



Alice Siegal Transcript

ROZ BORNSTEIN: Hi, this is Roz Bornstein, and today's date is July 10, 2001, and I am meeting this morning with Alice Siegal to gather Alice's oral history for the Jewish Women's Archive, Weaving Women's Words project. And we are currently at Alice's home in Seattle and Alice, do I have your permission to interview and tape you?

ALICE SIEGAL: Yes, you do.

RB: Thank you. Why don't we start with where and when you were born.

AS: Well, I was born in Seattle, January 23, 1924, so I've been here a very, very long time.

RB: And who were you named after?

AS: I'm named after my father's father who -- and I've never quite gotten the story straight -- but what I recall is that I was told that my father's father died when he was still in Russia trying to get out of the country to come to America and that would have been prior to World War I.

RB: And where did you grow up?

AS: It was the central area of Seattle. Close to Cherry and Yesler and I know we had different names for Kosher Canyon and one of the houses I lived in, actually the one from the time I was about 11 until I got married. And almost every home on that street on 26th Avenue had a Jewish family. There were very few non-Jews there.

RB: Is that right?

AS: Yes.



RB: So, for those outside of Seattle, could you give us some boundaries? Maybe starting with the home that you lived in after you were born up until 11 when you moved to --

AS: OK, well, of course, I don't remember the home I was born in. I know it was in the same general area but the first home that I remember, I guess I was a baby there. And lived there until I was about six years old. And that was a duplex that my grandfather had built and we had the second level. It was a two story and so we were second level. So, I do remember that and the Jewish families close by. And then, I say, fortunately, when I turned six in January, the school year was divided into two semesters and we were allowed to enter the second semester, unlike it is today where you can only enter in the beginning of the school year, whatever it is. And at that time, because I was so eager to start school, I could just hardly wait to learn how to read and write and so fortunately I was able to start school within a couple of weeks.

And after that, I think that summer, our family moved into another small cottage which was on 25th Avenue, very close to Horace Mann School which is now closed. Well, they're using it for other purposes. But at one time this school was called Walla Walla and some of my mother's brothers went there. I don't think my mother did. My mother came to this country when she was about 6 years old. They were on a homestead for a while and then came to Seattle. (laughter) And so we lived in that house until I was 11. And then we moved to -- my father and mother purchased a home on the corner of 26th Avenue and East Alder. So, it was always the Jewish area but 26th Avenue and East Alder really was very, very Jewish. We had kosher butcher shops on Cherry Street and on Yesler Way and it was quite different from what it is today.

RB: Do you remember what some of the landmarks were of that neighborhood?

AS: Well, for me, there was the Talmud Torah was built which was actually built even before we moved to 26th and the house we lived in prior to that move was almost kitty-corner from the Talmud Torah. So, that was a landmark, I guess my elementary school



was a landmark. And then there was the park across the street from the elementary school and Garfield High School, which was the high school that I went to. And the other landmarks would be, the kosher butcher shop stands out in my mind.

RB: What was the name of that butcher shop? Was it White Kosher? Or was it Varons?

AS: I think Varons was on Yesler way, I think. It might have been White Kosher. It might have been. And then there was a small synagogue a block away from us on 26th Avenue and Rabbi Shapiro was the rabbi there and then that congregation eventually merged with the Bikur Cholim. And, of course, I remember all the bakeries. Lipmans bakery, Brenners bakery, and where they were. And there was one other Jewish bakery, I don't know why I can't remember the name. And of course the Bikur Cholim and the Herzl and then the many Sephardic synagogues that were in that general area. So those are all places that were landmarks for me. (laughter)

RB: And so growing up you had quite a mix of Jewish families in your area.

AS: Right, yes.

RB: Ashkenazic and Sephardic it sounds like.

AS: Yes, although most of the families were Ashkenazic. But there were, yes. I can think of some of the families that were not. The Benveniste family and then there was the Levy family and I'm sure there were others but those are the -- because I was about the same age as their children so I remember.

RB: I see. And were the Ashkenazic families, were they Orthodox families predominantly or was it a mix of Reform and Conservative?

AS: You know, I don't think there were any Reform in the central area. At least none that I can remember. And so it was mainly some Orthodox, I mean some sort of secular or



not that observant and the conservative, the Herzl, had quite a few.

RB: What were your interactions with Jews and non-Jews at that time, as a young child in that neighborhood?

AS: Well, I guess when we moved to 26, I think it was mainly with the Jewish young people my age. Before we moved, when we were still living on 25th Avenue, well there were some Jewish families, there were much more non-Jewish. And so my playmates, when we were living there, were mainly non-Jewish except for the boy next door, who was about a year or so younger than I was. He was an only child so his parents would take me to the beach and so that their son had a companion. So, we got along very well.

RB: And he was a Jewish --

AS: Oh yes, he was Jewish.

RB: How do you think Seattle has changed over time as a place where Jewish people live?

AS: I don't think we have any solid pockets except in the Seward Park area, which does have really the Orthodox are congregated there. And some other pockets. But it's really so diverse. And, of course, now we belong to the Reform congregation, and while there are quite a few people living on Queen Anne that belong to Temple De Hirsch Sinai. In fact, we've been taking about three women who are widows and we take them to services on Friday night. People are spread out. They're all over the place, Magnolia, Queen Anne, North of Seattle, and of course Mercer Island and the East Side.

RB: So as the community has grown it's really branched out to different neighborhoods.

AS: Yes, it really has.

RB: As you were growing up in those homes, who lived in your household?



AS: Well, my father and mother. And I had one older brother that was three years older than I and one younger brother who was three years younger than I. So I was the middle child. So that was our whole household.

RB: And what were your parents' names?

AS: My mother is Rose and my maiden name is Abrams and my father was Samuel Lewis. And my father came to this country also prior to World War I. He already had an older brother living in Bellingham at the time. Although I don't have the story straight, I don't know whether he landed at Ellis Island and then came across Canada and then to Bellingham, although I think I've seen his naturalization papers say that he entered through Linden. But it's not clear. It was never quite clear. And my father didn't care to talk about the past.

RB: Where was he from originally?

AS: Oh, he was originally from Lithuania. And my mother was born in Russia. And her father had come to this country three years before he saved enough money to bring his wife and at that time two children. And my mother was the oldest of the two. And she was six. That was my Uncle Jack, Jacob, and probably a year or so younger. And my grandfather worked at the Studebaker plant. He was a blacksmith by training from Russia. And so he had skills that could be transferred to doing machinist sorts of work. And so he worked at the Studebaker for about three years and then he read in *The Forward* about getting land for farming, if you stay on the farm, I don't remember how many years it was, that that would be your land. So, he applied for it and so he did the homestead in Republic, Washington. And that's in the Northeastern part of the state and it's very close to Canada.

Then he had brought his young family and so my grandmother came across Canada on the train with her two little children. I guess one of the stories that I remember, that



stands out in my mind, my grandmother, just before she approached her destination where Grandpa was going to come and pick her up and take them all to the homestead, she took off her sheitel and just threw it and she says, "I don't need this in America." Now she was an observant woman. She certainly kept strictly kosher and she went to the synagogue every Shabbos. But they would call her, she was a modern Orthodox. And I really admired that. (laughter) So, they lived on this land that my grandpa had built some kind of a little house for them. He was very good with his hands. He could do things like that. And then he started to dig a well. Well there was no water, he went very deep, no water. So, obviously, this was not going to be good farmland and so he had to take a job in the little town of Republic, which is still a little town, where he worked as a blacksmith. And after three years there, and that's where my mother started school, and after three years there, my grandma says, "This is no place to raise Jewish children." And so they came to Seattle in about 1909.

RB: (inaudible)

AS: And then my father came and then when World War I broke out, he volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army. So that time, I guess they asked him if he wanted to change his name from Abramovitz to something easier and so he chose the name Abrams. That's how we became Abrams.

RB: Now what year did he come over from Lithuania approximately? Do you know?

AS: Well I think 1916. I think that was about the time. And then he met my mother in Seattle. I can't remember how they met but they did meet. And then he, as I say, volunteered for the Army. And he was sent to France so he was there and when the war was over and thank God he survived, he came back here to Seattle. And, of course, he had relatives, well it's this older brother who was married and had several children. And that's right, his brother had told them, "You better get a trade when you come to America because there are too many Jewish scholars here."



RB: Is that right?

AS: Yes. His older brother became a *shochet* here and that was his work until he retired. So, my father was able to get work as a tailor, although that's right, when he first came, he did what many Jewish people did when they first came. And I mean these were poor people. So, he would collect things. I guess he was kind of a junker.

RB: Peddler?

AS: Peddler, yes. And I guess he had a horse and wagon and at that time his older brother had moved to Bellingham. (inaudible) slowly moved in. So, I think no, they were originally in Bellingham, moved to Mt. Vernon. And so, he was a peddler there. I'm not sure in what order he got to Seattle but then he was able to get a job as a tailor. So eventually -- and I don't remember how many years he worked for other people but eventually my mother said, "Well, why don't you go into business for yourself?" And so, what he did, he had a little store on First Avenue near Seneca and that's the store I remember and he had that until after he died. My mother sold the store.

RB: I see, what was the name of the store?

AS: As I recall, it was United Tailors. I can't remember, isn't that funny, because I actually worked in the store. When I was about 13, I'd go down there after school because he needed somebody to be there so that to prevent shoplifting. (laughter) Because it actually was -- there were two sides to it and he needed somebody on one side where they carry mainly shirts and socks and I can't remember if it was underwear, but anyway so that was the side I had to watch. And I was able to do my schoolwork because things were not busy. By that time of course we were into the depression so there wasn't much business and so United Tailors and there was something else but I don't know why I can't remember.

RB: Did you consider your parents role models?



AS: (laughter) Actually I had a deep admiration for my father. I was amazed at, he was really self-taught virtually to learn English and he learned to write well and he was really with his experience serving in World War I, he became quite a pacifist and a believer in (inaudible) call it world government at that time but that war is totally wrong and he wrote a very impassioned article which was printed in one of our local newspapers and I think either my brother has a copy or we have a cousin that is the daughter of his older brother who has just been great about keeping the family records so she may have it. But he was very caring, very sensitive person. And I thought very bright. So I had a real deep admiration for him.

The other role model mainly for me was my grandmother. I really -- well, I admired her, well the things that come out, so she was also very caring and would help anybody who needed help and they didn't have much money but she was always willing to help. And she did take in boarders, not that when I remember but when they first came to Seattle. So, that would have been about 1909. And in order to help with the family income because I think he only worked, my grandfather, his first job was sweeping the streets in Seattle. And then later he began to use his machinist skills. She was very well organized. I never saw her ruffled. She handles things well. She was very active in the Workman's Circle, I don't know if you're familiar with that. It's still in existence and I think there's even still a chapter but it did kind of fold here for quite a while.

RB: Could you describe what you know about that and her role in that?

AS: Well a lot of -- it was quite an organization that really helped a lot of Jews I think assimilate. Maybe that's not the right word but I think adjust because they weren't ready to assimilate. It was their grandchildren (laughter) that did the assimilations. But adjust. And she was very outspoken what they believed in. My understanding later that it was kind of a socialist organization. And I don't know that that was the big factor but they were people that were really concerned about the lives of others and I know my



grandfather, he apparently wasn't active in the organization because I don't remember, maybe he was too busy with his work and didn't have time. I just don't know. But I know my grandfather just felt there was no country greater than the United States and of course it's true, the background that they came from, I mean my goodness. And of course we do -- this is a great country. But anyway so I don't really know too much but I know that my grandmother was very outspoken about what was right and what was wrong. I admire that she had this strong sense of justice and was a very caring person and also I had learned that when she was still in Russia as a child, that she had earned money by knitting so she could pay for her classes. So she was -- unfortunately, didn't have the opportunity to get a real good education, but at least she was knowledgeable about Russian and Hebrew and so I just had tremendous respect and admiration for my grandmother. She was wonderful to me and I loved going to her place and when I got older I could help with things. She grew vegetables. I guess grandpa helped in that. Vegetables and berries. And they had chickens. (laughter)

RB: Isn't that something?

AS: Yes, so it was fun.

RB: Now did they live close to your home or...?

AS: Yes. They were, I can remember the address is 22nd and East Terrace. And it was like a half a block from Garfield High School. And we were always within just a radius of, close, really close.

RB: Walking distance.

AS: Oh yes, very close.

RB: And so while you were growing up, you were able to witness her work for this organization?



AS: Well, I'd hear about it more and know that she always gave and that people had problems they could come, she would listen. (laughter)

RB: Is that right?

AS: Yes, so it started way back. This listening. So, don't know a whole lot but I remember hearing some of the stories. She was always ready to help out.

RB: And this is while she was raising a family and (inaudible) later years.

AS: Yes.

RB: I see. I wonder how common that was for women at the time. Do you have any sense of that?

AS: Well, I know that there were Jewish women that worked but I think most of them, I know a couple of cases the women were friends of my mother, where the husbands walked out on them and so they had to work and they did. And they raised their children and they did a good job. So I wouldn't say -- of course, in those days it was hard because you washed clothes by hand, you had to boil water, I mean, it was hard. And with my grandmother, she took in boarders so she was home and was cooking and so she was able to do those things. So, I really don't know how many actually worked. But my grandmother also worked in Russia. They came from a *shtetl* and she had a little store so I don't know whether, I never got it straight but I'm sure sort of like a general store, small things that people might need. But my, it was a hard life because no running water and going to the river to get the water, it was tough. But she did have somebody help in the home because my mother talked about the girl that sort of took care of her and my Uncle Jack. So, yes, I'm sure that many, if it wasn't outside of the home it certainly was within the home.



RB: Yes, it sounds very much so. And what about your mother. Did she also work for the same organization that your grandmother worked for, the Worker's ...

AS: Not to the extent as my grandmother. But I know she used to go to the meetings.

RB: Is that right?

AS: Yes. But I don't remember. Later she did do a lot of volunteer work but it was, I remember she volunteered at the Veteran's Hospital and this was after my father died. And so, she did quite a bit of volunteer work and she also worked -- I know she worked at Frederick and Nelson's in the children's department. And so, she also did what she could.

RB: Yes. What was your relationship like with your siblings?

AS: (laughter) Well, my older brother, in the early years, according to my mother, resented me because she was supposed to have a boy. And he just had no use for me. He was a very independent little kid, although he was only three. And he didn't spend much time at home but he was not -- OK, so that was kind of a strange relationship. Although when he got older things changed. He became more intelligent. (laughter)

RB: He grew up.

AS: Yes. With my younger brother, I just thought he was the most beautiful baby in the world. When my mother came home from the hospital, and I was only three, I just thought he was so adorable. And so, we got along very well. In fact we're still very close. Unfortunately, my older brother died when he was 66. So that happened, it was an aneurysm. He was visiting here and he was spending his winters in Hawaii; he and his wife had a condo there and he came back for sort of business reasons and we all got together. I remember it was my younger brother's 60th birthday, and I do remember Dave saying that he had this headache but he was going to go to the doctor the next



day. And he did, but the doctor just said, "Well you need to rest." It turned out to be an aneurysm. He was supposed to have dinner with some friends, Jewish friends who were also neighbors. And when Dave didn't show up, his friend Irving came to see what was happening and also fortunately had a key to the house because in case there was anything happened while Dave and Bernice were gone that he'd be able to help, and found my brother on the floor. He was not dead at the time but he was I guess in a coma and they had him on life support and then his wife came in and there just was no chance and so that was so sad because my mother of course was still living at that time and I remember at my brother's 60th birthday the night before I was thinking, oh, isn't this wonderful, my mother has all these senior children now and here we are. Never dreamed that the older brother, that would happen. But my relationship with my younger brother, and well, Dave was gone a lot so we never really had a chance to develop a real friendship. We cared about each other. But with my younger brother, we have a real close relationship which is good.

RB: And he lives in Seattle?

AS: Yes, well he lives in Mercer Island. His name is Syd. And he and his wife Marika, we get along wonderfully and it's a good relationship.

RB: As you were growing up, what were your parents' expectations regarding education and marriage and work, those kinds of things? What values do you remember?

AS: Well, I don't know whether it came from them but anyway, strong that you marry a Jew. You stay in the faith. And there was no preaching but the value came across. And then so that was no problem. As far as education, I don't know where it came from but I always felt I wanted to get a college education. And this older cousin that I mentioned who is keeping the family records and she was actually one of my role models. She's in her 90s now and still bright and alert and she lives in San Francisco.



RB: What is her name?

AS: Her name is Mary Blumberg. Do you know her or heard about her? Yes. So, Mary had gone to the University of Washington and gotten a degree in social work. And in those days I don't know -- I think you could do it with a bachelor's degree. And I just thought the world of Mary. She was just, I thought, and she still is, everybody loves her. So I know it came from that and she had a real, I don't think she knows, I'll have to tell her, but I always thought of Mary, so that the idea of going to college was I absorbed that and my mother's younger brother went to the University of Washington and so it just seemed like well that's the thing you do. And I loved school. Learning was just -- I just loved it.

RB: So let's see -- as a young child, where did you go to grade school?

AS: It was Horace Mann. That's now closed. And there was no kindergarten in those days. It was the first grade through 8th grade. I remember my first grade teacher who I did not admire, she absolutely terrified me. And to me, I always think of her as an eagle.

RB: Tell us about her, actually.

AS: Well, it was hard to say how old she was because at that age, anybody would seem old. And I don't know what it was about her but I did learn to read and I did go into the second grade. And actually, the teachers from then on, especially in my second grade teacher, we did "1A" the first semester, "1B" the second semester. So I entered in "1B." The next year, I must have finished off the "1A" part. And then another teacher, she was very young, I remember that, and just bubbly and really nice and she just, I was very shy, but she would have me do little errands for her and, of course, that made me feel very important. And so, she did a lot to help me sort of come out of my little shell and so I was deeply grateful to her. And so, that was a good experience. And then the next teacher who I think was Miss Dayton, but anyway that's where we started working on math and I



really loved arithmetic and I did extremely well there.

And from then on the teachers were good and I did well, and one year I was held back. The visiting nurse or public health nurse I guess it was, I had a rash and a fever and so I don't know how you got this service, but a public health came to the house and said oh, I had Scarlet Fever. And so, the rest of the family had to move in with my grandparents and so my mother was with me and was supposed to keep the room dark and after a while I didn't feel sick, I think the rash went away, I just don't know. But I was out of school a month before they would let me go back to school. And so, I'm really not sure that I had Scarlet Fever. But during that month, let's see, what grade was I in then? I must have been in the 8th grade and the 8th grade apparently was too large and so they moved some of the students up to the higher level and at that point, I just felt horrible because I wasn't there because I knew I was one of the best students and that if I'd been there, and the teacher said so but she said, "We didn't know when you were coming back and we had to do this." So I presented a case for myself.

RB: Is that right? What did you do?

AS: I said, "Well, I don't think it's fair that just because I was sick, that I don't have this opportunity." And the other part was that would allow me to graduate in June instead of the middle of the year and I didn't want that. And so, I guess I was persuasive because she did say well, "You'll have to go talk to another teacher, Miss Libby, because that's the class you'll go into." And she says you know I feel very badly about this but so I did it. So I went, presented, and I did in a very positive way. Saying that I was supposed to be in this class. And I was assertive which is something, first time I've ever been assertive but I didn't know the word, I just knew that this is what I want. I'm not going to let myself be cheated out of that. So, the teacher was annoyed because you know that (inaudible) fitting me in there. So she says, "I'm giving the reading test. If you pass that or high enough score, then you can stay but otherwise you go back." So, fortunately, I did very



well so I was able to stay. So, I always felt very good about, hey, you know? You know, you can speak for yourself and if you feel something's right. So, I thought that was a good lesson.

RB: Isn't that something. Did your parents play a role in this or was this strictly...

AS: No, I did it myself.

RB: On your own.

AS: Never asked my parents to be involved, and they just always assumed I would do the right thing.

RB: And this was in 8th grade so you must have been about 13, 14? Something like that?

AS: No, because I (inaudible) Maybe I wasn't 11 when we moved. Probably was, well let's see, probably 12, close to 13. Because I think we moved to (inaudible) so I was actually older. I'm sure I was 12 and that my next birthday would have been 13.

RB: Was that typical for girls at that age to be able to speak up to their teachers or to question decisions?

AS: Well, I don't really know. I was never aware of anyone else doing anything like this.

RB: None of your friends were doing it. (laughter) What steps led you to do that?

AS: Well, first of all, I was just, I'm going to use the word "enraged" but I think it's thinking back but I was very upset that I'd been first kept in the bed, the dark room, because I was positive that I didn't have Scarlet Fever. But we didn't have money so I couldn't do things that one could do if you had money. Have another doctor come in or whatever. And also, I was just saying but I was especially angry when I found out that I can't remember



how many students were moved into this upper level, meaning they will graduate in June which is something I wanted so badly, and I knew that I was one of the top students in the class, and I had never thought about it before but I knew at that time and the teacher did say -- well I would have, "You would have been one of the choices, but we didn't know when you were coming back." So, we did have a (inaudible), but my mother was not involved in this and I don't even know if I talked to her about it. (laughter)

RB: So, on your own.

AS: Yes. Well I think at an early age I learned that if things were going to happen, I had to do them.

RB: And the sense of social justice and injustice--

AS: Oh yes, it was strong.

RB: It was strong in you.

AS: Right.

RB: Do you know how that developed in you?

AS: Well, I really felt that I must have absorbed it from my grandmother and now I didn't really get to know my father because he was working late hours and many days and until after I started working in his store and so then I had a chance to talk to him and ask him things. And so, it certainly came in there. But I must have been -- and I don't know that it was from the only religion school education that I had was a Sunday school. One summer I did go to the Talmud Torah to learn Hebrew, and I did very well, and I could read and write. Unfortunately, I didn't stay with it but I don't know. Because later when I learned more about Judaism there definitely is that sense of justice is extremely important. So, I'm not sure that I felt that was something.



RB: That's one of the incidents, one of the first incidents that you can remember. Isn't that something? And you've -- we're getting off track a little bit but just to continue this line, that you've gone on to spend a great deal of your life working to improve the quality of life for people and in areas that seem where there is social injustice.

AS: Right, yes.

RB: In both your paid work and volunteer work. So, would you like to talk about that now or should we talk about that later? You can tell me.

AS: If you want me to talk about it now, I can.

RB: OK, and then we'll come back to more about your childhood. (laughter) Let's see, give me a second here to just move forward. OK. I'm not exactly sure where to start, maybe you can help me with that but one thing that comes to my mind is that you decided that you wanted to get a major in sociology and you attended classes at the University of Washington in 1942, is that right?

AS: Well, I did but for only 1 quarter. By that time I was going with the man who became my husband and it would have been 41, 42, that first quarter. Yes, the quarter I think ends in January, I think. But maybe not. But it started September '41. And so I went one quarter. I actually was -- I was disappointed because I was still working at my father's store and then I was seeing the man who became my husband, he was working as an engineer at Boeing. And so, he would come over every night. And I felt -- so, my older brother had worked in the store and then decided he wanted to do other things. I mean, this was while he was going to high school, that I was hoping that I could have time to work on studies. I did OK. There certainly was no problem with what I did but it was feeling pressured by the various things I had to do. And so, I decided -- and since it turned out my husband owed a lot of money for while he was getting himself through University of Denver and he wasn't paying his bills, so actually I took over managing his



money.

RB: You were good at math.

AS: Yes, and I had a firm belief in you pay your bills and you try to save money. And so, I thought, well, I better just get more work and just work full time and save money for when we get married. We got married the following June of 1942. But that was a disappointment that I didn't stay at the University. But always in the back of my mind that was something that I wanted to do.

OK, sort of social justice, I'd say one of the first incidents that really struck me and made me so angry so when I graduated from Garfield High School and they had a senior party and I didn't know how it was organized or what but it was at a country club, the North end of the lake, can't remember, but anyway, when I got there, that was before I met my husband, I was with another graduating senior, and I looked around and there were no people of color there. And we had as far as I recall, it was all White. And we had a large number of African Americans, at that time we called them Black, and Asian students.

RB: Excuse me, what year was this?

AS: Graduation was June of 1941. It was before the war started and so that just made me very angry and I wondered, "How did this happen, why did this happen?" Of course, I already knew that Jews were excluded from Broadmoor and Highlands and certain other very wealthy areas and well that there was discrimination, there was for Jews to get into the big name colleges and the Ivy League schools and so I certainly was aware of prejudice but this to me was just too much. So, that made me very angry. But I didn't know what to do about that. And certainly I had friends among all the people there.

RB: Excuse me, just taking a step back and talking a bit, because it seems like such an important story, when you were in high school, what were the interactions like between Whites and --



AS: And the other...

RB: Colored or non-white?

AS: I do think that there was more interaction with Asians.

RB: I see. Japanese, Chinese, what was that?

AS: It was more Japanese that I recall. There were some Chinese, there were also Japanese Americans that I mainly remember and who were in many of the same classes. Not huge numbers but they were there, definitely there. I know I certainly was friends with, there was this one girl that now I can't remember the name but somebody who I did admire and thought was very nice. I do think the African Americans, they stayed to themselves, which is what I've heard even happens where the schools are integrated but each goes off to their own group. But anyway, they were in the classes and there was one student that I remember from the Horace Mann elementary who apparently had to repeat classes over and over again to the point where he was in the graduating class that I was in at the elementary school and just before, I think in his last semester, he was hit by a car when he was coming back after lunch and was coming back to school and so he was out for quite a while and thank God they did let him graduate. He did fine at Garfield. He went through in four years. He was an outstanding musician and a lot of us knew him and really thought very highly of him. But there wasn't that much interaction. But at the graduation, I mean where are they? So, I knew students but there wasn't that much social interaction.

RB: And it sounds like it just was infuriating to see this.

AS: Yes. That to me was just beyond belief and yes, I was really angry. But again, I didn't know how to direct it, who do you ask, what do you do, and then there are other things, working and getting ready to go to the University. I met my husband that summer, actually July 4, 1941 is when we met. And so nothing happened that year.



RB: And at the University when you went, you were there that Fall...

AS: The one quarter.

RB: Yes, what was it like, the social climate like there for --

AS: You know, well I remember I didn't mix that much because I was working after school, I mean after classes, but I remember at lunchtime that I was able to get together with other Jewish students, where we could eat lunch together. This was before Hillel. I don't remember how it was publicized, how we knew or what, but that we would generally eat lunch together. So, that was about the extent of it. Wait, Hillel did come along. Yes. Yes, Hillel had been started. But I didn't go to it, well I went to it, yes. I just can't remember.

RB: Were there many Blacks or Asian students that mixed at that time with the rest of the student body?

AS: You know, I can't remember in the classes. I remember, I would take the bus to -- streetcar, whatever we had, I think it was streetcars in those days, to get to the University. And I had to change, I guess, streetcars, at 23rd and East Madison and there was a Black young woman who also went to the University and so we would visit while waiting for our streetcar and we got to talking about the jobs that we also held and she was doing housecleaning. Well, see, I would have never thought of doing housecleaning, even in the depression, but I was always able to get work. Well of course there was my father's place but I also had managed to get a job at I guess we called it a ten cent store one Christmas holiday. So, I had that experience.

And then in my senior year at high school, I was able to get a job at the Bon Marche, when there were lines of people applying, and I was able -- I couldn't believe it, I was hired, here were all these older people and at that age, I looked very young. But so I lied about my age and said I was at the University of Washington because I wanted to get a



job. And so, what I did was emphasize the experience that I'd had working for my father, cashiering, bookkeeping. And that I accepted the responsibility. I was there on time, yes it was my father, but I handled it just as I would any employer. Anyway, I got the job. And then I also did babysitting. I worked in the high school, the locker room for the girls, handing out, taking their clothes, putting them away, giving them towels. So, I had a bunch of little jobs. But then when I thought oh, yes, she doesn't have the opportunities that I have. And so that made quite an impression too. And then, of course, when World War II broke out, and hearing the proclamation that I guess it was the President that all the Japanese Americans had to go to camps, I was really outraged.

RB: Tell us about that.

AS: Well, there was a Japanese American family that had a grocery store close to where we lived. Of course, they had to close. And I knew their, I think they had a son that was about my age, and knew him and had gotten to know several Japanese Americans and I admired them. They were good students, the ones I got to know. And then, there were also some -- I can't remember, I think it was a hotel or -- no it was a restaurant, across the street from where my father's business was, it was a Japanese -- I'll say Japanese American because I assume at least their children were, and so that business had to go. And there were others in knowing what happened to the International Area, at that time I think we called it Chinatown, but that it just cleaned out all those people where there was no evidence that they were ever involved in any -- [noise] (inaudible) my husband will get it -- no evidence that they were involved in any kind of activities that were dangerous to the country. So that was another experience that just felt so wrong. And really hurt. Again, what do you do? So that hurt. (break in tape) Those were some of the experiences.

Well, of course, what was happening to Jewish people, and then what was worse -- oh, I remember one experience that I had when I was still living above my grandparents. I



was playing with a little Black girl, about my age, and then she said, "Well, let's go to my house." And so, I went into the kitchen and her mother just became just terrified, scolded her daughter, she says, "What are you doing?" I can't remember the words but you had no right to bring her in. Well, somehow I had already absorbed that there was discrimination against Blacks and somehow I knew something about slavery. I must have known something. And I felt so sorry. And even though we didn't have much in our house, what they had was, used. You could tell they were kind of broken down things, and I felt terrible. Sad about what I saw there. And knowing -- I mean, I assumed, it's kind of hard to believe that I could ever acknowledge, but it left quite an effect on me that this is horrible, that people are discriminated the way they are. So, that had quite an effect on me. So, I never had a chance to play with her again because her mother was frightened. And from what I know today, that her daughter could have gotten in trouble or she could have had something horrible happen. So, I could understand it was that her background -- I'm sure she had a very limited education, the mother, and it was pretty sad. So I could see these kind of things that were happening and that it really did bother me.

RB: So, what did you do?

AS: Well, the other thing that, I also was -- well, the things that had an impact on me, seeing how people interacted, the problems within families, were, I felt, that something could be done to make life better and that it seemed wrong that people didn't have the opportunities that the White people had. And so, I guess that led me to sociology to have a better understanding of what creates this, what can we do, also I remember becoming aware of prostitution when I was working at my father's store. I'd see these women walking up and down the street and then occasionally with a man and it was quite a while before I realized what they did. And at that time, I thought, well -- I became interested in Socialism when I was in high school. I felt that things were wrong because of the Depression and how people were having such a difficult time and so I thought, well, if we



had a better society and more just society with economic justice also that women wouldn't have to do things like that. Well, I learned differently. During the war when there were plenty of jobs, women were still walking the streets. So, I learned a little bit about that too. So, you know, anyway, I felt there was a lot to learn.

RB: Were there -- were discussions at home about your observations?

AS: Well, you know, I just didn't talk to my parents or to my brothers. Well, Dave was always gone, Syd was much younger, and my mother always seemed to be very busy with whatever and my father would come home late and tired, and I suppose later when I was working the store that I probably did talk about these things with my father but it was mostly kept to myself.

RB: Did you have a group of friends that shared your --

AS: No, not really. I really didn't even discuss this with friends.

RB: So, this was really a private experience over time for you.

AS: Yes.

RB: Right. And so, let's see, you went back to college later on but you started working first for the state. Is that right?

AS: Well, after I got my college degree, yes.

RB: Oh, I see, OK. All right. So, let's see. So, maybe we should take a step back then and bear with me here as we jump again.

AS: Sure, that's OK.

RB: OK, let's see. I wondered if there was anything else that you wanted to share about your high school experience. Any classes that seemed most enjoyable or formative. Any



teachers that were role models?

AS: Well, I guess again I loved math. Algebra and Geometry. I loved French and I had a wonderful teacher for French. I know one English teacher, stands out. I can still see her, she's very stately and she was wonderful. And let's see, I guess, you know, then there were some teachers that I thought were good and some a disappointment. But as I loved learning so the fact that they were boring didn't mean that the subject matter was boring. So yes, it certainly did have a positive effect. But there was no one really that -- it would have been nice to have had a counselor or somebody that I could have talked to and there might have been some such person at the school but I didn't know about it. And so I figured, well, I'm going to go onto college, and I thought I'd be a social worker but I wasn't sure. But I even thought maybe I'll do accounting. I don't know. But then I later thought no, I like working with people and I wouldn't want to just strictly work with numbers and I'm certainly glad I didn't choose that. So, I still like numbers and I still like (inaudible). And I did have friends there and I belonged to -- I guess they called it Junior Hadassah. So, we had that social group and so it was -- and there were dances and AZA and Jewish groups and that's what that was. So it wasn't a totally work or school only but there was a time for some social life.

RB: And some extra curricular?

AS: Yes. Oh, yes I used to enjoy after school sports. Never good. But loved to be physically active.

RB: Is that right?

AS: Yes, and I still am in that I swim, but I'm a plodding swimmer. But I do it. And so, I do enjoy being physically active.

RB: So, you met your husband Art the summer before you started at the University. Could you tell us a little bit about your courtship and marriage?



AS: OK. I had been invited to a beach party and Art was also -- Art and his roommate, the two had driven from Denver to Seattle to both go to work as engineers at Boeing. They were invited to this party. They knew a relative of someone who said, "Why don't you come to the beach party that we're having tonight," it was July 4, "and it's at Alki Beach." And so, they came there. And once Art saw me, I mean, trying to remember, did I go home with my date or did I go home with Art? I don't remember. I think I went home with my date. But Art found out where I lived, I suppose he asked. And was there to see me the next day and he was just there and then proposed to me I guess it was that following October, gave me an engagement ring, and so we then planned the wedding would be in June. My mother had a fit. I mean, I was still 17 at that time. 18 the following January. So, she was just sick about it. But she didn't have the way to talk to me. Go ahead, did you want to say --

RB: Just a moment. I think what we're going to do is stop this tape. I think this tape is finished. And what we'll do is we'll pick up with the second tape. So hold your thought.

AS: OK.

[END OF CD 1]

RB: This is Roz Bornstein and this is tape two of Alice Siegal's oral history and the date is still July 10, 2001 and Alice and I are meeting at Alice's home in Seattle, Washington for the Weaving Women's Words project of the Jewish Women's Archive. And Alice, do I still have your permission to interview and tape you?

AS: Yes, you do.

RB: Thank you. Well, we're talking about your courtship with your husband Art, and you were describing how your mom was, well why don't you describe that.



AS: Well, she was really upset, mainly because she felt that I wouldn't go to college then and I was much too young, which of course I was. (laughter) And my father wasn't happy about it but he was sort of well if that's what it's going to be, that's it. And so, my mother was so upset, it went on and on.

RB: Can you describe what messages -- did she have a strong belief in education for you or what was the concern on her part?

AS: You know, I really don't remember. It's just that I was too young and when I think about it now, that was much too young, but I think had she presented it in some way, why don't you wait until maybe you've had a year or two in college, or finish college, or something like that, I think I would have been willing to listen. But it was just, "You're too young, you're too young." And, of course, that just made me more stubborn. If you don't want somebody to do things, especially your child, at a certain age, maybe any age, I don't know, you don't beat them on the head with no, but you think about something that might work. Maybe it wouldn't, maybe it would have. But anyway, so that was --

RB: Within the Jewish community at that time, was 17 a young age to be --

AS: Yes. It was a shock.

RB: So, to put it in context then, at that time, what was the --

AS: Kind of the age?

RB: Typical or I don't know--

AS: I would say among those of us who were planning to go onto college, probably after they completed college would have been the typical age. Actually my cousins, the one I admired so much and then she had two other sisters who I also liked very much, they all married later, much later. So, it was from my generation, that was kind of a throwback.



RB: But the two of you fell in love.

AS: Yes. (laughter) I mean, obviously, it's difficult and when you're both pretty young but I always felt well we can work things out. But then as the war progressed and actually my father needed me more in his business because then the tragedy of the economy is when there's a war, the economy gets very busy and grows. But, of course, you were reading the news, there was no television at that time, I mean it was horrible. And my husband was doing some testing on a Boeing plane and so he had to do high altitude testing. I guess he was testing the electrical system because he is an electrical engineer. And so, he had very long days and also a lot of this flying at very high altitudes. And he was just exhausted when he'd get home. And so, it was a stressful time.

But after the war, my husband, without saying anything to me, quit his job at Boeing, he and another fellow engineer, and they decided to go into business for themselves and my husband asked me if I could get my parents to loan some money for the business and that he would need me to do the office work and the bookkeeping and that was something that really made me very angry because there was no talking to me first. But I did those things. Well, one thing that happened, in 1945, my father had a massive heart attack in November and he died, and as you know, I said we were very close. And that was just absolutely devastating to me.

RB: How so?

AS: Because I felt so close to him that and the fact that, OK, here's the situation where I knew that he had a heart condition and when we worked at the store before I got married, we used to walk home sometimes from First Avenue to 26th and East Alder and later he would be out of breath and he said, "I just can't do it." And so, we would just go to the bus and again, I don't know, bus or streetcar, probably streetcar. And go home. And I really denied to myself, and of course, at that time I didn't know that much about, I don't know



that anybody knew that much about heart conditions and so forth, but I guess I felt whether I could have done anything, I'm sure I couldn't have, but I just felt very badly that had happened. And it just left me feeling very bereaved and very sad. So, that took quite a while to get over. And then, after I began to feel better, I did become pregnant with our first child who is named after my father. And so, he was born in October '46 and we were, my husband now is in his business, and it was not doing well financially, and so we barely were managing, and it was a hardship for a number of years. And so, that bothered me because I felt I should have been more involved, I should have been --

RB: Involved in -- ?

AS: In the decision to go into business. Also, he should have used me more as a partner than as the woman who does the office work. And so, that really bothered me. And so, that's when I decided, well I didn't decide -- and then the second child came along later, it was a difficult -- so the early years became difficult. The stress of the war and his job and then my father's death and then the financial difficulties. So then, have the second child. I did become depressed. I became very depressed. I was fortunate enough to be able to get help and that was so fortunate that there was a clinic had been opened called Pinell and I was referred to it. You paid what you could afford. So, that was -- (inaudible)

I was very wary of many of the people in that field that I'd hear stories about and I'd think, "Oh God, I don't want to get involved with anybody like that." And so I was very fortunate. The psychiatrist that I was seeing was, I don't know where he was trained but he came from one of the famous -- Menninger -- I always forget whether it's Menninger or Menninger, but I think it's Menninger. Anyway, and he was wonderful and that's where I was able to kind of pull things together and realize OK, I am going to go to the University. As soon as our daughter entered the first grade, because we still had very little money, so I had to do it while the kids were in school. And so, as soon as she



entered first grade I enrolled at the University of Washington and then I went part time so I could be home when the kids were home. And so, it took seven years to get a bachelor's degree. But I got it.

RB: It's remarkable that you were able to juggle all of that. If you don't mind taking a step back for just a second, I was wondering, in your experience, when you felt depressed and you sought help, what was it like at that time for women to do that? Was it talked about much, or was it something that was rare --

AS: No, at that time, it was rare. Later it began to have women's programs and orientations for older women. I think I was 40 when I went back.

RB: Actually in terms of getting help for depression, how did you take that step at that time?

AS: Well, I was seeing a doctor, you know, for physical things, and then the doctor I was seeing referred me to I don't know if you know Bea Sachs whose specialty was psychosomatic medicine. And so, she was very helpful and so she referred me to Pinell and I was deeply grateful because knowing that this was -- very fine staff, that I would be able to get the help I knew I needed at that time. And so, actually, I was going four times a week and had a very reasonable, what was it, \$5 a session. But even that was a hardship. But I don't know, I guess I felt so relieved that I was having the opportunity to work out issues and it did help. So actually, I probably would have continued longer but I had one hundred hours of psychotherapy, but then the psychiatrist moved to California to open up a private practice and I didn't want to start with anyone else and I figured, well, I'll manage.

RB: That's such a change from now, isn't it, with what is provided through managed care. How many hours. And this was through Group Health?

AS: Well, they referred me to Pinell.



RB: I'm not exactly sure how well known Group Health is nationally.

AS: At that time, it wasn't well known.

RB: Could you tell us how did you get into Group Health and tell us a little bit about Group Health and that history?

AS: Well, I guess we joined in 1948, and it was a very young, struggling organization. And how I found out about it, my younger brother took a job there while he was going to the University. And I'm sure he was at the University -- to promote the organization, Group Health, and to get memberships. And so, the way he explained it, it sounded great to me and I liked the idea of a cooperative, members on in, and that's really what it was at the beginning.

I mean, it still is, but now it has many contracts with employer groups so now they have different kinds of memberships. But at that time, so I recall the doctors were, I think it was in the Security Building in downtown Seattle, just maybe a half dozen doctors. And they were having a lot of problems and King County Medical Association wouldn't recognize them. They couldn't use other hospitals. And so, they bought this old hospital that they used. Of course, at that time, but I had already had my second child so there was no hospital use for me. But I just liked the idea of the cooperative. And then they had, I'm not sure if they were called district councils which they do have now and I'm not sure if that's what it was called in those days. So, I decided to go to those meetings. And then, I became -- I was elected to an office. I don't know if I was vice president or secretary, what it was. I was not president or chair of that committee. But it was an interesting group of people and I learned about what was going on and --

RB: This is for the board of Group Health Cooperative?

AS: They had a board, but this was --



RB: A subcommittee?

AS: Yes, kind of a subcommittee that would feed into the board. And then, one meeting we came to, and Art came with me at this one meeting or -- maybe it's because the chairperson couldn't be there for that meeting and asked me to chair it I think and that just panicked me. Even then. I had held offices, well, or an office, with Junior Hadassah as a secretary but not, I mean, I still wasn't up to that point of wanting to do that. So, I asked my husband if he would be willing to run the meeting, and he said yes. And so, we went together, and I did whatever my job was, I don't remember, and he ran the meeting, and it was also election time, and so Art, of course, was elected to chair that committee, and from that, then he became aware of the board and then eventually was elected to the board. He became very involved with Group Health. And, of course, it was really a struggling organization because it took I don't know how many years before Group Health was recognized by the King County and Washington State Medical associations. And really took off.

But now, of course, it's very well known, and my understanding is it's considered one of the best -- in fact, I think it was written up in one of our magazines. I don't remember whether it was Newsweek, one of those magazines, where it was rating HMOs, and Group Health came out very highly rated. So, it's really great. And so, thanks to my brother, who told us about it and we joined, and then I got involved in it to a certain extent. And then, when Art got on the board, he was very involved. They really worked hard. And so, I used to read the minutes and so it was very interesting.

RB: Isn't that something? And through that process, you were able to get help for the depression.

AS: Oh, through Group Health, right.



RB: And it sounds like in your work, that it caused you to make a decision to go back to school.

AS: Right. Yes. I think the therapist or psychiatrist helped me work through issues that were keeping me... because there was a lot of fear and a lot of feelings of what if I can't make it and things like that. Well, I got the strength to go ahead and do it and at that time it was very unusual. I met one other woman about my age who also decided to go back later, I guess two women, but one I became good friends with. And then, one of my friends, when she saw what I was doing, she had already had two years, I think, at the University before she moved here. And she said, well she might as well finish her degree. And so she came back. I think we graduated at the same time. She came back much later because it was seven years for me. And I did not go to the graduation because it was just -- I mean, I knew everything was huge, and I was the only one with (inaudible) free afternoon, I wanted to enjoy it to do something else.

And then I got a couple calls from people saying, "Oh, congratulations. You graduated magna cum laude." I didn't know what it meant. (laughter) And then my friend who finished her last two years also called me about that. So, I looked it up to find out what it was. And also, it was in the newspaper. So, I know what it is now. And I also -- while I was at the University, I had been invited to join the sociology honorary. And in fact, they wanted me to take a part time job. But I had enough to do with a family and my husband would still call me every now and then to help out in the office. And this time, my mother's not that -- well, she did have health problems, and so she would ask me to help her. Now that time, my grandparents were also having health problems and so I was helping there. And I was taking the kids. Now by this time, they're taking their Hebrew classes mid-week, and it was just a very busy time.

RB: How did you manage to do all that?

AS: There was no free time. I didn't have free time.



RB: But just logistically.

AS: Logistically?

RB: How did you make dinner and do laundry?

AS: Oh (inaudible) did all those things.

RB: Study?

AS: Yes. I know I would study at the kitchen table. By that time, we had gotten a TV. I didn't want the kids sitting in front of the TV, but I'm sure we limited it, I know I limited it. But anyway I know what happened is, because we wouldn't get the TV, they were going to the neighbors and watching TV. So this way, I would know what they were watching and how much. So they'd be watching TV and I'd be studying in the kitchen and doing dinner and to show you, how it was difficult, I remember one time going to put the potatoes in the oven to bake. I apparently put them in the refrigerator because after I went back to the books I thought, there was a light on when I put the potatoes in and our oven doesn't have a light. I better go check this. And they were in the refrigerator. So I mean, it takes its toll. But I mean, again, I love learning. It was worth everything -- if that's what it takes, that's what it takes.

RB: Now, what were the roles in your marriage at this time? Did your husband -- were you the predominant childcare provider? How did it work?

AS: Yes, I was. Because with his own business he was putting in very long hours and then he became very involved, that's when he started his volunteerism with things like the Group Health was the biggest chunk and I don't remember at what point he became active in B'nai Brith, Jewish Federation, ADL, I mean there are so many organizations. And so, he was gone. He would leave the house early in the morning before the kids got up and he didn't get home until late and had many dinner meetings so it was pretty



difficult.

RB: So you were really managing the household and the kids and studies.

AS: Studies, and then if he needed me in the office, come in. It was very -- oh yes, I know what. Before I decided to go to the University, I told my husband, "Now, if you expect me to work at your office, at your business, then I become partner and have a role in decision making. And if that's not OK with you, I'm going to the University of Washington to get my degree." And he didn't say he wanted me to do that, and he didn't say, "Well, go to the University." So, I went to the University. So, that's how it happened. So now, he has become enlightened since then, but back then, he was not an enlightened person.

RB: And so it took a lot of courage for you to make the decision on your own to do that. And once you enrolled, was he supportive of your --

AS: No.

RB: OK. So throughout the seven years, you really had to--

AS: Yes, I was on my own, yes.

RB: On your own. Wow.

AS: Of course, my husband was also very active in Rotary and so every now and then there was a social thing and I remember, I think it was before I got my degree at the University of Washington, and this fellow came up to me and said, "Oh, it's so wonderful of your husband to encourage you to go to the University, to support you in this." And, of course, I didn't say anything. Well, that's the way it was but again, it worked and I was really so happy. And, as I say, I loved it. And, actually, towards the end, I mean, the courses I really enjoyed the most, were history. And so, I took as much history as I



could.

RB: What type of history?

AS: Well, at that time, there was ancient history, there was World History, Far East History, and U.S. History. At one point, I took a course, it was the values and they came out of our system of government which was a fascinating course. And I did like the sociology classes very much. I found some of the instructors or professors very boring. But I liked the subject matter. I took some psychology courses, and I had -- a dummy for an introductory course. It was a professor there. I remember this large introductory course. He said, "Well anybody over 30, they can't learn, they don't learn anymore." I mean, that's how behind things were in those days and I can't remember what other stupid things he said.

RB: What years?

AS: What year was that?

RB: You started back in what year?

AS: OK, I have to stop -- I think it was '50 -- OK, Marilyn was six years old, so we can do it that way. Six and 1948 is 1954, so it would have been '54. And yes, it was so unbelievable.

RB: Describe that a bit. When you say it was so unbelievable.

AS: Well, that's --

RB: The age (inaudible)

AS: Yes, and he was, I'm not sure how old he was, but I would have assumed in his late 50s or early 60s. Anyway, he was stupid. He was not the greatest. But anyway, I got



some introductory stuff. And it was not bad. But I did take some other courses. Later I realized that when I went, started, I didn't know whether I'd be able to finish the University. I didn't know whether I had what it took to be a University student. And then, when I realized I'm going through and I'm doing very well, I will finish while the kids are in junior high school. And at that time, they needed teachers, there was a real demand for teachers. And so I thought, well, I didn't feel that enthralled by many of my teachers. There were a few that were outstanding. And so, I thought, well, I might as well get a teaching degree. I'll keep the major in sociology, get my teaching degree, and then I have the same schedule as the kids.

And so, I did that, and I must tell you, I hated almost every education class I took. I couldn't believe that. Even went to one of the -- I think he was a professor -- to complain about what he was expecting us to do. I did it two times. That's right. The second time I had to talk to his assistant, a student assistant. And that didn't do any good. But the first time was a reading course, how to teach reading. And he had us divided into groups, and then we were to work on a project, work on a project together, and then we were to evaluate each other. And rank each other. Who was the best, did the most. And so on down. And I refused to do it. I was outraged by this. And in a university you work together with a group of people, everyone's doing something. And so, I went to see him. (laughter) And he was strange. He turns his back to me and faces his bookcase, and we talk. And I think he was so shocked, this was the first time anyone had ever challenged him on that. And so, I said, "I don't think this is right, and it's like expecting a group if I were teaching, you were saying you have to learn to do this, this is a teachers rank," I said, "I would not rank my fellow teachers. I mean, that is just not right. And it's troubling us, and I just don't think this is the thing to do. And I've heard complaints from many other of the students who are in your class who feel it's wrong also." And I don't know of the exact words, but that was the essence. And I found out later he didn't require it. Now I'm sure we didn't rank anyone in our group. And I got a good grade.



RB: So, you were the spokesman for your group?

AS: Yes, I took it up on myself.

RB: Isn't that something? And did you get the support of your group?

AS: Oh yes, yes.

RB: And how did you take that step? How did you decide to do that?

AS: Oh, I was again enraged. I mean, this is ridiculous. I mean, it was -- and I could hear people really bothered by it. Nobody wanted to do it. And I certainly didn't want to do it. I always feel when I get enraged, I've got to do something. And so that was it. I'm not going to keep that rage in me when this guy is causing it.

RB: So it motivates you.

AS: To take action, yes. You know, I don't care what's going to happen. I mean, if it means I'm going to get a poor grade, whatever, I don't care. So that's always been my habit. I found out, I mean, I discovered that's the way I am. So, I've done that in my work also.

RB: Yes, and it served you well in so many ways, hasn't it?

AS: Yes, it's never been a problem.

RB: So, you decided to continue with work in the field of social action. Can you describe it, now, is it right out of college that you worked at the Washington State Employment Service?

AS: No, that came a little bit later. Not that much later. Actually, I had a contract with Seattle Public Schools as soon as I -- before I even graduated. So, I had that. And I had an assignment in Magnolia at a middle school, well no, it was junior high in those days.



And then somebody had asked in the personnel office that they wanted somebody else to go there. I don't know, there was some connection. And so, would I mind going someplace else. And they offered me another junior high school that was actually more convenient, it was one where my kids were going to be, but I didn't see where it would be a problem because it was big enough so they wouldn't have to be in any class I would be teaching. But I didn't know what I was going to be teaching. And I kept calling the school and calling the school to try to find out what my assignment would be so I could prepare for it.

Well, one day, I ran into the principal at a gasoline station in our neighborhood. I was there getting gasoline also. And I told him, I said, "I've been trying to get hold of you because I want to find out what I'm going to be teaching so I can prepare." "Oh," he says, "Well, I can tell you." He said, "You'll be doing social studies, maybe an English, and teach beginning Spanish." I said, "Beginning Spanish?" He says, "Yes. We need somebody to teach beginning Spanish." I said, "I had one year of high school Spanish, and I had stayed with French for two years, and then I took one year of high school Spanish which I enjoyed, but that was my senior year. And then, when I went to the University that one quarter, I did take a Spanish course. And I really loved the language, but now it's many years later and, obviously, I haven't used Spanish, and there never was that much" and I said, "No, that's not right, I don't have a Spanish background."

"Oh," he says, "It's a beginning class, you'll just keep ahead of the kids, and you can do it." I said, "No, that's wrong. I said I wouldn't want my children learning Spanish from somebody who is just one lesson ahead. My pronunciation will not be correct because I always had problems with getting that sound right. And that is just not right." "Well then," he says, "Then you'll have to call the school district and find out where else they can send you." Anyway, so then I got sent to a junior high in Ballard, and, of course, I didn't know what it's like in junior high. And so, I had social studies and English. But the thing is, I had students from a wide range of ability, from a 15-year-old who is a non-reader in



one of my classes to a very bright student, young girl who was exceedingly bright. And then, there was the behavior, the kid who had this uncontrolled behavior problem, and another kid who was always sneaking. How are you supposed to do this? I mean, it was just awful. But I thought, well, this is first year, and get it together.

And so then at the end of that school year, they informed me -- or this Seattle Public Schools enrollment start to drop. So, they were shifting teachers. So, he said, "Well, next year you'll be sent to a different junior high or whatever." And so, I said, "OK. Maybe I'll find out earlier this time, or whatever I'm going to be teaching, can prepare during the summer." So, I didn't hear from the school, I had the contract, and I started, I guess in July, start calling the personnel office. And they said, "Don't call us anymore, we'll call you, and you'll have an assignment." I read in the newspaper that teachers were to report to school the next day, I still hadn't heard. So, I called. I said, "I have a contract, I don't think the school district is going to want to pay me if I'm not assigned to a school." So, then they said, "Well, you have a choice of, I think it was Hamilton Junior High School or something on Beacon Hill." Well, Hamilton was closer, and I thought, again, I don't know the difference. So, I went to Hamilton.

Actually, I had a good experience there. They had me teaching math for students who are not very good at math. It was eighth grade, and because I am enthusiastic about math, it went very well, and they did well, and in fact, I was told that their standardized math tests were much higher than they had ever scored before and they were very pleased. And then the other classes were fine, and so then I can't believe what happened in the Seattle School District. Then in December, I had teachers saying, "Oh, we're going to miss you. It's been so nice having you here." And I think, "Did I hear right?" So then after hearing it a couple more times, I decided I'd better go ask. And so I did, and they said, "Oh, didn't they tell you? Oh, you are just taking the place of one of our teachers who had a sabbatical or something, and he's coming back for the second semester."



And so, then I was told, "Well, you can go to Jane Adams." I think was -- anyway, by that time, I was really disgusted. I thought I was going to have to work on a fifth year. I thought, well, what I'll do is I'll start working on my fifth year, and then I also can do some volunteer work, and at that time open housing was being voted on. Supposed to be voted on. And so I worked in that office for -- it was the person who was in charge and myself as a volunteer. But it was very interesting and a lot of good things. And worked on getting my fifth year. I guess I tried substitute teaching, and that was -- you never knew when you were going to be called, and I didn't want that. But I did start taking classes, and then I guess it was that summer, actually it was my husband who read in the Seattle Times that the Federal Government was starting a program to work with 16 through 21-year-olds who had dropped out of school or had been in trouble with the law or minorities who had been kept out of opportunities.

And it was going to be called the Youth Opportunities Centers. But you had to apply. And if you were interested, they'll send the application. And so, it sounded very interesting. Sounded like something I would be interested in. It certainly fit in with working with people to help bring them up. And so I got the application, and I got the references, and I wrote the essay that I had to write, and I can't remember what -- it was quite a process. And I was accepted. Later I found out that it was a country program. The whole country had this program --

RB: National?

AS: It was a national program. And that out of the something like 22,000 people who applied, 2,000 were selected in the nation. And it was a very good program. It was really excellent. And then so after it -- and I can't remember -- it was a summer program, very intense. You had to live on campus. And so, I did mine at the University of Washington. And so then, when we finished, several of us were asked to -- all were accepted to work for the Washington State Employment Service in the Youth Opportunity Center that



would be starting. And so, I was one of the people, and at that time, our son was just graduating and also just graduated from high school and in the fall was going to go back to Wesleyan University or I guess it was called a college. And my husband and I were planning to go back with him. So, I told the -- can't remember his title -- he was head of the office in Seattle from Washington State Employment Service. He was really a wonderful person. And explained the situation. He said, "Well, we definitely want you, and so when you come back from your trip, just call him, he'll get you in." So, that's how I got started in Washington State Employment Service. And the Youth Opportunity Centers didn't last that long.

RB: What years (inaudible)?

AS: OK, that would have been, I think, '63. Wait, I just -- let's see, so our son graduated, have to stop and think when he graduated. He graduated, I'm pretty sure, in 1966. Oh, well, then it would have been probably 1966. No, I'm wrong about that. I think he graduated about there. '65, '66, I don't know if I have the dates there. Somewhere around there.

RB: He was born in '46, so '64, maybe '65?

AS: I think so. Probably '64. Yes, '64 sounds right.

RB: What was it like at the time, especially the climate in the country --

AS: Well, this was when, I guess, it was President Johnson was our president. And so, to me, I felt a lot of excitement that the Federal Government was getting involved in trying to help those who have been oppressed and didn't have the opportunities to get on with their lives, and so I was really quite excited about that. So, I felt very good about it. And those of us involved were pretty idealistic and the same thing. So it was a good group to be with, and it was quite good.



RB: Now your husband had shown you the article.

AS: Yes, he did show some (inaudible) support.

RB: But the word that you used before, "enlightenment."

AS: Yes, that's right, that's right.

RB: Is this when it started to--

AS: I guess so, I think so, yes. There was a change. And so, that's when I got started there, and I worked there for nine years. Youth Opportunity Center only lasted a few years, and then we were, those who were to remain in counseling positions were to get a master's in counseling. And the Federal Government paid for it, paid for everything and my salary.

RB: Is that right? So you were --

AS: It was just amazing.

RB: Back to the University of Washington to get your master's?

AS: Right, yes. And at this time, our daughter had already graduated from high school. That was '66, I think. And so she was going off to the University of Denver, and so I thought, well I really have the time to really work. And so, I carried heavy loads, which I didn't realize you don't do as a graduate student. But I did it, and I got through in one year. They did take some of the work that I did in that summer program, they did take some credits for that, and I can't remember. But anyway so, I was able to do it in one year.

RB: So, you completed a master's degree in one year while you were working?

AS: No, I didn't have to work.



RB: So, they allowed you time to --

AS: Yes, I didn't have to work that year, and they not only paid tuition, books, but they also paid me my salary. I mean --

RB: To go to school?

AS: Yes, which is unbelievable. So, I got that, and when I came back, then there was no Youth Opportunity Center, and I was made a supervisor of a counseling group, and at this time, I worked both in Seattle and in Everett. I worked two days a week in Everett and three in Seattle, something like that. And I really loved it and (inaudible) great people that I supervised. Worked with, I should say. And so, it was just really a wonderful experience. And then that program went by change. And they made me supervisor of -- the group that was in charge of the training programs that the employment security was to handle for the Federal Government. I think it was Manpower Training Act. Something like that. And so, that was a very different experience because one of the men that I had to supervise had been with the agency for years and years and years, and nobody told him anything. But it was really -- he was doing a good job, so it was just mainly to be aware of what he was doing and let him know when there was anything that had to be changed. And also supervise some other people. So it was a good experience.

RB: What were the rewards and challenges of working in these different positions?

AS: One, I guess, because I was working in programs that were to benefit people who had been kept out of the mainstream. So, I felt very good about that. I felt good because there were still a lot of the people, even though the youth opportunities stopped, they changed programs is what they did. So then, they were working with -- I think still the emphasis was more on adults and young adults but again, people from disadvantaged programs who had criminal records or minority background, poverty, or high school



dropouts, whatever. And so, it was a chance to also it was a challenge, a chance to learn about what we can do and what's out there and what it is like working with these people. And so, I just felt good about the experience.

It was a good experience, and then, because I did get my master's degree through the state agency, I had to put in two years, I'm really glad I did it in one year because then I had to put in two years of work before I could consider leaving because what I really wanted to do, by this time, I wanted to be a counselor in a community college. I thought that would be great because they would be working with a lot of the same kind of populations. And, in fact, I did my internship at Seattle Central Community College. But my husband, at this point, was also on the Board of Seattle Community College district. And so they said, "Sorry, we'd love to have you, but your husband's on the Board, and we can't do it." So, I didn't get that one. And I did look at some other community colleges, but nothing came. I didn't pursue it that much but anyway --

RB: So, at that time, if a spouse was serving on the Board, they wouldn't allow --

AS: Well, that's what they told me.

RB: Isn't that something?

AS: And I know I got it from different sources, so I'm sure that was true. And so, then they made me -- well, a couple of times, I really had some strange experiences. Well, I thought they were strange experiences. I still had my master's. I was to be a manager of what they called the Casual Labor Office. And that's where it was. At that time, we called it Skid Row, not Pioneer Square Area. They were just beginning to start this movement towards upgrading and making it fancier, but it was still really very run down. And that's where the office was located, it was located at the corner of Western and Yesler Way. And they needed a manager of that office because they felt the office had been not a part of the whole system. They were really to themselves too much. And



they needed to know what we're doing, and they wanted to upgrade that office, and they wanted me to find the building and so forth. And when I first heard that that's what they wanted me to do, I just couldn't believe it. But I didn't know whether to cry or laugh.

RB: Why is that?

AS: Well, the two men that ran the office had reputations of being very tough and very independent, and it was an all men's, they really served men there. No women.

RB: So the clientele --

AS: Yes, they were mainly people who were looking for day labor. So, the Longshore Union would call the office when they needed extra longshoremen. They no longer had their union people. And they needed and so they'd call our office. Farm labor, day labor. And any other kind of day labor. So, the waiting area was filled with men looking for these different jobs, and some were -- I could tell -- were on drugs.

RB: Were you the only woman in the office there?

AS: Yes, when I came there, I was the only woman. And after I saw what the situation was like, or maybe it was before, I think it was before I went there, but they already told me that's what's going to be my next assignment, I said, "Well, I really don't want to be manager of that office, but I'm willing to be the acting manager and I'll carry out the things that you want me to do, but I don't want to stay there, and as soon as I do what you want me to do, then I would like to be transferred someplace else." So, OK. So, I spent a lot of time looking for vacant buildings because they wanted me to do that. Nothing ever came of it, but I did that. And then, of course, I had to go in gently and let them know what the main office wanted and ask them to let me know what they mainly do there and how they do it so I can become familiar, and I said, "I'm here as an acting manager because as soon as Employment Security goals are met, then I'm leaving." Well, that worked out fine.



RB: How were you received by your co-workers?

AS: Oh, the workers?

RB: Or (inaudible)

AS: The PPO?

RB: Your colleagues, your co-workers.

AS: Oh, the co-workers, in the office, these two men, one was very nice. He was gentle, and he was really just a real gentleman. So, he sort of looked out for me. The other was kind of gruff. But then they would both, the other one came around too. They were very, very nice. And so, they explained what they do and how they do it, and one of the other goals was they wanted to also serve women that were looking for day jobs. Although I didn't know how they thought that was going to be done, but, of course, I knew that women were not to be turned down from any job that they could do, and I had really become involved and trained, I get men accepted for office jobs and would get stories like all the other people in the office would never accept that. So, it was a hard one to crack.

“We wouldn't want a woman doing that because it's very heavy work” even though I'd say they can do it, that's what they want to do. So, it was difficult, but I was going to keep trying, and so I remembered the first time I got a call at that casual labor office, they needed longshoremen. I said, “Well, I'll see what we can find, and if we have any women that want to do this, and have the strength to do it, I'll send them too.” This guy had a fit at the other end, and he came down to the office very quickly, within a matter of minutes, to talk to me and to see if he could believe it. And so, that was an interesting experience. However, actually, I don't even know if I had any women come in to ask for that kind of work.



RB: How did you respond to him when he came in?

AS: Oh, I talked to him. I said, "Well, you know, if there is somebody that is able to do the work, you can't discriminate. That's the law now." And I think he sort of shook his head and left.

RB: What qualities, I mean, I think that what I'm hearing is that time and time again, you've really confronted issues in very productive ways, and I'm wondering what qualities you use within yourself when you handle those situations.

AS: Well, I guess again, it's always that feeling of this is an injustice. And I grew up really being angry because I could see the difference, my older brother would get jobs that paid more than I got. Although I did get one job, when I got my job at the Bon Marche as a senior in high school, I was getting paid more than he was at Frederick and Nelsons and I felt very good about that. But I can even remember this older brother saying to me, "Oh, you should do that because that's really nice for girls to do." And being just outraged at -- excuse me while I take some water--

RB: So, it sounds like you observed women being treated differently in work positions as well. What about with education, or was it mostly in the workforce?

AS: I guess with education, I knew that women could go to the University and could get a good education if they wanted to. So, I felt it was up to the woman. That they were not being kept out. But I know that in many cases, parents didn't encourage it. And as I said, with me, somehow I observed that my parents expected me to go to college, but I don't know how or why, and I'm not sure. But that's the feeling I had, and that's enough. So, it was really in jobs and the fact that women could become nurses, teachers, there were pretty limited jobs that women could do, and yet men could do all these other kinds of things and get paid more, and I remember my older brother -- sorry about the, we do have the train that goes by -- and so he got jobs on ships. Some were cruise ships,



some were freighters. And so, he had many trips to Alaska. He'd do the spring and summer when he was going to the University, and then he also had a trip to China. And I think, "That's just not fair. Why can't I do that too? There's no reason why I can't do that." And so, there was always this resentment of people trying to say what women should do, what's nice for women, that women are not supposed to do this, that, or the other thing. So, I did resent it very much.

RB: Did you have a support network with other women?

AS: No, I really didn't. As far as I know, I always felt like I was different from everybody.

RB: Is that right? What do you mean?

AS: Well, that I suppose mainly because I didn't talk to -- because I kept things to myself. I guess because of the fact that I felt things so strongly about the injustices that I saw around me and didn't hear other people complain about that. I overheard, even when I was at the University, that short time some young women students behind me were saying, "Oh, you can only go to the University to get our husbands." They were talking to themselves, and I thought, oh, you know, that's so stupid. (laughter) And so, that's what was pushed, you get married, and then you stay home. And so, I just didn't accept these things. And I guess because there was this strong sense of just because things are done, that doesn't mean you have to continue doing it, and it doesn't mean you don't try to change things. And so, I just have always felt a little different.

RB: It's so fascinating to hear you talk about this, but I'm wondering if there were any other values that you were exposed to growing up, Jewish values or other values, that supplemented this belief or these beliefs in you.

AS: Well, it must have been something. I guess another example, I resented the fact that teachers could not be married when I was in school. But then they would say, you know, it's the Depression, and so we have to give the jobs to the men. You know, there



were women heads of households, and so that I felt was so wrong. So I don't know, I just saw things, and I guess I could see differences when my older brother, things he could do, what I couldn't do because I was a girl, and so I guess it's just feeling that sense of injustice. This is not right. And I remember thinking, well, I know that, though this was later, when I went back to the University as an older student, sitting next to a couple of young Jewish students, males, and thinking -- it was a large sociology class and I always got the best grades. And this -- I said something about, I don't know.

Anyway, but what I thought was these guys are going to get good jobs. In fact, one of them did become an attorney. I don't remember the other one, what happened, what he did. And they're going to make a lot of money. I'll be lucky to just get a job, and it will just pay an ordinary, it won't be a lot of money. And that was another area, the differences that women -- at that time, women weren't lawyers, and there might have been some, but I didn't know of any. And they really weren't doctors, although again, there probably were a couple. But in the professions, they were not really there. And you were discouraged. And I also had thought of medicine, that's another field I'm very much interested in. But they said you couldn't apply if you were over a certain age, and, for a woman, it would be very hard. I'm sure it was not the field for me because you really do need a lot of energy for that, and we have a grandson who just became a doctor, so I'm sure I couldn't have --

RB: Well, it's very hard to imagine you without energy. All that you've done, raising a family, it's very hard to imagine you low energy.

AS: But I've always needed my sleep.

RB: You must have been a good sleeper?

AS: I don't know. I do remember I was always tired.

RB: So by the end of the day --



AS: Oh yes, I was tired.

RB: I bet.

AS: But anyway, so I guess I really don't know where these values, because they were not generally held by the public. I guess that's why I felt like an oddball. [phone ringing]

RB: Were there any Jewish values that you remember hearing growing up in your home that --

AS: Well I know the importance of Tzedakah. I'm not saying it right.

RB: Tzedakah.

AS: Tzedakah, thank you. That was something I really was very strong and even I know that when we -- and having married young, and even though we had very little money, that time I used to get soup bones, they didn't charge for them in the supermarket. And I would make these wonderful soups that I sort of remember that my mother made and my grandmother. Very nutritious, I found out later. But they were good. And meat was a rarity because we just didn't have the money. So I'm sorry I got sidetracked.

RB: You were talking about Tzedakah.

AS: Yes, so even though we didn't have much money, I always managed, we always managed to give something. So that was the strongest value that you always helped out your fellow Jew. And Zionism became very important. Of course that came later but because of what was happening in Europe and that the Jews didn't have a home and so I felt very, very strongly about that as a young person. In fact I would have loved to have gone to Palestine. So I guess it's more so hard, the sense of social justice, which is really part of the religion. It just became a part of me.

RB: It's really a part of who you are, it seems like.



AS: Yes.

RB: Isn't that something? You know our tape is almost over for the second tape, so why don't we stop here so I don't have to interrupt you later.

AS: OK.

[END OF CD 2]

RB: This is Roz Bornstein. The date is July 19th, 2001. And, this is Tape Three of Alice Siegal's Oral History Interview for the Jewish Women's Archive "Weaving Women's Word's" Project. Alice and I are meeting at Alice's home in Seattle, Washington. And, Alice, do I have your permission to continue taping the interviewing you?

AS: Yes, you do.

RB: Thank you. We had left off -- in our last session, talking about some of your work experiences. And, I wondered if you could describe your experience as a Counselor of your School District? And why did you work there?

AS: Well, after I received my Master's Degree in Counseling Education, at the University of Washington -- and this was - I was able to do that when I was working at the State Employment Office. And, it actually was a counseling position, working with people from disadvantaged backgrounds. And so, that was a wonderful opportunity. And, after putting in the two years -- I was with the State for having sent me -- allowed me to get my Master's Degree at their expense -- I really felt that I would like to get back into the educational system. And, fortunately, there was an opening at Bellevue High School. And, I applied for that. And I was able to get that position. So, actually I was there only a year or so. I'm trying to remember now. At that point, the school enrollment was changing. It was dropping. And so, then I was assigned to Sammamish High School, half the time at Sammamish High School and, half the time at Newport High School.



And that was nice generally. (laughter) But, I really did love working with the students.
And --

RB: In what way?

AS: Well, it was an opportunity to help them through various problems. I mean, I saw students who had problems at home. Problems at school. Sometimes problems with individuals. I really was amazed at some of the situations in which these young students were living. It was really, very, very difficult for some of them. But I must add, that most of the students did come from very supportive families who received a lot of encouragement. And so with those students, it was mainly helping them plan what they wanted to do after graduation. And, help them decide where they wanted to - and, for most of them -- they did want to go to college. And I helped them with their choices. And let them know about financial opportunities, and scholarships. And then, be involved in writing letters of recommendations, and helping them get whatever it was that they needed for their applications. So that, of course, was fun. But you know, there were some students who -- well, I'll never forget one student. I might have met him at Newport High School. But then, some of the students also went part-time to the Off-Campus School - which was the alternative high school in Bellevue. And, this one particular student was trying so hard to, you know, complete his requirements for graduation. He was working full-time. He had been actually kicked out of his home. I don't know what the background was - and he didn't want to talk about it. But, all he wanted to do was to graduate and then go on with his life. And, so, it was amazing.

And so he was working full-time in a restaurant, in the evening hours. Carrying the subjects that he needed -- between Newport and off-campus school -- that he needed to complete graduation - you can't help but admire somebody with that much motivation - - which was really great. And I met several students who had very unusual situations. I remember that there was one student at Newport who - had cerebral palsy. And, he was



amazing, the way that he got around, and the way he was handling himself. But, he had a lot of issues -- it certainly wasn't easy for him. And so, it was really interesting to get to know this young man, and his family and, to be able to help him through high school.

And then also, there were several students at all three high schools, that I worked at, who were gay, lesbian. And, of course, they would share what was going on in their lives, and how to cope with that. So that -- I just kept learning more and more about the way that students -- their backgrounds -- and what they were coping with. And then, there were students who were -- either had been in drug programs or did have -- still had some problems, and working with those students. And, frequently -- I mean if the young people agreed, I also would work with the family -- most often they didn't want that.

(laughter) But it was -- I just found it very challenging, and very interesting. And, to enable young people to get on with their lives and, to have hope, and find that they can do what they want to -- was really very gratifying. So, I really enjoyed -- and getting to know the teachers, working with teachers to let them know why this student was having problems. And if they could make maybe some adjustments. And so, it really -- it was very interesting.

RB: You had mentioned earlier that -- through your work experiences -- that it was a source of personal growth to you?

AS: Yes.

RB: And I wonder, for this type of work that you're describing now --

AS: Mmm hmm.

RB: How so -- how is it a period of growth for you at this time?

AS: Well, I think it -- because it really opened up my world. Because you know, we grew up in a certain kind of sheltered situation. And, it was really opening my world to learn about the different circumstances that go on, and what can -- and also, to see



where schools could be more supportive. And so, it really was great. Of course, that was true in the school system. It was true with every position that I held. And, you know, one student stands out. We had the Youth Opportunity Program through the State Employment Service. This was in the days of The War on Poverty. And so, there was one young man -- in those days, we called them Retarded, those whose intellectual abilities were lower than the average person. And so, he went to, at that time, it was the Pacific School. And, he graduated from there. But, his reading level was very low. But, he had worked - he had worked at jobs. He was a tall, strong young man. And, he was in his late teens, actually. And, he was very responsible. And he did come from a very supportive home. So, in those -- let's see - that would have been in the mid-'60's. And he -- there weren't that many job opportunities -- especially for someone like him without getting into a sheltered workshop. And, he had actually done some heavy work, and felt that there was no reason why he couldn't get that type of work.

Well, I kept trying to find something that would suit him, and where he would be accepted. And, it was very, very difficult. We also had classes to help, that were part of this program, to help young people improve their basic skills. And, help them -- enable them to get a job. So, I told him what we had. And he says, "Well, I just can't do it." He says, "You know, I've worked really hard during school." -- and I did check -- I would always check out, you know, what the school had to say. And, it turned out that he was functioning at about a 3rd-grade level. And, it might have been a little higher. But I may be mixing him up with one other young person, OK? And, he was - he said, "You know, I can work. I'm strong. I can work." And so, I kept trying. He actually found a job, and where he was accepted, and he could do this hard work that he was capable of doing, and likes to do. And so, that was really -- well, I felt that I learned a lot from this young man -- who knew what his limitations were. He knew what his strengths were. And, he knew what he needed to find. Wow, you know? He really did great.

RB: What was the lesson there for you that has stayed with you?



AS: Well, I think that we tend to under-estimate people sometimes, by labels or stereotyping. And you know, it is really important to get to know the individual well, and find out what those strengths are and really see a really beautiful person there. And, I think that was a lesson. And I really found that's so true with many, many people from all walks of life, and various situations that I've been involved in. It's -- I just think that people are the greatest things there are. (laughter) So, that's why it has been so gratifying. And it helped me grow in understanding and see where things could be improved in our society. (laughter) I suppose this idea of social justice tied in with my Jewish background, and my Judaism. And, that's been very important to me.

RB: Now, at some point in time, you started to work at the Jewish Family Service.

AS: Right.

RB: Here in Seattle. Could you describe a little bit about that experience? When you started? And why you started to work there? And -- you know, your experience in general.

AS: OK. Sure. Well, after I retired in, I guess it was the end of July in 1988, at that particular time, our daughter was expecting her first child. And, she was living in Montreal. So, I was very excited about going - and being with her. So, I stayed a month in Montreal with Marilyn and her husband. And Rebecca finally came. Well, of course, it was hard to leave. But then, I did come back. And, I did some volunteer work. I did volunteer work at the Alternative High School in Bellevue. One of the programs was a teenage parent program. And, this was developed for the girls who were expecting babies. And, some would have their babies adopted. But the majority of them kept their babies. So, there were parenting classes. And then, they had the opportunity to complete the requirements that they needed for graduation from high school. So, it was a very interesting program, and I got to know many of these young girls, and what they were going through. And, that was also a very gratifying kind of



opportunity.

And then, my mother was not well. And, so, I wanted to have a certain amount of time for her. Let's see -- at that point -- let's see - yes, she was now at Kline Galland Home. I would spend two days a week with her. And then, of course, call her every morning. And if she needed anything. So, kept in close touch. And, spent more time when necessary. And, but -- so I found that I would really like to do something professionally. And, also, I did not like driving to Bellevue, because the traffic kept getting worse and worse. And I thought it would be nice if I could find something in Seattle. I happened to see an ad in the *Jewish Transcript* for a part-time social worker for the Senior Services Program for the Jewish Family Service. And I thought well, I don't have a MSW. But I do have a Masters in Counseling. And I think that I've become quite knowledgeable about what's out there for seniors just because of helping my mother, and so I applied for the job.

And by this time, I think - yes, it was Spring of 1989. And, well, I was hired. And, I attended all sorts of classes and went to all kinds of seminars and conferences on learning about working with a geriatric population of which I was really a part. And, I found it just fascinating. And, my supervisor, Sarah Barish, was really very supportive, and very helpful. And, I had these wonderful part-time hours that were just ideal. It allowed me the time I wanted to spend with my mother. And, also time to now get involved in the Social Action Committee at Temple De Hirsh Sinai which, when I was working full-time that, I just couldn't do. I was always exhausted. (laughter) And, also the Adult Education -- my two favorite. Because one of the things that I wanted to learn was more about Judaism. I didn't have that great a -- in fact, I had a very limited Jewish education. And so, I kept thinking, well, I'm Jewish and I better really learn what it's all about. Get some -- take some good courses, and do some reading. And which I was able to do that too. So it was, I think, a pretty balanced (laughter) life. And, I really did enjoy working with seniors -- oh, I guess I enjoyed working with any age group, although I



never worked with babies. But, I always felt that that might be something I'd like to do, but I wasn't sure what. And, but, I certainly enjoyed working with seniors, and developing the skills to do - I think, a good job.

RB: What have been the rewards and challenges at Jewish Family Service for you -- through that position?

AS: Well, first of all, hiring me. And, this is a paid position. It didn't pay that much. But (laughter) sorry. Well, they had a special grant for this position, and it wasn't very much. But, the real thing was that I wanted to do something professionally, and that was the main reason for wanting to work. And the fact that Sarah was so supportive, and encouraged the different classes, and conferences. And, actually, the Jewish Family Service did set aside a certain amount of money each year for taking classes. So, that was really good. And, I really loved the people that I worked with. They were so wonderful. And, the other thing I loved is when we had Jewish Holidays, I didn't have to make arrangements to take time off, or to get a substitute. And, always the explanation why. (laughter) And here, you know, the Agency was closed for all the Jewish Holidays, and it was wonderful. I loved it.

And, also they had wonderful programs. Every time there was a major Jewish Holiday, we had Rabbis, or very knowledgeable people come in and talk about it. It was open to the whole staff. So the non-Jewish staff would come. And it was great. So that was, just a wonderful opportunity. And, there was flexibility in the hours, which was great for me. And, in learning and working with the people who were aging, and learning about them, and all the resources. I mean, there was certainly a lot more than I came in knowing. I thought I knew a lot. And, just being able to see that I could make a difference in their lives. Getting whatever resources they needed. Consulting with families. It was very gratifying. So, I still enjoy it.



Well, I retired at the end of June. They gave me a lovely retirement party and a gorgeous Menorah. And, there was one particular case that I was working with. It was very, very challenging. And I had been with this case for probably close to three years. And, there were a lot of things happening. It was just a lot of issues. The Jewish Family Services, allowed me to stay on to handle this one case. And, it involves two people. And, so I think that's very nice. (laughter) And this -- this one has been a real challenge. And, I like challenges. (laughter) Because it certainly, I've got to really think about things and work things out. And so far, things are going very well right now. But there are a few more hurdles that we have to go through. So, it continues. But I think that things will slow down there. And, but, yes, it's been great. So, again it's that learning. It's being involved with -- and even, we Jews, come from all different backgrounds, and so it's been really very, very interesting.

RB: It's remarkable that they are really wanting to keep you on, even though you've retired ---

AS: (laughter)

RB: A second time -- is that right? (laughter)

AS: Well, that's true -- this would be the second time, yes. (laughter)

RB: And, how does it feel to, you know, to continue on? You mentioned that you love your work.

AS: Yes. As long as -- you know, it still allows me more time than I had when I was working part-time, you know? Even though that was a part-time job. Right now, it's been very time-consuming. And, I'd say that this one has been as much time as when I was doing part-time. But, that will taper off. And, I do like it. Yes. Because I get to go in and see my co-workers. (laughter) You know, retired, but still working. And yes, I actually think that I'll really miss it when I have to say, well, I guess -- I can go on about



retirement. (laughter) I'll find something. I'm sure. Really, my plan was that after I retired, is that I would assess my life, and what I wanted to do, and what was important. And, you know (laughter) do those things. So, we'll see.

RB: Yes.

AS: How things go. But, it's been great.

RB: That's terrific. You mentioned that while you were working part-time, that you had the flexibility to take care of your mom?

AS: Yes.

RB: And you began some volunteer work at the Temple.

AS: Yes, yes.

RB: And, so I'm wondering if you could describe a little bit how you became involved in Temple. How you, in your early life, you were raised, I believe, an Orthodox?

AS: Right. That's true. Yes.

RB: How did that transition come about for you?

AS: Well, it mainly came about because my husband is from New Mexico. And he came from a very small town. I guess (laughter) at that time, they were all small towns then. And, I think, at the time he was born, there were a few other Jewish families living in Las Vegas, this was New Mexico. So, he really didn't have much really, no Jewish education. And, but once we had children -- and, he did not like going to the Orthodox Synagogue.

RB: Excuse me, which Synagogue did you belong to?



AS: Well, actually, what I recall -- the first Synagogue I remember was Herzl when it was on 19th or 20th Avenue? I mean, I can't remember now. And, then, my parents and my grandparents -- my grandparents were my mother's parents. I think, at that time, I can't remember if my father's mother had come to Seattle or not. But, she was pretty frail, and so, she did her praying in her apartment. But, so the family then went to the Bikur Cholim. So that was the Bikur Cholim. At that time, it was called the Bikur Cholim.

But then they absorbed another Congregation that was on 26th and Spruce? Anyway, it was very close to where we were I grew up -- at the age of about 11 until I got married.

And, anyway, so there was the Bikur Cholim which was on 17th Avenue and Yesler Way. Now Langston Hughes Cultural Center. And, however, I didn't have much Jewish education at that time. I went to the Bikur Cholim. I guess at a Sunday School -- and I know I went there, and I liked it, I loved the bible stories. (laughter) And, I had very little Hebrew. I must have had some Hebrew. And then, one Summer, I did go to the Talmud Torah, it was a daily program. And, my Hebrew for an 8-year-old was quite good, to the point where I could read and write. And then, well, anyway -- then, actually, as an older teenager, I began to draw away from religion and began to question various practices.

But, certainly, I always went to the High Holy Days. That was very important. Well, my husband just didn't like the services. And, so when we had children, and it was time to have them go to Religion School, we joined Temple De Hirsch. At that time, it was just Temple De Hirsch. And I must admit, at the beginning, it just turned me off.

RB: How so?

AS: Well --

RB: What were the differences that struck you?

AS: The fact that there was an organ, because, of course, it was just an all-male choir at the Orthodox. Which I loved I just thought it was beautiful. And, we had a Hazzan, and here we had organ music. And here I thought, this was like a church service.



(laughter) And also, at the Bikur Cholim, it was a lot of bustling around. The men would come in at different times. The women would come in, and we sat upstairs. Come in at different times. And the little children were running around (laughter) And I just thought that was great. And my husband thought that was terrible. And so I said, "Ok. Better to be in some Jewish congregation than none."

Well, we didn't go every Friday night, by any means. And, it was -- it was just sort of in the background. It wasn't the big thing in my life. (laughter) Well, after several years, actually, after our children grew up and went off to college, well, Art became very active on the board, and on committees. And then he -- he said he wanted to go to Temple every Friday night. So, we started going every Friday night. And, at first, I kind of resented it. But, I thought, well, you know, I can do it. Well, after a while, you know, it becomes a habit. And then, you know, you develop many friends there, and people you get to know. And, so you know, I can't imagine not doing it anymore. (laughter) I mean, so, it grew on me. And, I'm really quite excited. We now have two Rabbis. And we are doing things differently. And, of course, there's more tradition that has come in with the younger Rabbis. Which I like very much, and I think that they've blended the two traditions, and some new ones, very nicely. And to me, it is very exciting.

RB: What traditions are coming back? That you're noticing and appreciate?

AS: Let's see the Rabbis wear a yarmulke. And, a prayer shawl. And, I'm thinking -- our new Rabbi does not wear one of those robes that the Reform Rabbi wore. And, I think that's nice. (laughter)

RB: What about the role of women?

AS: Well, yes, yes. I realize now I would have been really bothered by the separation of the males/females in the Synagogue in the Orthodox. And, the fact that there is a lesser role for women -- many Orthodox women are becoming very well educated. And they're



doing very exciting things. And so, I certainly admire that. But that is a more recent development. So, but then there's the fact that my Hebrew, I sort of lost it along the way. I couldn't keep up with it during services. And then, I just sort of gave up on it. So, and then there were some -- and I thought I would try to get it back myself -- teaching myself. But there were always other things that had a higher priority. And I felt that it was more important to read good texts of the Jewish scholars, and learn from that than to spend the time trying to learn Hebrew, which well, I can remember that my sister-in-law went to the University in Washington to learn Hebrew. And she went, and she and a good friend of ours went for two years. For my sister-in-law, it was really difficult. Now, she had a son who had moved to Israel. And, in fact, got his Law Degree there. And then he got married, and they have children. So, it was really important for her to learn Hebrew. And, after two years, she said, "I still can't speak Hebrew." So I felt, let's learn about the beauty of our religion. And to me, that was more important. And I didn't have that much time. So to do those things. And so it was at this point it was after I retired, that I became involved with the Social Action Committee, which was always very important to me.

RB: Excuse me.

AS: Yes.

RB: So this was after retirement through the --

AS: From the Bellevue School District -- right.

RB: Late '80s, early --

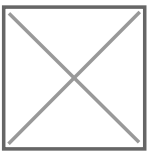
AS: Yes, yes. And, also, and it's -- and then, I added Adult Education to it -- well, that was a strong interest. And so, those are two committees that I have stayed on all the time. Other than that, I haven't been active like my husband, who is on many committees. But we are supportive of the different programs. And I have a good feeling



about (laughter) reformed Judaism now. And there really have been changes. And I do appreciate the fact that it is a growing religion. It didn't stop with whatever the beginnings were in this country. I learned that in Germany Reform Judaism wasn't really that different. And, that in this country, they felt that they wanted to be truly accepted. So I think that in some places there were services on Sunday, instead of Saturday. And they would eat things that being brought up kosher, were traif. But that's changed. I think that many of the young Rabbis today are more often vegetarians, or keep kosher. And, I think that's great. So, I, you know, I have a great deal of respect for that. So actually, that was the extent of my volunteer work. But, I did, of course in 1989, I started working part-time. And, after my mother died in 1993, I continued to visit Kline Galland on a weekly basis, as a volunteer. And then, I did have clients there. And, of course, I went to visit them and other people. And, I have a very good feeling about Kline Galland. And I enjoy going there. And so, I still go there. Right now, I have a friend there. And I think right now, I don't have any clients there no, I don't. They were turned over to others. But, I have some relatives there. I have, anyway, I just like going there. People I know. And, to visit. And, it's just, it is a good feeling.

RB: That's wonderful. So, let's see. What caused you to become more involved at Temple De Hirsch at that point in your life? What were some of your real factors that motivated you?

AS: Well, the first of course the Social Action, and Adult Education were the two committees that I felt by being involved we had some say over what we do. At least have a voice. And so, that was important to kind of direct me, or have a feeling that I'm having input in what we do. And, of course, that doesn't mean that I was always accepted for what I wanted. But there was a lot, especially in Adult Education. That was in the earlier years when I got involved. I got really involved in that. Yes.



RB: I was just wondering, were there any specific social causes that really made you feel passionate and drove you?

AS: Well, I know that growing up in this city, I'm sure it was the Civil Rights. Even as a child, I was aware that there was this horrible discrimination and also with religions. And so, I felt that it was important to be involved in those issues, again those that relate to improving situations. And, we've had actually, well, actually some things have split off from the Committees. We met with the Catholic Group where we dialogued. And, we had a Rabbi involved part of the time, as well as the Catholic priest. One of the priests from the Catholic Church was involved. And that was interesting doing that sort of thing. And then, there's a group that was formed. It wasn't actually formed by Temple members but, many Temple members became involved. It's called the African American Jewish Coalition for Justice. And, it started several years ago. And, New Hope Baptist Church, we did a lot of things together with their congregation. And then, their church had a horrible fire that destroyed the church. And Temple was wonderful about opening up Temple for their services. So that I felt was really good. And I liked -- in fact, I was going to do more of that sort of thing. And, we've done some inter-faith types of things. Well, I guess the Catholic-Jewish dialogue was inter-faith, of course as well as things that we had been doing with the African American Jewish Coalition for Justice. And, that's been, so, anyway, certainly those sorts of activities. Homeless lacking sufficient shelter. And, again, kind of a sub-committee has kind of split off and I'm working on those issues. We've had some community seminars open to the public. I mean, we had many programs -- but they weren't. Oh, those were the Adult Education. For Social Action, I think, that we developed programs. And, the first one we did was Assisted Suicide. Getting the ethics of that, and viewpoints. And that was very interesting, and well-attended. And then we had a program on Gun Control. And we get, you know, we always get both sides with the range of whatever the opinions are. And, that was good. Let's see, there was another one, I'm trying to remember. We talked about doing something on the Death Penalty but, I'm sure we haven't done



that yet. But, you know, those sorts of issues.

RB: You know, what's so striking to me, Alice, is that as you're describing this is that I'm thinking back to the early part of our interview where, as a younger child and a young adult many of your feelings about social injustice were private. And, I remember you describing that --

AS: That's right. That's right.

RB: And a lot of time more than others --

AS: Yes.

RB: And how it has progressed to a point where you're actually helping to organize open discussions.

AS: Right.

RB: And, how do you think that transformation really has come about?

AS: Well, yes, I guess what has happened (laughter) I've become more self-confident about my feelings, and meeting people who shared them you know, many of the same beliefs. And so, that's given me courage. And now, I guess that I now realize that it is very important to be vocal about these sorts of issues. So yes, well, thank you for reminding me you know, look back, hey there's been a change here. Yes, that's true. (laughter)

RB: Well, it seems like from your descriptions that you've always been so instrumental and positive when you have confronted people --

AS: Yes.

RB: That facilitated the open discussions.



AS: Yes, that's new. Well, I guess for the last, maybe fifteen years. Something like that. (laughter)

RB: And with Adult Education?

AS: Yes.

RB: What spurred your interest in that, at this time of your life?

AS: Well, I think it was I just had a really strong feeling that I had to learn more about Judaism. And I know the way that I was brought up. I know as a woman that you just didn't get a good Jewish foundation. I mean, it was the High Holy Days and the stories that we remember.

RB: Were boys and girls taught differently, did you find? Or --

AS: Well, when I grew up, the boys went to cheder, The girls, I guess, to religion school. Now that you mentioned that -- I have met a couple of women who are in my age group, or even older, who did get a good Jewish education and from an Orthodox background. And, but their mothers really encouraged it, and supported that. So, they had the support from family. But, really, there were very few.

So, for me, my feeling was that there was this ignorance. And, I just didn't feel good about that. I felt, well, as much as I know, I could be a Unitarian or any other liberal kind of faith. But, I really did feel, "I'm Jewish, and I know I'm Jewish. And I know a lot of good things about Judaism. And I want to know more." And so, that's the thing that really spurred me on. And so, I thought, well, I can encourage some classes, you know, that would do that? And, they're doing really some great things at Temple. Rabbi Meisels has been one of the most wonderful teachers. He's retired from Temple. But, he loves teaching, and he does a wonderful job. And so, I really have enjoyed his classes. They really do get into depth. And learning, you know, about the myths, as



well as -- but, out of them, what is the point to that story or, challenging our thinking.

And so, he has been a wonderful teacher. And there have been others that have been very good. And Rabbi Sperling also did wonderful classes on Saturday morning before the Services. And that was great. And, then, I've always looked forward to the Stroum Lectures at the University at Washington because we had these really great scholars that would come out and do three lectures. And they were just fascinating. So, that I had a chance to learn about my religion it was extremely important. And, I still will continue with that.

RB: It sounds like your love of learning has really continued --

AS: Oh yes.

RB: Over the course of your lifetime?

AS: Yes, yes.

RB: Do you know what roots of your Jewish identity have carried over time? So that now that you are 77 years old, you've really wanted to learn more about your religion. What are those roots?

AS: Yes. Well, I think it's Tzedakah. This time I think I said it right. (laughter) It was the thing that impressed me the most. As I mentioned, I think, in the last interview, that my grandmother, my mother's mother, was my role model. Or, one of my role models. And, I appreciated the fact that, you know, she kept a kosher home. Went to the Synagogue every Saturday morning. She baked her challahs, you know, like Fridays and, you know, did all the things. And, we lived above them from the time I -- I don't know how old I was. I was a baby. That's right. I was a baby. And, my grandpa had built this duplex that we were living in. There was an upstairs and a downstairs.



And so, when I became a little older, but still pre-school age, I went downstairs, when grandpa would come back from the Synagogue. And, we would sing a traditional hymn the kiddush and I thought that was nice. So, I think that was my first drinking of wine. (laughter) It was very sweet. So, he just gave me a little. And that was very nice. And, I was aware of my grandmother. She was really very aware of what was going on. And, they would help people. And they didn't have much money. I mean, they were working hard. So, you know, that just made quite an impression. And, my parents also, were very good about giving and sharing what they had. And, so that was one of the elements of Judaism.

And, then, oh, I suppose as I got older, I guess in my earliest ages, I guess, I really did feel very positive about Judaism. And, well, I guess another role model was an aunt who was married to my father's older brother. And, his older brother was a *shochet* -- they were, of course, very, very religious. My mother would often take us to visit in the afternoon, on Shabbat afternoon. And, my aunt always had this wonderful house. She did wonderful baking. And was so gracious. And, it was just really nice to go there. So, you know, here's another very Orthodox woman. And also with it -- although I will say this about Orthodox women, I never saw them as subservient. They were (laughter) very much an equal. I never saw a Jewish man put down a Jewish woman. And, I'm sure that there were some. But, might have -- and, probably did. But, overall, it was a very positive relationship. And, a respect for each other.

RB: So, let's see if I have this right. They found within their roles that --

AS: Yes.

RB: That other division of labor that they respected --

AS: Yes, I think so. And, then, again -- knowing that what Jews had experienced prejudice, and you know, really difficult times -- and, of course, as I got older, then there



was -- what was going on in Germany. And you know, stories were coming out. And, so, you know this, they certainly developed the belief, and I still believe it passionately that wars are wrong. It's got to be the last resort. Only, in, I think, to defend yourself. I don't know.

RB: How did the World War II and Holocaust affect you?

AS: Well, it was, it just seemed so horrible, so unbelievable. And so, and I thought of it mainly, in terms of you know, why a nation, Germany, all educated people under this horrible leader could turn against the Jews, just because they were Jews. And want to destroy them. Of course, you know, he was trying to purify the Germans, and all that sort of ridiculous nonsense. I did become, I loved every story that I could read about Palestine, and learning about Palestine. I would have loved to have gone to Palestine, and helped develop that country that became a Jewish nation.

RB: Why is that? Why did you really want to do that?

AS: Well, I just felt so strongly. I guess I knew fully that if we had a country of our own, we wouldn't experience the prejudice. And that, of course, is not really true. But it certainly has helped. I'm thinking back, and I remember, I really did not feel like a full citizen of the United States. Even as a child.

RB: Hmm.

AS: We would sing, you know, different national anthems. And sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee". And the Land of the Pilgrims. And, my people weren't Pilgrims. (laughter) They came as immigrants, later in life. To get away from poverty and exploitation. And so, I didn't really feel the roots here. I came later. (laughter) Well, I guess it must have been a sense of adventure, a pioneer in developing a country. That really appealed to me. And, I have to tell you, my younger brother did go there. He actually got to, he'd volunteered. He, and two other friends from here, in Seattle, volunteered to go on these



ships that were really run down. The Haganah had purchased them. They recruited, I didn't know how they did the recruiting. I never did get the story straight from my younger brother, how this happened. Anyway, they went to the East Coast. Got on the ship. And they helped to bring in people from the displaced camps.

RB: To Palestine and to --

AS: Yes, to Palestine. And they were such rickety ships. They never made anything. There was a wonderful book, actually, it was written by the Captain of that ship. He was not Jewish. And it was called "Running the Palestine Blockade" -- I should have it out there on the shelf. And, it actually tells about this -- my brother and his two friends. And, of course, the others on the crew. And what they went through. Because they were followed by the British, the entire way. You know, with airplanes, following them. But the ship, when it would run into problems, they would have to go into ports. They had to do everything secretly. And, it was really difficult. And then, when they got to Palestine, the British were there and interceded and put them in camps on Cypress Island, including the crew. My brother escaped by walking ashore with other laborers. I think that a couple of his friends managed to get into Palestine. And so, my brother was able to get off. He pretended that he was one of the workers, and going off the shift, and just mingled in with them. So, he got into Palestine. And somehow caught up with his friends. And then, he spent quite a bit of time there. That became a state in 1949, I believe. And so, he stayed and worked on a kibbutz. And, he stayed there until actually until the State was declared in 1949. And then, my mother was eager for him to come back and finish his college education. And, I think he was only 22 at the time. So, that was --

RB: How did that affect you?

AS: Well, I was so disgusted, well, I really became disgusted with our Nation, you know, because I had learned that the ship carrying Jews tried to dock in the United States, and



they were sent back. I guess that other of them went to Cuba. So many Jews did. They were safe there. But the ship that was returned, that was just too much. And then, what the British did too, things like that made me extremely angry. So, just --

RB: Did you visit the State of Israel?

AS: Oh yes, we've been there, I guess three times. And we certainly hope to go back. The last time we were there, which was a couple of years ago, our great nephew was bar mitzvahed. So this was my brother's grandchild.

RB: Is that right?

AS: He's got two grandchildren. So their son and, of course, the daughter-in-law. Well, Marika, it's his wife. Yes. So, yes, and I loved it. I loved going there. It's really exciting.

RB: And in what way?

AS: Well, to see, you know, what these people have done. And, the fact that they have brought in so many people from Ethiopia. From the former Soviet Union. And, from North Africa. Just, you know, they've come from all over. And, they certainly have a lot of problems, but, you know, they're trying. They love people that really care. And, oh, if we could just get peace there it would be so great. But yes, just to see it thrive -- is just a wonderful thing.

RB: You mentioned your brother's children. And I thought that was a good reminder to hear a little bit about your own children, and grandchildren. It would be great to hear the names of them, and their ages, and what your experience has been like, being a mother and grandmother.

AS: Well, ok, I'll start with who they are.



RB: OK.

AS: First-born son, the first-born child, his name is Seth. And he was named after my father. My father died a year before he was born. And, nineteen months later, our daughter was born. And, she's named after my husband's father. And, we had a little bit of differences as to what her name should be or, what I would like, or what he would like. We ended up with Marilyn. So, she's Marilyn. And, of course, they are grown now in their 50's. And, Seth and his wife, his wife, Mary, have one son. And, Justin is now 30. Yes, he was 30 in June -- June 3rd. And, he completed Medical School a year ago. And, he's doing his Residency at Virginia Mason Hospital in Diagnostic Radiology. And enjoying that very, very much. And, Justin was married, I think about three years ago. It's been three years, I believe, two or three years, I'm sorry. Anyway, and his wife is finishing her Ph.D. in Philosophy. I know she is very close to having it done. And, they are expecting their first child in September. So, we are going to be great-grandparents very soon.

RB: That's marvelous.

AS: And, Marilyn married later. But, she also moved to Canada when she was a graduate of the University of California-Berkeley. And, after she graduated, she -- well, actually, she worked a while down in the Bay Area. And then, she decided that she wanted to get a Master's in Counseling. And, she'd been an Art Major. (laughter) And, and she had very close friends in Berkeley. One of the friends was on the faculty at the University of California- Berkeley. But then, he and his partner moved to Victoria. And, he was working at the University of Victoria. And he and Kathleen convinced Marilyn that she should get her Master's there. It was a wonderful program. And you know Victoria is beautiful -- which it is. Well, anyway, she did.

She decided, and she went up there. And, she really liked it. And she had to work hard to become Landed, because I think they call it "Landed Immigrant Status" I guess it is the



equivalent of our Green Card here, in the United States. So that you can legally work. And, so she did. And, then actually eventually became a citizen of Canada, because unless she was a citizen, she was excluded from certain positions, mainly Government positions. And then, she decided that she wanted to get her Doctorate in Psychology. So, she decided that she would go to Montreal, to McGill University. And so, she did. And so, while she was back there, she met the man that she did marry. And, their first child was born there. And, that was Rebecca that I went back to be with. And, she finished her Doctorate. She got that all done. And then, she took a position in Victoria. And so then they moved to British Columbia, well, into Victoria. And Tony's sister had moved to North Vancouver for her husband's job at, he was transferred from Montreal to North Vancouver. And, they just loved it out here. And they were constantly after Tony and Marilyn to come back. And, of course, I was all for it. And I think Marilyn was too. So, they did. And, they lived in Victoria. I'm not sure how long.

Tony was having a hard time. He's a musician. And he was having a very hard time getting established there. So, I think, again, Tony's sister encouraged them to come to North Vancouver, where there were better opportunities, and she was sure that, you know, he would do better there. And Marilyn could get a job there. And so, she did. She got a position. And, Tony did. I mean, it took a while but, it certainly went faster than it would have in Victoria. And then, they had a second child. Now, she was older (laughter) by this time, she was in her 40's. She had Rebecca at 40. She was 44 when she had Adam. Thank God, both children are very healthy. And, Adam is a delight. He's now just turned 9 in June. And, Rebecca was 12 in October. And she's quite a young woman. (laughter) In fact, I just talked to her last night, no, the night before. And, she was telling me about -- I knew she was in a theater program. And she got the lead part in "Annie". And oh, I said, "When is the performance?" And she said it was Thursday -- which is today. And, I said, "Oh gosh, Grandpa and I are not going to be able to come down for that but, I'd love to see you, you know, perform. Well, you know, you could perform when you come down." She said, "Yes, I have four songs that I sing.



And I dance." And she said, "Sure, I'll do that." And, she's going to go back and do that again, next year. And, her brother's become quite the kind of athlete. He did very well in soccer. On the Soccer Team. And I was just amazed. He will not do anything until he observes and observes. And, he would not go on the team -- the Soccer Team -- until his father -- and when he and his father -- they were playing, and he would learn -- and then he was ready. And he did just beautifully. (laughter)

RB: And you are obviously such a proud grandmother.

AS: Well, I am. I am very proud of my children too. And really, that is certainly the highlight of my life, is the family -- my children, my grandchildren. It's --

RB: That's wonderful.

AS: Yes.

RB: Alice, we just have a few minutes left of this interview, unfortunately. And, I'm wondering what messages you'd like to close with?

AS: Well, to me, life has really been very exciting. I didn't feel that way when I was younger. I really felt trapped. But, once I got my education, started working, the world has opened up. And, as I get older, I think that life is more exciting than ever, because I have more time, more choices. Less concerned about things, thank God again, that financially we're comfortable. And money's never really meant a lot -- just as long as you have enough. (laughter) So, that we can live reasonably well. Take some trips. And, that's fine. And I'm thrilled that I don't have to worry about those things. And, there's just so much out in the world.

And, I think the message is don't cut yourself short. There's a lot that one can do regardless of your condition. I think that's one of the things that I've learned in working with older people. I've seen older people at Kline Galland who really have problems of



various kinds. But, their minds are good. They're doing things. They're still exciting and vibrant people. And so, I think that life is such a wonderful adventure when you're fortunate enough to grow up in a society like ours. We have these opportunities. And so, I'm thrilled. I'm just really thrilled.

RB: It's been a pleasure. A pleasure meeting with you and hearing your story.

AS: Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]