



Ruth Levy Transcript

[Midway into interview, Stanley Levy, Ruth's husband, adds a few comments to interview.]

Marcie Cohen Ferris: Testing -- 1-2. Is this working? [taps on microphone] All right. It's not working. [Break in Recording]

Ruth Levy: OK.

MCF: Try speaking into that Ruth. Just say your name, and the date.

RL: Ruth Levy. Saturday morning. September the 8th.

MCF: OK. I just had it turned way down.

RL: Is it working now, do you think?

MCF: Yes. Today is -- the day is September the 8th.

RL: The 8th.

MCF: 2001. And my name is Marcie Cohen Ferris. I'm in Baltimore, Maryland with Ruth Surosky Levy. And, we're going to do an interview for the "Weaving Women's Words" project of the Jewish Women's Archive. So, we'll probably just start talking about -- oh, I had just glanced at this -- really about neighborhood. And, where you grew up in Baltimore. So, I am just going to ask you to start with your name, and your date of birth. And, then we'll go onto family and move on (Break in Tape) keep going. Right? So --

RL: Begin?



MCF: Yes.

RL: (laughter) My name is Ruth Surosky Levy. I was born in Baltimore, Maryland, January 1st, 1922. I was born to two loving parents. Born into a stable and loving family. And, I lived, as I said at 919 Whitelock Street. When, I -- when this -- when I first moved there, it was a lovely residential neighborhood -- row houses, for which Baltimore is known. But, as time went on, and the Depression set in -- it became very, very busy -- the row houses -- many of them were converted to stores, as well as apartments on top. And that's where we lived. On top of the store.

MCF: Give me your parents' names, too?

RL: My father's name was Albert. My mother's name was Yetta. Her maiden name was Botwinick.

MCF: So, Albert Surosky. That's OK.

RL: Can I get --

MCF: Go ahead.

RL: I have brought the lineage with me -- who your parents are -- I have it with me.

MCF: OK. And Yetta (inaudible) changed to Botwinick. That's B-O-T-W-I-N-I-C-K?

RL: Is it I-C-K? Or is it -- I think it is just I-K. Botwinick? I don't -- no, it's I-C-K.

MCF: OK.

RL: Can you read German at all?

MCF: I can't.



RL: This is something I have that I am trying to figure out, because what I see here is Meyer Michael Rothers was my mother's grandfather, according to the -- my father's grandfather. Well, all right.

MCF: So what do you know about your parents' countries of origin?

RL: My mother was a daughter of Zalman Botwinick and Chaika Rosenbloom.

MCF: Please spell those out?

RL: Zalman -- Z-A-L-M-A-N. My oldest son is named for him.

MCF: OK.

RL: B-O-T-W-I-N-I-C-K.

MCF: OK.

RL: And, he married Chaika. C-H-A-I-K-A. Rosenbloom.

MCF: OK.

RL: Her English name was Ida. And that was my grandmother. And they came originally from Pinsk.

MCF: OK.

RL: However on my mother's side, they were Vladivostok furriers.

MCF: OK. Do you know how to spell Vladivostok?

RL: I have it down as V-L-A-D-I-V-O-S-T-I-K.

MCF: So, on your mother's side, they were furriers?



RL: On my mother's?

MCF: Mother's side?

RL: Yes, mother's side. Mmm hmm. On her father's -- they were all scholars. They were -- that's why when her father came to this country, and he became a painter to earn a living -- and it was the time when there was the arsenic in the lead poisoning -- and this is -- he developed severe asthma from this and died.

MCF: So, which died? Which was this?

RL: Zalman.

MCF: All right.

RL: That's my mother's father.

MCF: So, your grandfather became a painter?

RL: Mmm hmm. I mean from Yeshiva Bocher to a painter.

MCF: Yes. So do you know where they came? When they came here?

RL: As best I know, they came about -- well, on my mother's side, they came about 1898, because my mother was born here. Was a tiny infant, I'm not -- and, she was the oldest of eleven.

MCF: OK. And, they came straight to Baltimore?

RL: They may have come into New York. I don't know. But they lived in Baltimore.

MCF: OK. And, your father's side?



RL: Oh, my father's side -- he had an old -- my father's father -- his name was Schmuel Yussel.

MCF: Hold on one second -- let me get that.

RL: I can write that. Schmuel Yussel.

MCF: Spell that for me.

RL: S-H-M-U-E-L. Yussel. Y-U-S-S-E-L. Surosky. They came from Knishim.

MCF: How do you spell that?

RL: K-N-I-S-H-I-M.

MCF: Wait. K-N-I --

RL: S-H-I-M.

MCF: OK.

RL: Now, if we can --

MCF: Now where is that? Poland?

RL: Poland. Now, if we can deviate for a moment. Michael's Poland Committee, you know that --

MCF: Right.

RL: Someone found this man's grave, and told Michael that he saw it in Poland. See? Because he was never here. But, Michael called me. And he was very excited about it.

MCF: Wow.



RL: Yes. His mother's name was Fraida Rachel. F-R-A-I-D-A. Rachel. R-A-C-H-E-L. Roches.

MCF: Wait a minute. I'm not getting this fast enough.

RL: That's all right.

MCF: Fraida, what?

RL: Rachel. R-A-C-H-E-L. Rachel.

MCF: R-A-C-H --

RL: Rachel.

MCF: E-L?

RL: Mmm hmm.

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: R-O-C-H-E-S -- the last name. And that's who I'm named for. She favors with my name.

MCF: Wait a minute. I'm not getting the spelling.

RL: R-O-C-H-E-S. Roches.

MCF: OK.

RL: And that's for who I'm named. A-Ruth. (laughter) You translate it into the English.

MCF: OK.



RL: Now, this Fraida Rachel and Schmuell Yussel married. But, before they married, he had been married to somebody else. I do not know what her name was. And had this one brother -- the half-brother, the older brother. Louie. That's the one my father came to in this country. Now, this man was married three times. And in those days, unfortunately, when a mother died, the father had to remarry quickly, because they had to have somebody take care of the children. And, with the second mother -- they had three children. Which were - my father had -- there was Albert, Julie and Bennie. And then, the father remarried a third time -- after my father's mother died. And, he had another brother that he knew -- the father might have had more children -- but the only one that we knew was Abe who came here right at the war time. I don't know whether the others survived -- he got out of Poland in time. He must have come here about '41 or '40 -- it was right after the War had started. I remember when my uncle Abe came. So then they were the four brothers here.

MCF: OK.

RL: Three brothers here and one sister in Richmond.

MCF: Albert, Julie, Bennie and Abe?

RL: Yes, and Louie was the oldest. The one who was here first.

MCF: OK. And they came to Louie.

RL: My father came to Louie. When Bennie came, my father was already here. He came to my --

MCF: OK, so Albert came.

RL: Yes. Albert came to Louie at about 11 years of age.

MCF: And, was Louie a Surosky?



RL: Yes, Louie Surosky. They were all Schmucl Yussel's children. (laughter)

MCF: OK. And, Albert was about 11, do you know --

RL: Mmm hmm.

MCF: ... generally when that would have been?

RL: Yes. About -- in 1921, he was 23. So, let's figure -- I got that -- because that's when he was married -- 23. So that's what? 12 years prior to that. Born in 1898. Yes. That's why I always thought he came here about 1911. At 11.

MCF: OK. And he changed to go to Baltimore?

RL: Mmm hmm. Well, he came in through Philadelphia. Shall I deviate and tell you a funny story?

MCF: Sure.

RL: He came. He had his possessions -- you know, clothing. And, he had five gold dollars. But, he was a child. And, he was so hungry. And, the people on the train coming from Philadelphia here -- had with them a big salami, and my father said to them -- if I could have some of that, I'll give you my money. And he gave them five gold dollars in coins. And, the man took it of course, but gave him a piece of salami. He always remembered that story. Isn't that terrible?

MCF: Yes, that's terrible.

RL: Yes. Because at that day and age, five gold -- five dollar gold pieces were worth a lot of money.

MCF: Yes, yes.



RL: But, he was starving. He was 11 years old, and what did he know?

MCF: And, he came by himself to his brother? Incredible.

RL: It is incredible, isn't it? When you think about it -- at 11 years of age -- that's all.

MCF: Hmm. So, he came about 1909 or 1911.

RL: Mmm hmm.

MCF: And, your mother was born what year? Do you know?

RL: Yes. 1899. 1899 or 1900 -- it was just like that.

MCF: OK. And, your dad was born?

RL: Oh, my father was born a year prior to that. I guess he was born about 1898.

MCF: OK.

RL: Or 19-- I'm a little wrong on my arithmetic there.

MCF: No, I think you've got it.

RL: But that was close enough.

MCF: Yes. OK.

RL: He must have come in 19__ -- let me see. If in '21, he was '23 -- he had to have been born in 1898. That's right. Is that what I've put there?

MCF: Yes.

RL: Yes, mmm hmm.



MCF: OK.

RL: And, he probably came here -- he came here at 11 years of age. But, it would have been more like 1909, I guess.

MCF: So, tell me a little bit about their -- what you know about their early lives, and then how they met? Their families were doing other things?

RL: All right. As I told you - my mother was a remarkable woman. She was an older sister in the true sense of the word. She was actually like a mother to her younger siblings. As a matter of fact, when she died, we erected a tombstone, and you put on "Loving mother, wife, mother, and grandmother" -- I added the word "sister" because she was so important to her siblings. And I have to give my father compliments for that, too. Because they were a young, married couple. And yet they were both so wonderful to all the younger siblings as they came out of the home. They all did -- the youngest child who was 9 months old -- my Aunt Rose was adopted by a very nice man and woman. She was very happy with them. But, when she turned about 14 or 15, her foster mother died. And, then when we entered the era of the traditional wicked stepmother -- and so, her father who was always in contact with my mother -- my mother would go up to New Jersey -- they lived in New Jersey -- Mr. Schlein. I remember his name. He came to my mother, and asked my mother -- if she would take my Aunt Rose. So, my Aunt Rose came to live with my mother, and father, and myself -- when I was 2 years old. And my parents were just what? 25 themselves? And, she stayed with us until she got married.

MCF: OK. I'm a little bit confused. What was your mother's situation? I mean, Rose was her sister?

RL: Yes. My mother graduated Western High School, Class of 1917. And she went to work as a stenographer -- as a secretary.



MCF: Hold on. Let's get her sisters and brothers now.

RL: Ah. She had her -- the one next to her was a sister Esther -- who, unfortunately, died at 30. Married and left twins.

MCF: OK. Esther.

RL: Then there was Nathan.

MCF: OK.

RL: Charlie. And, Rose, the baby.

MCF: OK.

RL: And, my mother's name was Yetta.

MCF: OK, got it.

RL: And so now you have my father's siblings and my mothers?

MCF: Right.

RL: Right.

MCF: Got it. And, what about -- so Yetta's mother --

RL: Her mother lived for many years afterwards because -- but she was in a Home.

MCF: So the father had --

RL: Well, the father died at 35 years of age.

MCF: Right.



RL: So he died -- really very -- if my mother was 11, and she was born in 1900, or 1899
--

MCF: Again, she was really left with the care of the five kids.

RL: Yes. Including herself -- five.

MCF: So, what did she end up doing? How did she deal with that situation?

RL: She was -- they were all in the same orphanage?

MCF: Which orphanage did she go to?

RL: The German-Jewish Orphanage. And, that's the picture that I showed you of her Confirmation picture. And, she stayed there until 1917 when she graduated Western High School. And then, as each child reached a similar age -- see they did send them to high school there from that Orphanage. I mean they were -- (laughter) you can't say it -- it's a loving home. But they were brought up very nicely, and introduced to the finer things in life. They were taught etiquette. It's very interesting. And a lot of the well-to-do people would take them on Friday nights to their house for dinner. And, my mother -- that's how she was -- became familiar with names like Lansberg and, she knew this. She knew these people.

MCF: So, she'd grown up in an orphanage from the time she was?

RL: Eleven until she was 17 or 18.

MCF: OK. And, I'm sorry -- to ask you to clarify. But, her other siblings were in the Home?

RL: All in the Home, too. And then, one by one, they came out.

MCF: OK.



RL: When they left the orphanage each one came to live with my parents, until they went their own separate ways. My Uncle Nat ended up -- oh, he was a travelling salesman. Sold magazines. And, he ended up in Texas. My Uncle Charlie, unfortunately, died at a young age. My Aunt Esther, who was married to someone who had a store across the street in that picture I showed you of the stores? She died at 30, and left twins -- a boy and a girl. And then, my Aunt Rose lived in Baltimore. As I told you, she lived with us, and she lived here until she was 80 when she passed away. And, I'm very close to her children.

MCF: Do you know what Yetta's father was doing for a living, before he passed away?

RL: He was the one who was the painter.

MCF: OK.

RL: But, who had been a Yeshiva Bocher

MCF: Right. Right.

RL: See this is what it was.

MCF: So he was trying to make it.

RL: Yes, he was working. And they were living, you know, reasonably well. I mean -- he worked -- grandma stayed home (laughter) and took care of the children, and he went out to work. But when he developed asthma and died, she was left -- and left penniless. And she had no way of earning a living on her own. And it was very difficult.

MCF: Yes. Do you know where she went?

RL: Yes. Spring Grove.

MCF: Which was a mental hospital?



RL: For mental problems.

MCF: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And, she lived --

RL: She lived until about '40 -- 1940, I believe, or '41.

MCF: Oh.

RL: I remember visiting her in the Home as a youngster for a long time. The last couple of years I hadn't seen her -- but I remember going to her funeral. Ida Botwinick. As a matter of fact, she's buried in the same cemetery where my parents are buried. And where my younger sister is buried. That's a sad memory. I lost a sister when she was 15 -- from medical causes. Six weeks before they put penicillin on the market -- they said penicillin would have saved her life. But she had a -- at five she had rheumatic fever -- which left her with this bad heart-- and then she developed an illness called Strepveradanes(sp?) And then they were treating her with sulphur. But they tried so many different kinds of sulphur -- but sulphur would eventually kill you -- and, she passed away. She was just 15. I have pictures of her. I'll show you if you are interested, later.

MCF: OK. All right. Do you know how your mother and father met?

RL: They met at Bay Shore. That is -- have you ever heard of Bay Shore? Well, that's a summer recreation place. And they must have been introduced by mutual people. But he was taken with her right away. My mother, as I said, was very pretty. My father -- my mother wasn't as taken with him at first, because she had come from this German-Jewish environment. And, my father was pure Eastern European. But they did get together, and they fell in love.

MCF: Why don't you tell me about Bay Shore? What kind of place was that?



RL: It was a recreation center. I'm trying to think of what I can compare it to. It's like Ocean City -- like a small part of Ocean City? Bethany Beach? But it was nearby. And it was very popular.

MCF: In Baltimore?

RL: Oh yes. Oh sure, it was just -- you go for the day.

MCF: And was it primarily Jewish?

RL: No. Everybody went there. But it's like now we'll go to a swimming pool, or something. But I'm trying to think of what it would be like in Washington. I can't think.

MCF: Yes. No, I understand.

RL: Yes.

MCF: And, so they met when they were?

RL: Well, they were married shortly thereafter. They were married. My mother was 21, my father was 22.

MCF: What year were they married?

RL: 1923. 1921, I beg your pardon. My father became a citizen at 23. I have those Citizenship papers.

MCF: So, Albert became a citizen?

RL: In 1923.

MCF: And then, where did they set up home? Do you have any sense of it?



RL: Yes, I know -- all in this neighborhood that I was talking about -- they lived first on Callow Avenue. Just for a very brief time.

MCF: How do you spell that?

RL: C-A-L-L-O-W. For a very brief time. And then, they moved to Whitelock Street. 919. We bought a house. By this time, he started -- see he had worked for his brothers. And, as a matter of fact, when he was 11 years old, he used to deliver meat on his back -- take the street car and deliver packages.

MCF: Tell me -- which neighborhood was Whitelock in? What part of Baltimore? Location-wise?

RL: I guess you would call it Northwest. Is my husband still here?

MCF: He's out side.

RL: I'll ask him -- I'll have to check.

MCF: So, it's northwest?

RL: I think so, yes. It was that -- Eutaw Place? Chauncey Avenue.

MCF: Yes.

RL: That and by -- I think that's Northwest.

MCF: OK. And, so he was working with his brother?

RL: As a youngster. And then he --

MCF: What was his brother doing?

RL: Butcher. All butcher -- all kosher butchers. The whole crew of them.



MCF: So who started all that?

RL: Louie had the first one. And, his place was on Front Street.

MCF: OK. Let's get that kind of straightened out.

RL: OK.

MCF: So, Louie Surosky started the --

RL: Kosher butcher business on Front Street.

MCF: And what was the name of the business?

RL: Louie Surosky's Kosher Butcher Shop. And then, my father started his own.

MCF: Do you know, generally, when that was?

RL: Ummm, well it would have had to be in the early '20's.

MCF: Right after the marriage?

RL: Yes, pretty much after marriage. As I said, they lived on Callow Avenue, and then they owned Whitelock Street. And it was about this time, that his brother Bennie came to the States. And, Bennie and -- let me see if I have it straight. Bennie and Albert -- might have all worked with Louie together for a while. And then they split. Louie stayed on Front Street. And these brothers came up to Whitelock Street. Worked together. And, then, that was a big store. 935 Whitelock Street.

MCF: OK. Hold it. 935 --

RL: Whitelock Street.

MCF: Whitelock?



RL: Yes.

MCF: And what was the name of that shop?

RL: Surosky's Butcher Shop. And then, they split. And, this is when the Depression came. And, Uncle Bennie went out to Garrison -- Belvedere and Garrison Boulevard. And, my father remained on Whitelock Street. 919 -- where he was for many, many years.

MCF: And do you have any sense of how Louie initially was trained to be a butcher? Or, any of that?

RL: As I recall my father telling me -- his father was in the cattle business. And, they did slaughter in the Old Country. That's where he must have developed knowledge -- you know, I'm so glad that I've got these notes down that my father told me -- but -- a lot of this, of course, is just pure memory.

MCF: Yes. But that's -- that makes sense that there was some history of cattle and the slaughter business.

RL: Yes. Mmm hmm.

MCF: OK. So, we're up to Surosky's being opened at 935 Whitelock. And, you all lived above the store?

RL: No, at that time -- at 935, we lived in this lovely duplex house. 919.

MCF: OK. Tell me about the house. What was that like?

RL: It was two five-room apartments. Very comfortable. Very nice for its day and age. Lovely living room. Big dining room. Nice kitchen. Two bedrooms. And one bath.

MCF: Mmm hmm.



RL: And that's where -- they're starting. However, when the Depression hit -- I remember, after the Crash -- see, this was in -- like in the '20's -- late '20's. I can still remember sitting on the front porch and my father -- in utter despair -- because it was the Crash of 1929. And, I didn't clearly understand what it meant when he told me the banks closed, and the banks failed. But, after that, that's when many of these houses were converted to stores with apartments above. And that's what my mother and father did. They converted the house in which we lived to a store. Now, this is the interesting thing. There's a store -- the apartment above -- which remained intact -- plus behind the store, there were a couple of little rooms -- and for a few years, until my father could get on his feet -- we all lived in the few rooms behind the store. I mean, really -- when I think now, I'll never forget -- many years later, I went back to see the store. Just to walk through -- and when I looked -- and said -- did we all live here? Because the rent -- I'll never forget my mother telling me. The people who lived upstairs. Their name was Rosenkauf. They were friends. They paid \$35 dollars a month rent. For a five-room apartment.

MCF: Rosen --?

RL: Rosenkauf. And I said to my mother -- why can't we live up there? And she said, well, darling, we need the money right now. I remember. I remember it so clearly.

MCF: They paid how much?

RL: \$35 dollars a month. But, after that, as my father got on his feet. He was able to give -- ask the Rosenkauf's to find another place. And, we moved upstairs. And, by that time, it was 1940, and a little bit more prosperous. I was already in college and they fixed up the apartment, and it was quite beautiful.

MCF: OK.



RL: I tell a lot about this in that little thing -- just about how he converted the store and we lived upstairs. First below. You know, when I hear about homeless people -- how I think about my Aunt Rose and Uncle Nathan and one child came to live with my mother and father and three children -- in three rooms -- behind the store. I mean, it's just unbelievable.

MCF: Share a little bit about the details about the -- I don't know if you want to cull from that. But, I think it's good that you describe the neighborhood a little bit.

RL: All right. I'll tell you -- I'll read to you -- what you want to use, you use what you want to use.

MCF: OK.

RL: "The 900 block of Whitelock Street no longer exists. Leveled to the ground -- a grassy plot now marks the spot of a once-bustling and thriving area. From the mid-1920's until the mid-'60's, Whitelock Street was a shopping mecca for a densely populated community. A predecessor of today's shopping mall. It was bordered on one side by Linden Avenue -- home of prominent Zionist, Anna and Louie Samuels. Distinguished artist, Rubin Kramer. The Udel Family of photographic fame. The Banks family ---well-known haberdashers and many others. At the other end of the block, there was the Brookfield Pharmacy -- owned and operated by Drs. Freed and Kroopnick. They filled the neighborhood prescriptions and dispensed medical advice. Opposite the pharmacy was Sylvia's -- a confectionery store operated by Gus. Sylvia's was a meeting place for teenagers. Where the best milkshakes and ice cream could be purchased for very nominal cost. Around the corner, more shops. Dorothy Miller's Dress Shop and Barr's (sp?) Kosher Butcher Shop. Whitelock Street itself was packed with stores of every description, designed to answer your every need. Saler's Dairy Store, Cohn's grocery store, Mr. Gold's Shoe Repair -- where Jimmy, the shoe sign man held sway, Morty Robinson's Liquor Store. And one of the earliest supermarkets -- the A&P. There



was even a pool parlor above two of the stores. In one of the row houses, Mr. Kessler's Barber Shop. Facing these stores, was Mr. Snyder's Taylor Shop. Goldstein's and Aaron's Grocery Stores. And, the Whitelock Bakery. Who could ever forget the delicious aromas that emanated from this building -- where Jennie, Anna, Edna and Herman graciously waited on all the customers?" Do you want me to read more?

MCF: No, I think that's good.

RL: All right. OK.

MCF: So, tell me what you --

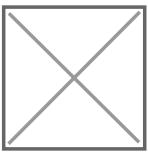
RL: I just have to say -- wait -- "and in the middle of the block was Surosky's Butcher Shop. A meeting place, as well as a place to purchase your meat and exchange recipes." And I did say that "during the Depression, many of the row houses were converted to stores. It was living quarters on the second level. Albert Surosky's home was one of those."

MCF: So, tell me about your memories, Ruth -- just of that neighborhood. What was it like when you were growing up? And, you know --

RL: It was a very close-knit, thriving neighborhood. I have to read you this part. "The neighborhood surrounding Whitelock Street -- Eutaw Place, Brooks Lane, Chauncy Avenue, Lake Drive, Callow Avenue, Park Avenue." [You may have heard these names] "Reservoir Street, Brookfield and Linden Avenues -- was predominantly Jewish, and heavily populated. On Jewish Holidays, the local elementary school -- John Eager Howard -- commonly known at #61 was attended by very few students."

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: That's how I grew up.



MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: What --

MCF: And what kind of Jews?

RL: I would say not Reformed -- Orthodox and some -- some Conservative. We belonged to this close community with its synagogues. And I went to Hebrew School from the time I was 8 until I was 13 -- three days a week. I want to read you just one paragraph. "Whitelock Street was always busy and thriving. It literally hummed with action. Young mothers would push their baby carriages as they purchased their food. Performed their chores, and chatted with friends. Older and more affluent shoppers arrived in chauffeur-driven cars to make their purchases." This is true. "Most of the stores extended credit -- before credit cards were in popular use-- and provided delivery service as well. Truly a shopper's paradise." I often used to collect for my father, when I was about 14 years old.

MCF: Wow.

RL: Yes. It was very, very interesting. And I grew up as I said -- I can't even say predominantly Jewish-- it's was almost like all Jewish neighborhood. And, the school was too.

MCF: Now, were they predominantly Jews from Eastern Europe?

RL: Yes. They were mostly -- on Eutaw (sp?) Place, there were a lot of the German Jews (inaudible) But it was a very strong Jewish neighborhood. People who grew up in that neighborhood, think about it very fondly. In the local elementary school they had a system, when you finished 6th grade -- if you had a certain average, you went to the Junior High -- called 49. Otherwise, you went to 79. Both were good schools. And, of course I was among the fortunate -- I went to 49. And it was predominantly Jewish



also. But, they came all over to the Junior High School. Whole different ballgame than today.

MCF: So, and in what situations were you going to associate with non-Jews?

RL: As a youngster, I didn't.

MCF: Didn't at all?

RL: I didn't. I really didn't.

MCF: Tell me about -- just what was a typical day like when you were a little girl? Like what was the schedule in your family's household? What time did you wake up? Who cared for you?

RL: Well -- and, this is interesting -- even though there was Depression -- because my mother helped my father -- we always had a maid in the house who did, like the dishes and this sort of thing.

__: [phone rings in background]

__: Excuse me. I'm sorry to interrupt --

RL: Yes --

__: (Break in Tape)

MCF: Here we go. This is all brand new equipment that we're using for this project. So --

RL: But it was recording?

MCF: Oh yes.



RL: Oh, that's good.

MCF: We did time it --

RL: I wouldn't want to go through all that again. (laughter)

MCF: I know. I know. So, you were saying that you always had a maid. An African-American?

RL: Yes. Susie. She worked for my parents -- for I guess close to 40 years.

MCF: Do you remember her last name?

RL: Susie Johnson.

MCF: Is it S-U-Z --

RL: S-U-S-I-E. We called her -- Johnson. J -- And, we followed suit. We had a couple of maids in those days. And, when I think now about how the youngsters work and what you pay for that -- and what I pay for help now -- the full-time help. And then we had -- in that effect -- Stanley and myself -- we had a young woman named Mae who stayed with us for a long time. And then, we had Rosie -- who's Rosie Morris -- who's still -- she's retired. But, she worked for us for 35 years.

MCF: Wow. And so Susie Johnson worked for the family for --

RL: For my mother -- I think it was close to 40 years.

MCF: So, who did what in the household? And as far as responsibilities and household chores?

RL: As a child, I really didn't have any responsibility in the household. I was supposed to do my homework. And, I took elocution lessons. I played the violin. (laughter) This



is what my parents wanted -- elocution lessons, violin, dancing lessons. I did all these sort of things. And, I was supposed to do my homework.

MCF: And, let's get your brothers and sisters down too, so that we know --

RL: I have two sisters.

MCF: Two sisters? And, tell me their names.

RL: Selma -- who, unfortunately, died at 15.

MCF: Right.

RL: And, my sister Rita who died about 14 years ago at 57.

MCF: And?

RL: I'm the oldest of three, and the only one who's living. That's pretty bad -- and mmm --

MCF: Rita Perel? Right?

RL: Perel. P-E-R-E-L. Now, I'm close to all my nieces and nephews - I really am.

MCF: OK. So you were the oldest?

RL: Mmm hmm. And, I'm the oldest of all the siblings of my cousins.

MCF: Right. So you'd get up in the morning about what time when you were a little girl?

RL: Well, we had to be at school at 9:00 o'clock, I think, in those days. I don't think we had to be there at 8 like they are now. So, I'd be up -- I guess, it's 7:30, 8:00 o'clock, you know? And, you wash quickly and you get dressed and -- didn't like to eat breakfast in those days -- and, ran out of the house. Now --



MCF: And who prepared breakfast?

RL: My mother prepared breakfast. She always prepared breakfast.

MCF: And, what time would Susie get there?

RL: Sometime in the morning. Maybe about the time I left for school. And she stayed -- in those days; they used to have a big meal during the day. Because my father would come in -- he would have been at work since 5:00 o'clock or something in the morning. And they -- I can remember the big soup dishes with meat in it -- this was a borscht -- but, hot borscht. And, all kinds of meat and vegetables-- and often --

MCF: Did you mom cook the noon meal?

RL: My mother made the noon meal -- often -- because the light meal was easy, Susie made the light meal. And, what I remember -- she did one thing terrific -- she used to fry fish and bake cornbread. Those were her specialties. Cornbread and fried fish. And, she would often make the nighttime meal -- but, so would my mother. I mean they just alternated. We didn't have a set thing, but --

MCF: And, did your mother keep a kosher home?

RL: She kept Jewish-style. Kosher-style. In other words, we never had treyfe meat in the house. Or anything of the sort. But we weren't so strict about the dishes. And she didn't mix butter with meat. So, I always said it was a kosher style -- a Jewish style. Which is what I do. Although now, I'll bring ham into the house. Not a cooked ham -- but for sandwiches. You know I'll buy it and have a sliced ham sandwich -- right?

MCF: Yes. But the butcher shop?

RL: Oh, strictly kosher. Strictly kosher. And that's why we only had kosher meat. I use kosher meat. It's interesting -- when Stanley and I were first married -- after being in



the services and we came back -- we lived very close to Whitelock Street.

MCF: Yes.

RL: On Eutaw Place.

MCF: All right. Let's kind of continue going through your day a little bit.

RL: All right.

MCF: So the big meal was in the middle of the day?

RL: Mmm hmm. At school, and at after school on certain days --

MCF: Was your mother working in the shop?

RL: My mother would help out. She was the bookkeeper in the shop. And often, when things were really rough, she would help him -- at one time, they had a fish counter. And, she would work in the fresh fish counter. But she was -- she had a little office, and she was the bookkeeper.

MCF: OK. So she could go in and out of the shop?

RL: Yes. Yes, yes.

MCF: And then back upstairs?

RL: Yes, yes she could.

MCF: So, it sounds like the housekeeper -- Susie -- was mainly responsible for cleaning and --

RL: Cleaning? Right. And, I can remember -- and this is interesting -- when you think of the days of diaper service. And now, with the Pampers. I can still remember the



diapers for my younger sisters hanging up that she washed the diapers -- hanging up in the cellar.

MCF: Yes.

RL: Isn't that interesting. You probably -- do you have any recollection of that at all? See, you're like my child -- (laughter) you're how old, Marcie?

MCF: I am 44.

RL: Yes, you're a baby. You're even younger than my youngest child.

MCF: So, did everybody in the neighborhood have African-American help?

RL: Yes. Nobody had White help that I know. If somebody had White help, it was so unusual. But, in my neighborhood, this was it.

MCF: What other things do you remember about your Mom as far as a cook? What kind of things? Was she a good cook?

RL: She was wonderful. I'll tell you what I remember the most. My mother was ambidextrous. She had been born left-handed. And, when she went to high school, and they said, you cannot learn to type and to do stenography, with your left hand. And, they switched her. And today they'd say -- oh, it's a horrible thing -- you can't do it psychologically. And see, I can remember in the days before the Cuisinart - -coming to the kitchen when she was making say, gefilte fish -- she'd chop with her left and, and she'd chop with her right hand. It was fabulous -- this was an outstanding thing. My mother made fabulous chopped liver. Fabulous gefilte fish. This is what I remember, so clearly. She was a very good cook.

MCF: What kind of fish would she use in a gefilte fish?



RL: Oh, if my father were there she would use some carp and she'd use a lot of white fish. This was her specialty. She really made great gefilte fish.

MCF: And how did she learn to cook?

RL: She either learned from reading books -- and she had a couple of great aunts who were on my father's side. Older women who -- I can remember one of them came -- and tried to teach her how to make Challah. And how you put in the yeast and let it rise-- well, she learned from family and from books. This is really true. She was an avid reader.

MCF: And what other kind of dishes would you have? Just on a normal day -- if it wasn't say a holiday? What kind of foods?

RL: As I said, we would have soup dishes -- which were really a meal in one, with lots of meat in it. And, of course, we always had chicken and turkey. This was normal. We always had big meals. Because my father required it, and we had it.

MCF: So, like a big chicken or turkey?

RL: Oh yes. Friday night was always a chicken or a turkey night. Or duck. She made duck, too. Wonderful duck.

MCF: How did she prepare that?

RL: She used to get the duck quartered. And, she'd broil it. It was wonderful. Marinate it, and then broil it. I've made it some time. It was very, very good -- with orange, and all kinds of stuff.

MCF: And then, in the evenings you'd have a light --



RL: It was lighter. We would have tuna fish, or sour cream or cold borscht - you know, depending upon the season. My father loved strawberries and sour cream. So does Stanley.

MCF: So you had a dairy meal in the evening?

RL: Usually a dairy meal in the evening -- we didn't have meat -- except for Friday nights.

MCF: What time did your father get home?

RL: Well see -- we always had supper around 6. 6:30. Because either he would come up for half - if they were keeping the store open late that night -- it was just downstairs. It wasn't like he had to travel any distance.

MCF: Yes. And the business stayed open how late at night usually?

RL: I would say to about 7:00 o'clock. 8:00, I think. I --

MCF: What time did it open in the morning?

RL: I opened early. Well, it would probably open by 8:00 o'clock in the morning. But see, he would often have to go out to buy the meat first. So, he left the house. My father often was up at 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning, if he had to go different places.

MCF: Right. And, just to do a little bit more on food. What was -- did you all do Shabbat meals on Friday?

RL: Yes. Friday night was always a beautiful Friday night.

MCF: So, let's talk about what that was like? How would mother prepare?



RL: Always ate in the dining room. And, the table was set beautifully. And we would have Kiddush. My father would make the prayers. The blessing for the wine. The blessing for the bread. And my mother would light the candles. We had a traditional Friday night meal which -- I really -- and that was the night when we could always invite guests. Friends would come to our house. And my mother and father wanted everybody -- Friday night was -- it's not like some people might have Saturday night or Sunday. Friday night was a night for entertaining. Because my father didn't go to work on Saturday morning -- he would stay up late. Friday night was truly a beautiful traditional Friday night. And I tried to carry that forth in this house. And, if you talk, to Michael, or any of my other children --- they always brought friends here. They could bring them any time -- but, Friday night, like when they went to school -- they would bring friends for dinner. And, my grandchildren -- they all remember our Friday night dinners here.

MCF: And, would your mother prepare for a couple of days ahead of time for Shabbat? Or just be cooking for Fridays?

RL: I honestly can't tell you. She might have made something like Gefilte fish or something that had to stew overnight -- she might do the day before. But, I think she did it on Friday.

MCF: What kind of things would you have then for your meal on Shabbat? You said a turkey or a chicken?

RL: Mmm hmm. Or duck. We always had salad. And, sometimes we have chicken soup, too. It depended on the season.

MCF: Often Gefilte fish?

RL: Um, yes. But not everything. If we had soup -- I mean it wasn't quite -- it was lots to eat, and we always had a nice fresh challah.



MCF: And she made her own bread? Or, did you buy it in a bakery?

RL: Both. She made her own for a while. She learned how to make it, and made it. But see, we lived two doors from the bakery that I was talking about.

MCF: What was the name of the bakery?

RL: Whitelock Bakery.

MCF: And was that also kosher?

RL: Well, I don't think everything was pareve so you can't call that kosher because I don't honest -- I can't honestly tell you.

MCF: Right. Right. But it wasn't specifically a Jewish bakery?

RL: Well, you got wonderful bagels and wonderful rye bread. It was Jewish-style bakery.

MCF: Yes.

RL: It was a Jewish-style bakery.

MCF: Yes. And then, would anyone go to Shul on Friday nights?

RL: My father went. And, of course, Saturday morning, he always went. But, in earlier years, he opened the store again Saturday nights see -- after Shabbos.

MCF: Wow.

RL: No, you interviewed Lois Hofberger (sp?)

MCF: Mmm hmm.



RL: Blum. Her parents were good customers of my father's. I mean, it's very interesting, because he was already established. He was very well-to-do. The Hofbergers. But they were good friends with my father. They all liked my father. I mean, my father's store was a meeting ground. Well-to-do people came as well. And S&M Katz Jewelers. They were all his customers.

MCF: So, tell me a little bit about your -- about the store. Let's see -- we finished Shabbat, first of all -- so we got through -- would the three girls help with the meal?

RL: I did very little in my house --

MCF: OK, so she, you mother --

RL: Yes, it was small. And, Susie was there. And my mother cooked. I might help to clear -- take the dishes into the kitchen afterwards -- this sort of thing. You know? We didn't have dishwashers. Susie probably stayed on Friday nights to do the dishes.

MCF: Wow.

RL: It was a different day and age.

MCF: Right.

RL: You -- do you have any recollection of that at all? I mean you were so young. I don't know if we were still doing it at that time.

MCF: Just a little.

RL: You know when I lived on Eutaw Place, married with children -our maid stayed and did the dishes, five nights a week. But, when we moved out here, and because Stanley was a little later -- I let her go. I'll never forget it. And then we had a dishwasher. I'll never forget. Laura was two and half years old. Something happened to the



dishwasher. And she gets on the chair and she's going to -- oh boy, she says, doing dishes is such fun. And I look at her like she was crazy. (laughter) But she had never seen -- she didn't know about it.

MCF: So, tell me -- I want to kind of do your growing up.

RL: OK.

MCF: Your neighborhood experience. And then we'll move into this -- we'll talk about the store a little bit more. But what was your -- you were going to school. What was Jewish education like at the time?

RL: All right. I went to the Chizuk Amuno Hebrew School -- three days a week. Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday --and, Sunday morning. And I went from the time I was 8 until the time I was 13. So, that's two full afternoons of the week that I was really busy. Now, if you want to know what else I did as a young person -- I took elocution lessons.

MCF: Mmm hmm. Got that.

RL: I took violin lessons -- I told you.

MCF: So, as far -- tell me about the Jewish experience growing up. What was that like?

RL: We --

MCF: Did you go to temple on occasion?

RL: Yes, I went for High Holidays. And, of course, I went to Hebrew School three days a week. So, I didn't go much on the weekend. What my big experience with being Jewish was the Zionist experience. I always have used the expression that we were Zionists before it was fashionable to become Zionists. Fashionable was after 1947. My



mother was a very dynamic member of Pioneer Women -- which is now called Na' a mat Israel. My parents both belonged to Poale Zion. They were Labor Zionists.

MCF: I didn't hear what that was?

RL: Poale. P-O-A-L-E. Zion. Z-I-O-N, Poale Zion.

MCF: Wait a minute. P-O-L --

RL: P-O-A-L-E, Poale Zion. That was a Labor Zionist organization. The beginnings.

MCF: And how did they get involved?

RL: I can't tell you. It's just that they were always interested in it. And, I always remember growing up -- and, as Stanley told you -- my mother -- when they went to Israel the first time -- they saw Golda Meier, Bebe Edelson ate in our house. They were just in the beginning. And, I belonged to Gordonia. Which later became Habonim (sp?) And that was --

MCF: How do you spell Gordonia?

RL: G-O-R-D-O-N -- For Aleph Daled Gordon. Have you ever heard of him? Aleph Daled Gorden --

MCF: Gordonia?

RL: Uh-huh.

MCF: G-O-R-D-O-N---?

RL: I-A. Gordonia. Which later merged with Habonim and became called Habonim. And, they had a summer camp - the Moshava -- which I started going to, I guess, when I was about 11 years old.



MCF: How do you spell that?

RL: M-O-S-H-A-V-A. That's a Hebrew word that means camp. Moshava.

MCF: So, from what age --

RL: It's similar to just as today.

MCF: Give me a year -- a time of the year. You know --

RL: Yes.

MCF: When they became involved in Zionism. About what years would you think?

RL: Oh, always as long as I can remember. So, it would have to be certainly late '20's or '30's -- early '30's. Because I was already active at that time. And I was born in '22. By '32, I was active in it.

MCF: And, were other people in the neighborhood just as involved?

RL: Yes, some around the corner. Not necessarily next door to me. But, it was - it was --

MCF: And, tell me what Zionism meant to you? What was your involvement?

RL: It was always that there was going to be a Jewish homeland. Because Jews had been dispersed and I mean, my father had come from Poland to America. My mother had come also and they were going to have a -- this was the object to have a Jewish homeland of their own. This was an important thing.

MCF: So, you'd go to -- after school -- to Hebrew School?

RL: Two days a week.



MCF: And what were you learning in Hebrew School?

RL: I really learned how to read and write Hebrew.

MCF: Uh-huh.

RL: This was about it. And we learned the history of the Jews and Judaism, and this sort of thing. Just general Hebrew education.

MCF: And then, your organizational activity -- when would that occur? When did you go to work with the clubs, or be a part of this--?

RL: On the days that I didn't go to Hebrew School, I was often -- or on the weekends -- Saturday nights and Sundays -- we were down there a lot.

MCF: And what kind of activities would you do?

RL: Learned to do Hebrew dances. And, we had a very nice social time of it. And we would -- we would -- you know, what do kids do? You know? I wasn't doing this when I was in college. This is what I was doing when I was a youngster growing up.

MCF: And, your sisters, too

RL: Yes, not as much as my second sister worked -- my younger sister already -- this was starting to phase out a little by the time she -- see there's an 8 year difference between my youngest. But, the sister next to me who was only 3 years younger -- she, too, participated.

MCF: And you just remember --

RL: We had older advisors.

MCF: You remember your mother just being really involved in this?



RL: Oh, my mother was extremely involved. She was, I said, a very dynamic member. And, I have those pictures to show you of her with Abba Eban. That was probably about '60, I guess.

MCF: And the picture that you have -- is it of you going door-to-door?

RL: Yes, that's myself. And that must be about 1945, or '46. I don't know which day this was -- this was a First G-Day Girl Poster. You know, the Associated Jewish Charities have this drive.

MCF: What's G-Day?

RL: What did G-Day stand for? Giving. G-Day.

MCF: And what would you do?

RL: Oh, you'd go door to door.

MCF: Yes.

RL: And, you'd -- solicit for the Associated Jewish Charities -- the Women's Division. And that's how I first glimpsed the Cone (sp?) Sisters' apartment, with all that art in it. I saw it in the actual apartment -- because I knocked on their door once. And, I remember being absolutely overwhelmed. It was a simple apartment. It was not a grand-looking place. Some very good-looking pieces of furniture. But I remember old side-boards, items like that. But, these gorgeous pieces of art. And if you think this is something -- you should see what they had stacked -- and they were Matisse's and Picasso's and I didn't even realize. I just knew.

MCF: Wow.

RL: And, I'll never forget that.



MCF: Wow. Wow. All right. But that was when you were already married?

RL: Oh yes. Yes.

MCF: And you got involved in that activity.

RL: Yes, yes.

MCF: OK, so as a young girl, you're involved in lots of this kind of Jewish organizational activity.

RL: Mmm hmm.

MCF: And you were going to Shul, for Hebrew School. And then, you went to Shul for High Holidays?

RL: Yes.

MCF: What --

RL: Now, I'll have to tell you the important thing --

MCF: OK.

RL: About also part of this background. Because the Zionist background was very strong in my upbringing, I would go at about age 15 or 16 to the Chalutz farm in Creamridge, New Jersey. That was the Hachshara. And, I'll spell those words for you, and tell you what that means. Did you ever hear of them? It was a training farm for people who were going to be Chalutzim. You know the workers in the kibbutz. You know, I came from this kibbutz background. Orientation, not background. As a matter of fact, I was up in Creamridge the day that Hitler marched into Poland in 1939. And it was just when I was about to start college. But, that was a wonderful experience for me up there. And, I met many people there. And, of course, a number of them left



immediately for Israel, because they wanted to get there before there would be any further war time.

MCF: You said that was 1949?

RL: '39.

MCF: '39. And then, what was the name of it? I didn't get any of that.

RL: Creamridge, New Jersey. That's the name of it -- and, it was called the Hechalutz. H-E-C-H-A-L-U-T-Z. It's a Hebrew word.

MCF: OK, so slow. Wait a minute.

RL: OK.

MCF: H-E-C-H --

RL: A-L--

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: U-T-Z.

MCF: OK.

RL: Hechalutz.

MCF: And that was the name of this training farm?

RL: Yes. The Hechalutz Farm. And, it's where people would go for Hachshara. That's the training to be a chalutz or chalutza.

MCF: OK. Spell that.



RL: H-A-C-H. Hach. H-A-C-H S-H-A-R-A.

MCF: OK. And that was the actual training?

RL: Mmm hmm. And, the people -- but I would go as a volunteer. People who were up there -- they were all like say --

MCF: So, what would they do? What was it like? How long would you stay?

RL: Oh, I went -- the last time I was there -- Probably for a whole summer -- instead of going to camp -- I went up there. And, I'd volunteered. I'd work in the kitchen. They had chickens. And they grew vegetables. They were doing all the things that they'd hoped to do in a kibbutz when they would go to a kibbutz. As a matter of fact, many of the people from the farm that I became friendly with this time -- went to Kfar Blum. I don't know if you -- have you ever been to Israel?

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: OK.

MCF: And how do you spell that?

RL: Kfar K-F-A-R B-L-U-M.

MCF: K-A --

RL: K-F-A-R Kfar Blum. B-L-U-M.

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: Many, many years later, when Stanley was - I guess it was about 1977 -- we went to Kfar Blum - -and, he volunteered his services for a month. He worked as a dentist in their dental clinic. And, I just worked in the sewing area.



MCF: Well, did you hope to go to a kibbutz?

RL: At the time I did, yes. But the War interfered. Or intervened.

MCF: So, how old were you, when this was going on?

RL: About 16. Because that's when I graduated high school. That was the Summer I went there. Because the following -- I went and started college in 1938 -- '39.

MCF: But -- I want to skip back around -- if you don't mind?

RL: Sure.

MCF: Skip around a little bit.

RL: It was --

MCF: So, you were 16, and you're involved in all this activity.

RL: I was very -- yes.

MCF: Tell me a little bit, though, about - -just so that we get down some stuff about ritual. You all did Shabbat. What about the High Holidays?

RL: Oh, very observant on the High Holidays.

MCF: And, tell me what your mother would do on home? How would you all prepare for that? Were there meals? Special holiday meals?

RL: Well holiday meals were -- holiday meals are often very like Friday night dinners. This is basically what they are. And yes, we would have -- the house would be especially cleaned. And, we would have family for dinner. And we had -- and we all went to services for the High Holidays.



MCF: So, which holidays did you all celebrate throughout the year?

RL: We celebrated -- my father celebrated everything. My mother went -- We went Rosh Hashonah, and Yom Kippur. Sukkas. Simchas Torah. Of course, a strong portion of that -- was that my younger sister -- my middle sister died on Simcha Torah, that -- but that was afterwards. Passover was always celebrated.

MCF: Chanukah?

RL: Oh Chanukah -- definitely.

MCF: And do you remember special foods associated with those specific holidays?

RL: Well, potato latkes with Chanukah. Everybody remembers that, I think. That was a big thing. And, Passover, of course. How could you forget the matzo?

MCF: And would you keep Passover Week?

RL: Oh, yes. Yes, we kept it. No bread in the house. Mmm mmm.

MCF: Did your mother change all the dishes?

RL: Yes, we changed dishes -- it's interesting. It was a nutty thing -- you don't have two sets -- but you change. And doing all this, she didn't --

MCF: How would she do that then, if she didn't have two sets?

RL: I mean you don't have a milk and dairy. But you had certain dishes for Passover. I still have my Passover dishes down in this basement.

MCF: And, was that a big deal to change out the house?



RL: Sure, it's a big deal. (laughter) There's a lot of work. Can you imagine cleaning out a kitchen cabinet? I feel for the people who are really are very strict. What a lot of work it is.

MCF: Yes, yes.

RL: But -- it's symbolic and I like it. I like the changing of dishes with symbolism. I changed them in this house -- up until we went. I remember, one year, we went away -- after the first Seder -- to Japan. And I figured -- why should I change the dishes in front of my kids, and makes them do this, if I'm going away and I can't keep Passover? And that's when I stopped changing the dishes. And, the funny part of it is -- that those Passover dishes I now see as collectibles. I have them in the cellar. I want my daughter to take them.

MCF: Yes.

RL: They're hand-painted, and they're selling for a fortune. And, I know they weren't very expensive -- Blue Ridge pottery.

MCF: Yes.

RL: And, I see them.

MCF: Well, as far as -- one thing I forgot to ask you about -- did your mother -- would you say that she was fairly typical in her cooking that was more Jewish? Did she do anything that was kind of regional of this area?

RL: It's hard for me to answer that question. I wasn't so much into -- I just know that my mother was an excellent cook. And, it was -- I would say traditional.

MCF: Yes.



RL: And, what I remember -- because my father was really more observant than my mother. On Saturday, he would take her out to dinner. And, he would drink coffee or -- and she would always get a crab cake or something (laughter) That's what I -- isn't it funny that I remember that.

MCF: On Saturday night?

RL: Yes, on Saturday. But, not during Shabbat. But after -- definitely, they'd go out to dinner on Saturday nights.

MCF: Now, did she allow any crab or --

RL: No, they didn't bring that in the house.

MCF: Right.

RL: Once, I think -- when Stanley was there. But, never growing up.

MCF: Would you eat it -- out?

RL: Oh yes.

MCF: Where?

RL: In restaurants. Oh sure. As I was saying, my father would take her out to dinner.

MCF: Did you all have special and favorite places that you liked to go out to?

RL: Oh, we didn't go out to dinner much as a family. We didn't do that. You know, that's really even a recent thing today with the youngsters. Because you don't have the kind of help in the house that allows you to go. But, we used to have, ourselves -- we had dates on Wednesday night. We didn't take the kids out to dinner. We went out and the maid stayed with them. Or the babysitter stayed with them.



MCF: Yes, yes.

RL: But, today, wherever we go, we see young people out with children, you know?
And -- that's really a sociological difference.

MCF: Yes. I just wondered if there were certain kinds of regional foods that your mom had learned to prepare growing up in the Baltimore area?

RL: I'm trying to think of what regional food would I say that's particularly Baltimorean?
Because the regional foods were really more non-kosher foods.

MCF: Yes. I think that's right. That's right.

RL: See, this is why I can't come up with anything.

MCF: Yes, you're exactly right.

RL: Right.

MCF: Was she a baker?

RL: Yes, she could bake, too.

MCF: What kind of things?

RL: Cake, cupcakes.

MCF: Yes.

RL: Things like --

MCF: Desserts?

RL: Yes, desserts.



MCF: She wasn't a strudel maker like some people are. But -- my mother was not what you would call an old-fashioned Jewish woman. She was a very avant garde, educated, bright woman. And, she kept a wonderful house. She wrote beautifully. I will share you one thing -- in 1957, because we were active in the Chizuk Amuno community -- that my mother and I were honored by giving -- the Saturday before Mother's Day -- and, you may be -- and Linda Bloom loved it -- she took a copy as a matter of fact -- the sermon that we each gave -- of what it meant. I'll show it to you later.

MCF: And when was that?

RL: 1957. I was looking at the date. Let me pull it out here.

MCF: So, she was very active?

RL: She was active politically in the organization -- that's probably where I got it from. Because she --

__: [sound of papers rustling...]

MCF: Great. Oh that's great. And just leave that out, so that I can take it...

__: [background noise/conversations..]

MCF: OK. How are you doing?

RL: I'm doing great.

MCF: OK. Good. Let's go back and talk -- kind of got you up to high school. But one thing that I feel like we didn't describe quite enough was the store. And, I just wanted to get a sense -- a little bit more -- of who worked in the shop. Did you help out in the shop occasionally?



RL: I would sometimes do collecting for my father. I'm going to read you one thing then. "To quote Dr. Louis Kaplan" -- you were talking -- "Surosky's was actually a magnet that drew thousands of customers to patronize the neighborhood grocer, baker and drugstore. Before long, Surosky's also became a Labor Zionist Meetinghouse. For Yetta Surosky was a dynamic leader of the Pioneer Women's Organization. One never entered the store just to buy meat. Conversations about families. The progress of children. A bit of innocent gossip -- made this trip a social event. Customers became friends, and friends lasted a lifetime." That was from the eulogy that Dr. Kaplan gave at my father's funeral.

MCF: Wow. Wow.

RL: And which I have also, which was a beautiful tribute.

MCF: And who worked in the store? What kind of people?

RL: My mother, my father. My Uncle Abe for a while. And then, he went to my Uncle Bennie's. And, we had another butcher---one man's name was Gabriel Hecker. I remember him. And then they had --

MCF: H-E-C --

RL: H-E-C-K-E-R.

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: Then they had someone to do delivery. Usually a Black man.

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: I think his name was Harry, if I'm not mistaken. And we had a couple of delivery boys and that's it.



MCF: And, was there much speaking in Yiddish, or kind of back and forth or English? Or, do you remember?

RL: Well, it was both. Most of the customers who came in spoke English. What I do remember is that in the '40's -- when the Holocaust survivors started arriving, or the people who were fleeing. They all speak about my father with like reverence. He would send everybody free meat. An order of free meat. And then, they became customers, until they got on their feet. But that was a big thing.

MCF: Wow.

RL: And the neighborhood, of course, was full of those people. He was highly thought of -- my mother, too. Different day and different age.

MCF: And, were they very involved in the Temple? The Synagogue?

RL: They were involved in the Synagogue, but more involved in Zionist activities.

MCF: Yes.

RL: This was the big thing in our household.

MCF: Right. OK. And what did the store sell? What kinds of things? What kind of meats and -- was there a specialty? Or -- just it was everything?

RL: All Jewish -- you know, they only sold kosher cuts. So, it was the briskets, and of course, they'd make the ground beef, and the chickens and the poultry, and liver.

MCF: Could you then --

RL: Chops.

MCF: could you buy anything prepared?



RL: No. Nothing was prepared. Not like today. It's not like when you go into a supermarket, and you go into the prepared counter - and I'll take dinner home with me now. You know?

MCF: And was everything personal service?

RL: Everything was personal service. Nobody went behind the counter. You got waited on.

MCF: And how long did the business stay in business?

RL: My father was in business -- what was it? Until the -- did I write that down? I thought I figured it out -- from the mid-'20's until the mid-'60's -- 40 years.

MCF: What caused him to close?

RL: In the first place, the neighborhood changed drastically. As I said -- you see what it is now. And then, he got older, and they moved away. He still used to serve a couple of customers -- that he'd go to the wholesale houses and get -- I'm going to give you an article about kosher butcher shops that Gil Sandler wrote -- he doesn't mention my father -- but it came in this week's Jewish Times. Have you ever seen this week's Jewish Times?

MCF: No.

RL: No? All right. It's a good magazine for Jewish things.

MCF: Was he involved with other Jewish food businesses in town? Like grocers? Wholesalers? Those kind of -- do you think?

RL: Not really involved. But like, for instance, if he had a good customer -- like say a Mrs. Hoffberger or a Mrs. Katz. He would get -- he would pick up something. He'd go to



the market and pick up certain groceries -- because he liked it. He was used to being out. He would pick up certain fruits and vegetables for them. But, he didn't -- he wasn't into any other kind of business. It's not like the supermarkets of today, where you have everything. I mean, you went to him for meat.

MCF: Yes.

RL: He didn't have cheese. Or any of that stuff.

MCF: No, I just wondered if there were relationships between Jews that were involved in groceries, and Jews that were involved in --

RL: Oh yes. Certainly. Certainly.

MCF: Across foods.

RL: But I don't think not a business relationship. But they all were, you know, together. Like I told you -- in this Whitelock Street alone -- there were grocery stores, and bakery shops.

MCF: Where would he go to buy the meat?

RL: Ruppensberger's, Schmidt's and SK. They sold the kosher meat. And, it's in this article. It's very interesting. Because I got such a kick out of it when I saw it, because I remember Charlie Schmidt and Ruppensberger's. They were two of the big ones that handled kosher meats for the kosher butchers.

MCF: Can you spell those names for me?

RL: Ruppensberger's -- is R-U-P-P-E-R-S-B-E-R-G-E-R.

MCF: And he was the wholesaler?



RL: Yes, he was the wholesaler. As this article tells you -- as Gil said -- and, he must have researched -- Gil -- he lives across the street -- did. There were 50 kosher butcher shops. In Baltimore today, there are only three. That's unbelievable.

MCF: There were 50 kosher?

RL: Uh-huh. I'm going to give you -- let me pull it out now so that I won't forget.

MCF: And today there's three. We'll get it later.

RL: I'll get it later -- all right.

MCF: OK. Let's go on from the story then. Let's talk a little bit about -- what did you do after high school.

RL: All right, now -- now we're getting into the next decade.

MCF: It took a while.

RL: Yes.

MCF: Doesn't it?

RL: Yes, because I've got to -- there are a lot of things. After high school, I entered the University of Maryland. I went to College Park. And you see, I was still imbued with this idea of going to Israel. And they had said to me -- we don't need any more strong backs. We need some people with knowledge and education. We need nutritionists. So, I enrolled -- even though I had been an English -- an ardent English scholar -- this is what I was -- I enrolled in the School of Home Economics, so that I could be a dietician. Well, as time went on in World War II -- and, I was there two years. And in those days, you didn't go to college for five and six years -- because your parents were struggling to get you through for four. So, I decided that I better learn to do something. Because I



don't think that I'm going to go to Israel and be a Chalutzim (sp?) you know, you change. I went to the Department of Education. And I had my degree in secondary Education from Deborah High School. So, I was equipped to teach high school. And I had a Home Ec major - -which I did do for a while.

MCF: And, so you graduated?

RL: Class of '42. Long time ago.

MCF: That's when you graduated?

RL: That's when I graduated.

MCF: And, tell me about your decision to go to college -- and, also a little bit about your parents' expectations?

RL: Never entered anybody's minds that I wouldn't go to college. You see? Education was extremely important to my parents. They say that's just -- that was it. And, of course, I was going to go to college. And, I could have a choice. You could go to Goucher and live at home. Or, I could go to College Park, and live out there. And, I wanted to live -- go away.

MCF: Why?

RL: For the adventure. I was very adventurous. OK? Not because I didn't love my parents. I love my parents dearly. But I wanted that excitement of living away from home.

MCF: Yes. What about your sisters -- where did they go?

RL: Well, my second sister died at 15. My third sister also went to College Park.



MCF: OK. And, did your parents -- since they had three girls -- did they speak about -- was there a difference between what your expectations that your father and mother had for you as far as what they hoped you'd become?

RL: Just to be successful. To get educated. And, I remember very clearly -- I'm jumping a step ahead -- but I'll -- that brought that to mind. When I went to my father -- when I enlisted in the Navy, I was still 20 years old. And, you had to have parental consent if you weren't 21 for the females in the WAVES. And, I asked him, and he said -- it was World War II and he said -- if I had sons, I would want them to go, he said. So, I only have daughters, and you go with my blessing.

MCF: Mmm.

RL: He was so proud that I went. See? So, all right.

MCF: So he really did want you to go.

RL: Oh yes, well, that day he did -- I think he liked the idea of having daughters, but my God, when Stevan was born he went nuts. When he started -- and his brother Bennie, the one that he was closest to had three sons. And, of course Bennie and he's only got sons. And I only had -- only he only has daughters. Well, then my uncle Bennie had, I think, three great-granddaughters. And, my father had three great-grandsons. The worm turned, you know? (laughter) Oh God, was he excited when Stevan was born.

MCF: I bet.

RL: Yes.

MCF: Well, so, what happened after University of Maryland?

RL: All right, now here's how -- when I got out of College in June '42, I spent the summer as a counselor at Camp Louise. Then, I get a couple of --



MCF: Time at Camp Louise?

RL: I was a Counselor.

MCF: What is that?

RL: A girl's camp. Very well-known. Louise is the girl's camp. Airy's the boy's camp.

MCF: For Jews?

RL: Yes. Mostly all Jewish. It was started by this Aaron and Louise Straus Foundation. And so that if you couldn't afford to go, they gave a lot of scholarships.

MCF: And, where was it?

RL: It's in Western Maryland. Thurmont, Maryland, with Cascade, Maryland was Louise. And, Thurmont was Airy.

MCF: OK.

RL: Stanley was a counselor there also. But we didn't meet there. We met two years before when I was a counselor at a camp called Camp Scopus. You know, the summer -- he was 19 and I was 18 -- that's where we first met.

MCF: OK. What was the name of the Camp?

RL: Where Stanley and I met? Scopus. S-C-O-P-U-S. It was run by Gus Bisgyer who was the head of the JCC at that time in Baltimore.

MCF: It was run by -- what was his name?

RL: Gus -- G-U-S. Bisgyer. B-I-S-G-Y-E-R.

MCF: And that was through like the JCC?



RL: Yes. He was the head of it. But, the camp wasn't a JCC camp.

MCF: OK. What year did you meet?

RL: We met -- I guess it would have been 1940.

MCF: OK. Did you start going out?

RL: Not at that time. Oh, we were married three weeks after our first date. October 1943.

MCF: OK. (laughter)

RL: Three and a half weeks. (laughter) We'll get to that.

MCF: We'll get into that.

RL: Yes, right.

MCF: All right. So you --

RL: But I knew him.

MCF: So you were at Camp Louise --

RL: Yes.

MCF: And then what happened?

RL: After Camp Louise, comes September. And, I taught school for just a couple of weeks. They put me in Special Education, where I hadn't had special training, and I really didn't like it. And then, I went to the Department of Public Welfare for a few months. And, I was restless, and adventuresome, and patriotic. And they started the Navy for women -- the WAVES. And I volunteered. And I was in the Third Officers Training Class.



MCF: Third Officers Training for the?

RL: WAVES. Women Accepted for Voluntary Service. And, I have all my certificates here. I brought up to show you.

MCF: What year was that?

RL: That would have been 1943 -- I guess I was sworn in 1943 -- February -- right afterward -- I'm trying to think of -- but, I wasn't 21 yet. So, I must have been '42 -- right after -- no, it was just a few months after graduation. But, I didn't go until '43.

MCF: So, it was Women's --?

RL: Accepted for Voluntary Service. Known as the WAVES. And there's a picture of myself over there in the WAVE uniform. And, I trained at Smith College in Northampton. There was three months' training, I believe.

MCF: And, what was that like?

RL: It was a wonderful experience.

MCF: What did they do?

RL: Well -- and this is interesting. Because now four year olds know how to use a computer...I didn't know how to type. And in six weeks, they taught me to type 40 words a minute. And we were trained how to -- mostly with codes and how to translate the codes into language. And we had a certain amount of military training. And here is an interesting point of my service. There were only three Jewish girls in this whole class. Two from New York and myself. But, the head of the WAVE at the time was Mildred McCaffee (sp?) was that her name? She was a minister's daughter. And she was -- told everybody that she had a bit of religion. So, we used to have Sunday morning ecumenical services -- or, if you choose not to go -- you could go to the service of your



choice. Either on Sunday morning -- or, in my case, Friday night.

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: I went to the first one -- well, ecumenical is ecumenical. But, it's still Jesus Christ. And this which -- I felt uncomfortable doing. It wasn't just God above. It was, you know, specific. So I elected to go to the Friday night services. So the people of Northampton were so wonderful to us. They were so good. We went to the Friday night services that they held there. And, they were just wonderful to us. This one girl -- I remember her name. Dorothy Rosenberg (sp?) and I went. The other girl -- Eva Levin (laughter) she didn't go. She stayed on with the Sunday morning. Just see a difference in personality and temperament.

MCF: Yes. And so, after training now?

RL: After training, I was stationed in Norfolk. I was sent to Norfolk.

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: And, of course -- this was a tremendous experience in my life. (laughter) And, here's a funny story. I don't know if you'll put this on tape --- but the first day I'm there, we all go in this huge room and a girl sitting next to me, makes an announcement, "You'll notice that none of them are here. They wouldn't leave their homes to come here." "What do you mean?" I said. "Jewish girls," she said. I said, "I am." She said, "I didn't mean, uh, uhmm..." She tried to

END OF CD 1



RL... getting married right away and fall in love... And, I remember one night I had a date with a very nice young man. And, we're walking along and he turns to me and he says, "Oh, I like you so much." He says, "And, I want you to know," he says "I've been looking so long for a lovely Catholic girl." So, I looked at him and I said, "Catholic?" Well, Suroski? I said, "It's spelled S-K-Y. (laughter) Not, S-K-I." (laughter) Isn't that a great story? (laughter)

MCF: Yes, yes.

RL: I always remember that. I had big experience in the Navy. This was my first encounter with coming outside of my Jewish background.

MCF: So you were in Norfolk, Virginia?

RL: Yes. That's where I was stationed.

MCF: And, what were you doing?

RL: I was a communications officer. I worked in the Code Room -- it was all very confidential. And I lived in the BOQ. And, just when I think about today --

MCF: The BOQ -- what?

RL: Bachelor Officer's Quarters. B-O-Q. That's what they called it. There's a big sign down the hallway. "No Male Officers Beyond This Point." Isn't that a throwback?

MCF: Yes.

RL: Here where they have mixed dorms today. "No Male Officers Beyond This Point."

MCF: And so, how long were you --



RL: I was in the service a year and a half. I was married while I was in the service. So, I went to Norfolk in like about April, I guess, after my training. And that fall, when I was home for the Jewish holidays. This was an exciting time. I was a representative of the Navy on the Bimah in the Chizuk Amuno Congregation. They had someone from the Marine Corps, from the Navy, from the Army - and I was the only female. And, I was the first female, who had been on that Bimah – from the Chizuk Amuno community at that time, during the regular service -- aside from a Confirmation or something of that sort.

MCF: Oh.

RL: And, a month later, they opened it up, because they hadn't had any weddings in there. When we decided to get married, we were married on that Bimah. I have fond memories of Chizuk Amuno.

MCF: So, you're saying that your naval experience or your service experience really opened you up to a non-Jewish world?

RL: That's the first -- that's really my first real contact.

MCF: OK. So --

RL: At College a little bit. But not much. Not like the Navy. You know, because I stayed in a Jewish sorority, and you know -- whatever's real experience --

MCF: I didn't ask you much about your experience at the University of Maryland. Did you have good professors or experiences that were strongly in your life or shaped you in any particular ways?

RL: we'll, I think --

MCF: Or anything that standing out?



RL: I had a very -- how can I put it? I had a very happy time at College Park. And I had good friends -- and --

MCF: And you were in a Jewish sorority?

RL: Yes.

MCF: Well what was it?

RL: Very segregated. Well, it was Alpha Sigma which was the forerunner of AE-Phi. It went national after I graduated.

MCF: Were you dating Jewish boys?

RL: Yes, I only dated only Jewish boys.

MCF: Only?

RL: I do remember -- this is a funny story. This is off-the-record. I had a date one night with a non-Jewish boy. And, we're cutting up a little bit, and he wants to get very sexy. And, I got scared. And he said, "What's the matter?" he said. Nobody would ever know. You're Jewish and I'm Gentile. Can you believe that? (laughter) I said, "No thank you." (laughter) Isn't that a crazy story? I remember that. That stood out in my mind.

MCF: Yes.

RL: I had a very -- a good experience at College Park. I did well. And, I wasn't a great student, but -- I played a lot. And, I had fun.

MCF: So, tell me about your courtship with Stanley.



RL: Well, that's exciting. And that's very, very thrilling. I had met him, as I told you -- when I was 18 or 19. And he said he was attracted to me right away. And he used to come around to my bunk where I'd be reading my kids to sleep. And they'd fall asleep and so would he. But then I'd leave them -- I went out with the older man there -- he liked me -- he was 27. (laughter) He was the older man, who became very well-known. Sid something in the beginning -- Joint Distribution Committee? He was -- anyway that was nothing. And it was that following fall when I came home, that my sister, Selma, died. That was a rough time. [getting choked up....] She died, literally in my arms. A friend of mine brought me in from College Park the night and I was there. That was --

MCF: So tough.

RL: Yes. You know, like I've been saying that -- the Navy was such a big experience to me. But, I do have to say that the outstanding thing in my life has been family. From the beginning to now down to what's going on now. My big, big thing. My parents were so -- having been bereft themselves -- my parents' family life was very important to them. And, of course I -- it's interesting. Even though -- well, for a time we were poor. You know, I never knew we were poor? I didn't know what that meant. Because it was a stable home. And, a loving home. And this, to me, is so important. And, I didn't -- I never went hungry. As a matter of fact, one of my father's customers -- A Mrs. Katz from S&M Katz, the Jewelers -- used to send -- she had a child about my age. And she used to send beautiful clothes from Sak's Fifth Avenue to the house. And I -- you know, that they had been worn -- but, I didn't care. It didn't make difference. And, I always had nice clothes.

MCF: Yes.

RL: And my parents -- as I said, I had all these lessons. I was a terrible violinist. Until one day I remembered the violin teacher said to my father -- he felt bad for him. Mr.



Surosky, -- he took four dollars he used to pay him for a lesson -- I can't take your money any more. (laughter) I wasn't interested. And, I didn't practice. I'd get it out the minute before he'd come you know? And I was terrible. I was good in my elocution. I loved that.

MCF: Were your sisters very close? The three of you?

RL: Yes, we were. But you see, the difference between my youngest sister was 8 years. So, I was out of the house already. But the sister that I was close to -- which was three years -- I was close. But then -- and then, of course, as time went on -- and she grew older and I grew older -- and we were very close --the later years of our life. But as little ones -- oh she used to rush home from school. She was still in elementary -- she and one of her girlfriends, Abby Blumenthal, to fight over who would push the carriage with Stevan in it, see? Because I was living with my mother during the War when Stanley -- well, for part of the time -- when he was overseas. Well, not to get ahead of myself.

MCF: OK.

RL: All right. So, we met there. But we didn't date. I had other boyfriends in-between. A goodly number, though. We dated. I didn't go steady, like today seems to be the tendency more. And, Stanley had another friend at College Park in Phi Sigma-- the other Sorority House. He would start -- he'd come to date her, but he'd come to see me first. We've always joked about this. How come you stopped to see me first, before you took that Alma out? (laughter)

MCF: Where was he going to School?

RL: He was at dental school at the time.

MCF: Where did he go?



RL: The University of Maryland Dental School in town here -- in Baltimore.

MCF: OK. So, he was at the --

RL: We had a wonderful romance. And then, that September, Rosh Hashonah, I'm home for the holidays for a couple of days. And, Stanley had come to my house just a couple of days before -- to see if I would be there.

MCF: What year was this?

RL: This would be 1943. And my mother said that I would be home for Rosh Hashonah -- which was like in a couple of days-- And, my sister Rita -- they always said -- when Stanley came -- he's so handsome-- and I'll show you a picture in a minute -- and he's still good-looking. She said, "That's going to be my brother-in-law. I know it." She was predicting. So he called me, and -- we had our first date. And we went to see Iolanthe at Ford's. I'll never forget it. And then we went to the Belvedere Bar. And he says he would have --

MCF: Wait a minute -- you went to see what?

RL: Iolanthe. And you remember these things.

MCF: And that was a play? Or --

RL: It was a -- at the Ford Theatre or Mechanic. It was a musical. Iolanthe. Or Play? I can't remember.

MCF: OK.

RL: It was called Ford's Theater at that time. It's now the Mechanic.

MCF: And then you went to?



RL: Belvedere Bar. Because I remember our 50th Anniversary -- we went back there. And we had drinks after the show. And he says -- I was telling him then about -- oh, my God. World War II you have a date with somebody once, twice -- and they want to marry you already. I said -- I mean, it's just like they're -- he says -- guess what? He didn't tell me he loved me the first time. Today he wanted to -- I scared him off by telling him that. (laughter) Well, anyway, I had to go back the next day to Norfolk. He was supposed to have stayed home a few days -- and I always joked. That's why your mother didn't like me. (laughter) And so I teased him. And so, of course, he left, too. He came back to Norfolk. And, we were married October 31st.

MCF: Well, wait. He was in Maryland -- right?

RL: Mmm. But, he was stationed in Norfolk also.

MCF: In what?

RL: In the Army. The Army Dental Corps. He was in the Air Force as a Dentist. And, he was in Langley Field which is right next to Norfolk. I was at the Norfolk Naval Operating Base.

MCF: OK. So, did you date down there?

RL: Sure. Then the -- well, what? Two weeks? Then, we called up and told we're engaged. I remember one night we were in the bleachers...

MCF: OK. So you met -- you had your first date in September?

RL: Uh-huh. Married October --

MCF: You were 23?

RL: No---21. And married October 31st.



MCF: October 31st?

RL: Of '43. (laughter)

MCF: OK. So tell me about that. How does that happen?

RL: Well, as I said, you have to go through that experience of a War like that. You're not going to wait -- you don't know what's going to happen the next day. And, I was crazy about him. And, he was crazy about me. And we wanted to get married. And, you see -- could this be off-the-record? I want to tell you --

MCF: Yes.

RL: Say something here. And it is my own personal feeling. See, today, the youngsters would just go to bed. But they didn't do that at that time.

MCF: Yes, yes.

RL: See this is different. And here's this -- I'm so excited, and he's so excited. And I knew I loved him. I'd dated a lot of boys before. It wasn't like I wasn't popular or didn't have boyfriends.

MCF: You could tell?

RL: I knew right away. I had gone with a --

MCF: What was it about him that made you --?

RL: Just everything.

MCF: Know?



RL: I just knew he was right. I don't know -- because -- this is a funny story. When I called up my parents from Norfolk to tell them that I was engaged to Stanley, my father said to me -- if we knew you wanted to get married, we would have told you to marry Max. They didn't even know Stanley. But, Max was also a dentist - -but, from Boston - -that I had been going out with. But, I remember, very clearly -- these are my words -- and, I've always said it. Because I say it to Stanley all the time. I think -- I believe there's such a thing as stars in the eyes. And I was only 19 or 20 at that time. Well, I'm not going to sell myself short at this age of life -- and, I didn't. And, I'm forever grateful. 58 years next month.

MCF: And, so --

RL: And I still like him.

MCF: Yes.

RL: Who called, darling?

__: Roger.

RL: Oh good, what did he have to say?

__: He will be here. Call him and tell him what time.

RL: Did he have a good time?

__: Pretty good.

RL: OK.

__: I think he was a little worried of going --



RL: This is a friend of ours -- single -- who was in Copenhagen, and went through the fields and just came --

__: I thought he was in Greenland, and he was in Iceland.

RL: Oh really?

__: He was in the Sparrow Islands.

RL: Oh.

__: And Bernie was in a lot of places.

RL: He's divorced, so he's alone. So I always invite him for Rosh Hashonah. So I'd left a message.

MCF: OK.

RL: OK.

__: Yes.

RL: I don't -- I just told Marcie how we were attracted to each other. (laughter) And --

__: How we were attracted to each other?

RL: And, how you didn't tell me that you loved me the first night when we went to the Fords -- the Belvedere because I was telling her how everybody's so urgent with the World War II -- they tell you they love you right away.

__: Did she tell you that we were counselors together?

RL: Yes. I told her.



___: And I was madly in love with her.

RL: (laughter)

___: But she was madly in love with the senior -- (laughter) Now -- (laughter)

RL: (laughter)

MCF: I know. Too bad.

___: It wasn't bad.

MCF: All right.

RL: She asked me how I knew you were the right one. I told her I had dated enough boys before -- I knew (laughter)

Stanley: Marcie -- it was purely sexual.

MCF: Yes.

RL: I told her -- I said, off the record -- she said to me -- September -- your first date, and you were married in October? I said, Marcie - off the record -- today, young people just go to bed -- but we -- you just didn't do that then.

Stanley: Marcie, I was going with a girl in College Park, before I met...

RL: (laughter) I told her that.

Stanley: Who used to be before her. You know? (laughter)

RL: (laughter)

MCF: That's great. So tell me about the wedding.



RL: My mother got together a beautiful wedding. I'll show you a couple of pictures of her.

MCF: Well what did she think about putting together a wedding in three weeks?

RL: She -- they were crazy about him. They thought he was wonderful.

Stanley: Did you tell Marcie what your father said?

RL: I told her. If we knew you wanted to get married, we would have told you to marry Max. I just told her. That's a famous thing. But you know what? Many, many years later -- and my father's been gone 15 years. But, maybe just a couple of years before he died. He was sitting here for Friday night -- and see I always have Friday night -- and, he pulls out this letter that Stanley had written him -- asking for my hand in marriage. He had kept it all that time.

MCF: Yes.

RL: Yes.

MCF: Well, tell me about the wedding.

RL: It was a beautiful wedding. It was at Chizuk Amuno Synagogue. And one of the foremost Jewish caterers in town.

MCF: Who was that?

RL: Rebecca Tannenbaum. That's what it was at that time. And, she prepared everything. And, our friends were there. And, we had a wonderful time. I'll tell you a little story.

Stanley: Marcie, our wedding was the only Jewish wedding in the whole history of Judaism where she had nothing to do with any of it.



MCF: (laughter)

RL: Except the gown/dress.

Stanley: We came up -- we came up from Norfolk you know?

RL: (laughter)

Stanley: On the boat. And arrived in the morning, early - -and got married that afternoon.

MCF: That's great.

Stanley: Remember that?

RL: It's true.

Stanley: She wouldn't let me in her room.

RL: (laughter)

Stanley: Wearing a bow-tie --

RL: But he thinks he was because -- he didn't know I had my hair up in curlers. And I didn't want him to see me with my hair in curlers. (laughter)

RL: Oh, it was wonderful.

MCF: So, when did you get your dress?

RL: I'd come home - at Hutzler's (sp?) I'll show it to you - -sure. My sister wore it when she got married -- too.

MCF: And did you have an evening, or an afternoon? Or --



RL: It was a Sunday afternoon. And then, a lovely -- and really -- and, his friends were there, a lot from Dental School.

MCF: And they were at the reception afterwards?

RL: Yes, a beautiful reception, and music. Lew Ginsberg who was the musician at the time. He played at the wedding. And, it was the full works.

MCF: Well, was that like a dinner? Or just a cake and cookies? And --

RL: Oh, no, no, no. It was a lot of food.

MCF: They sat down?

RL: Yes. Yes. It might have been buffet in sitting down - because it was downstairs in the Chizuk Amuno in their Rec Room, or whatever you would call it?

MCF: Now, was like Tannenbaum? And that was a kosher caterer?

RL: Oh yes, oh yes. Rebecca Tannenbaum.

MCF: So, your mom did the arrangements, and you showed up?

RL: We showed up. She got the invitations, and everything. When I think -- I've watched my grand-daughter, and -- I know what I went through with my own daughter -- and they all had something to say about the wedding, and how they wanted to be -- and I just wanted to get married, and liked to be married in a synagogue. And Rabbi Coblenz was there. And, everybody was glad to do - -because we were both in the service. You know? It was like they were doing something patriotic. It was lovely.

MCF: What Rabbi married you?

RL: Rabbi Coblenz.



MCF: How do you spell that?

RL: C-O-B-L-E-N-Z. I have my Ketuba upstairs. And I just hung Rachel's wedding invitation above it.

MCF: Tell me just a little bit about Stanley's family. And his background.

RL: Yes. Well, Stanley's father was Scotch. His father came from Edinborough. His mother came from Russia-- well; she came from Kiev -- actually.

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: And, his family was like about the 8th Jewish family in Edinborough. I have a wonderful picture of them also to show you. And, they were really ardent Zionists in the beginning. His grandfather was at that First Conference with Theodore Hertzl at Basel (sp?) And, he's an only child. And, what did his parents do for a living?

RL: His father, who was educated in Scotland, came here -- a high school graduate -- was a very bright man. My father looked up to him. He thought he was very educated. And, he ran an installment business here in town.

MCF: What was his name?

RL: David. David Ephraim Levy. And his mother's name was Anna Turow -- T-U-R-O-W Levy.

MCF: T-O--?

RL: T-U-R-O-W.

MCF: Anna?

RL: Mmm hmm.



MCF: And she was -- OK, good. And did she work in the business then?

RL: Yes, she would stay in the store. He would go out on the street selling. So, the people who dropped in, they lived out in West Baltimore.

MCF: So, they grew up - he grew up in West Baltimore?

RL: Yes, he grew up in West Baltimore.

MCF: What Shul did he go to? Or did he?

RL: They were not religious. They weren't -- didn't have an affiliation. He went to Hebrew School for a couple of years, and then quit.

MCF: So, all the kind of observance -- you really --

RL: It's our family -- my mother's side, and my father's side.

MCF: OK. So, tell me what happens after marriage.

RL: OK, now --

MCF: Where did you go? Did you go on a honeymoon?

RL: Oh yes.

MCF: Where did you go?

RL: To New York. Right away. And, this is a funny story. I'm in uniform, see -- oh, everybody I -- I had a wedding dress. I was allowed to take off the uniform for the wedding. But then, I got dressed to go away. And I'm putting on my uniform, and I go -- and we go into this hotel. We were booked into the New Yorker, I think it was. And, Stanley always teases me - because he was in uniform. I was in uniform. And, the



whole time I am on the elevator, I am holding my hand up like this -- that everybody should see that I'm married. Because I don't want them to think that we're just going -- (laughter) it's so funny when I think about it now. You know? Relative to today. And, we spent the week in New York. And we -- we saw Carmen. I remember the Opera. And we went to see a fight. Who's a -- we just had a wonderful week in New York. And we came back, and we went to Norfolk. And, we had an apartment on Willoughby Beach. I can show you a picture over there -- and, we were very happy there. And he worked -- he was in the Army, as I said, and I was in the Navy. And then, I became pregnant. And, unfortunately, I had a miscarriage and at that time, I got out of service, because that's--

MCF: Yes.

RL: And then, I traveled with him, and he got transferred shortly thereafter. We went down -- we were in Nashville, Tennessee, and in Augusta, Georgia. And, we were in Augusta, when he got the call for overseas. And then, I was pregnant, and I guess I was about four months pregnant. And then, we came home. And I lived with my mother for a year and a half while he was overseas for a year.

MCF: So what year was that?

RL: Well, I got out of the service in '44. And Stevan was born in '45. In March of '45. And, Stanley came home -- 9 months -- when Stevan was nine months old.

MCF: So, that was like 1945?

RL: That would be -- Stanley came home then in 1946. And, we stayed with my mother until July -- a couple of months -- we stayed a couple of months until he got his office on Eutaw Place. And then, we moved. And it was really quite...

MCF: And Stevan was born when?



RL: 19__ -- March 22nd, 1945.

MCF: How do you spell Stevan?

RL: S-T-E-V-A-N.

MCF: S-T-E-P--?

RL: S-T-E-V--- as in Victory -- A-N. I know it's different than most people spell it -- but --

MCF: OK. First born.

RL: Mmm hmm.

MCF: And what was it -- tell me about your pregnancy, and about your delivery. What kind of an experience that was?

RL: I had a very easy time. And this -- I'll never forget. I was with my mother. And, of course, when my -- when I started to go into labor- - it was a Thursday morning. I had to remember, because my father had (inaudible) and I had woken my mother up -- and she said, oh it's time to get you to the hospital. She didn't drive, so she wakens my father. And he says to her -- but, darling, you said I should sleep later this morning. And she says -- Albert, the child's going to have her baby. He says "Oh, oh, all right. Well, then make that cup of coffee." (laughter) And then we got out -- and they took me to the hospital. And, that was mixed sweetness and sadness, because he wasn't there.

MCF: Where was he?

RL: He was in Iran, overseas. And, I'll tell you a little interesting tidbit. In the room across the hall from me --

MCF: What Hospital were you in?



RL: Sinai Hospital. There was another young woman who gave birth to a child. His name was Joel Shavitz. And you know -- did you know Robin, too?

MCF: Mmm mmm.

RL: New York? Bonny does. Anyway, Joel Shavitz. But his father had had some sort of physical problem, and he wasn't in the Service. So, of course, he was there with his wife, and -- it made me kind of sad - -you know, I mean I was happy for them. But I'm -- you know? But, everybody was lovely to me. And, I never knew them. Blanche actually had been in my high school class. But, we hadn't been friendly. And, I maybe had run into them once or twice. Twelve and a half years later, they end up next door to us. Isn't that amazing? And, Stevan and Joel were bar mitzvahed the same day. They'd become very good friends. And they're still friends -- to this day.

MCF: That's great.

RL: Yes.

MCF: So you had a good pregnancy?

RL: Yes, no problem.

MCF: Went to Dr. Gutmacher. I was very well-taken care of. And, my mother, of course, was wonderful to me --

MCF: G-U-T--?

RL: G-U-T-M-A-C-H-E-R. He was a well-known obstetrician in town. I'll tell you another funny story. Stanley had written to me, and he said that -- I should get fitted for a diaphragm. So, I asked Gutmacher would he fit me for a diaphragm. And he said, "When your husband comes home from overseas." (laughter) Just like he wouldn't trust me. Isn't that a funny -- and so, I didn't think anything. I said, OK. So, I didn't get it until



I knew he was coming back.

MCF: That's hysterical.

RL: Isn't that funny? I mean -- see -- it is so different -- this whole thing today.

MCF: Yes, yes. So, then what would you do before Stanley returned? You were just raising the baby? Raising Stevan?

RL: OK. I raised --

MCF: Stevan?

RL: I raised Stevan, and I stayed with my mother. And I did various things, because -- and, here's one thing. I volunteered --

__: [background noise -- apparently they go over to look at some materials on table]

RL: ... few little things like that, you know?

__: (Break in Tape)

MCF: So Stanley was still in the service? And, you had a young baby?

RL: Yes. And he came home -- when he was 9 months old.

MCF: And, how did he react? How did Stanley react to the baby?

RL: Well, you should really ask me how Stevan reacted. This is a funny story, too. Stanley, of course, was thrilled. He says, "Oh my, he's so handsome. He's wonderful." Stanley was excited. I'll show you a picture of him holding him. And, the first morning -- Stevan shared my room. He was in a crib. And, I was in a single bed. And, my sister slept in the dining room, because I shared a room with the baby. And



Stevan gets up in the morning, and he sees this strange man in bed, and he like shakes his foot and starts to rock the crib so that it came across the floor. Isn't that a funny story? Like who's that with my mother? (laughter) It's a funny story. Yes. We did very well. We handled it just wonderfully.

MCF: OK, so then where did you all move?

RL: Then, we moved to Eutaw Place. 2422 Eutaw Place. Where Stanley had his office on the first floor -- and, he had a beautiful office. And we lived on the second floor. And, we had a tenant on the third floor. These were big, old brownstones -- New York style, traditional brownstones. And, you see me ringing the doorbell -- and that picture is one of those doors. And, several years later, the tenants -- we asked them to leave, and we took over both floors.

MCF: And, he had his own practice?

RL: He went right into private practice, all by himself. Did very well, thank God.

MCF: What kind of dentistry?

RL: General dentistry.

MCF: And then, were you -- at home with Stevan? And doing stay-at-home mom? Or, were you doing volunteer work, too?

RL: Well, all right. Now, we're coming into the first decade -- I guess, after I've been married.

MCF: OK.

RL: For the first couple of years, I helped Stanley in the office. And see, I lived upstairs.

MCF: Yes.



RL: And, I had help in the house. And, I stayed at home. And, I became active in Jewish activities. And then, when I became -- after a couple of years, Stanley got a full-time secretary. So, I didn't help him in the office at all any more -- except to take money that I needed. (laughter) That was --

MCF: What kind of Jewish activities were there?

RL: Now, then as time went on -- I became active in The Associated. And as you just heard-- I was very active in Chizuk Amuno -- both in the Sisterhood. And the PTA through the '50's -- I was President of the Chizuk Amuno PTA at one time. This sort of thing. And, I became active in a group -- a younger group of Pioneer Women. And that would carry me through the '50's. I was -- I said Active Associated, and Sisterhood.

Very active in the Synagogue activities with the Hebrew Schools. But, during that time -- when I was pregnant with Laura, and I was -- she was born in '54 -- I treated myself to two years at the Maryland Institute, and where I studied Interior Design, which has always been a favorite pastime of mine.

MCF: So, Maryland Institute?

RL: College of Art. Mmm hmm. Take out the Comma address - just write it one word, they just change it. The Maryland Institute College of Art.

MCF: And you studied Interior Design?

RL: Design -- mmm hmm. For two years.

MCF: What years was that? Was that '54 and --

RL: '53 and '54. '54 and '55.

MCF: And, Laura was born?



RL: In '54.

MCF: And, what was the date of her birth?

RL: May 10th, 1954.

MCF: OK.

RL: She's my baby.

MCF: Yes. OK. And, so, she's the baby?

RL: Mmm hmm.

MCF: And, Michael's born in?

RL: July 12th, 1947. And, Eddie was born April 5th, 1951. He just turned 50. He just had his big 50th.

MCF: And those pregnancies – deliveries.

RL: All good. Thank God. I did have a couple abortions. I had that one I told you about when I got out of the Navy -- spontaneous abortions. Miscarriages you'd call them. But only very brief -- it was six weeks. And then, I had another one, after Michael, I think it was -- between Michael and Eddie.

MCF: That's hard.

RL: But I -- I did very well. It was -- when I think about it in retrospect, because I hadn't gone long. It was just like six weeks, you know, each time.

MCF: Yes.

RL: It was like a delayed period. (laughter)



MCF: So, tell me about - -you know -- raising a family --

RL: OK. Because the most important thing in my life -- this is my mantra, is my family. My kids call me the She hecheyanu kid. I don't know if you know that or not.

MCF: No, tell me what that means?

RL: It's a blessing in Hebrew. [Gives the blessing in Hebrew -- which sounds like -- [spellings???) -- "Baruch attah adonai elohanu melech haolam she-he-he-yanu ve-higi-anu ve-kiy'manu la-z'man hazeh." It means "Bless oh Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sustained us, and enabled us to reach this day." And I say that all the time.

MCF: Do you know how to spell she-he-he-yanu?

RL: she-he-he-yanu? S-H--- let's see. S-H-E-C-H --that's what I think. I can spell it in Hebrew easier.

MCF: Yes, all right.

RL: And, I have a mantra. It goes like this -- I was born into a very loving and stable family. And, I was fortunate enough to meet a very loving and wonderful man. And together, we really had four wonderful children who were smart enough to bring us four lovely children. And then, in turn, they've given us 9 fabulous grandchildren, who now are following in their parents' footsteps. We have two wonderful grand-children-in-laws. What more can anybody ask? And then, I say Sheckianyu. I do, I feel very blessed.

MCF: Yes.

RL: I don't like to say it out loud, but Stevan and Joyce have been married 32 years. Michael and Bonny, 29. Eddie and Joanne, 20. And, Laura and Trafton will be married 25 in November.



MCF: That's kind of miraculous.

RL: That's a record today in today's world.

MCF: Well, I don't think I've heard that from another person.

RL: I know. I'm sure you haven't.

MCF: I have to tell you that.

RL: I believe it. And, as I'm saying it very quietly. And, very -- and I'm laying -- shehechyanu. And I really mean -- thank you, Dear God.

MCF: Well, I think it has everything to do with it. They had this really, really good model.

RL: A lot of kids have good models. I know, we have friends who had good marriages, and their kids have divorced.

MCF: It's tough.

RL: Oh, it's tough. It's -- I'm saying -- I've very thankful.

MCF: I think you did a lot right.

RL: Well, I hope so. (laughter) Because I probably did a lot of things wrong, too. So, I hope I did some things right.

MCF: So, tell me about creating a home life and a family life.

RL: OK. Family was always very important to me. As I said, I have a friend, Leonard Davitz, who used to joke. We've been friends for umpteen -- actually, we met in the second grade. But, we've been friendly all of our married life. His wife, and he, and



Stanley and I -- that's who we're going out with tonight. And, he used to tease me about the 12 o'clock kiss. Because at the time, my kids would come home half day from school. But if we had to go out, I didn't like to go until they came home, and I gave them a kiss from school. I believe, very strongly, if you can -- some people can't -- they absolutely can't. If you can stay home while your children are young, you do it. Now, as I said, I went back to school when I was -- but that's just a few hours, you know -- a couple of days a week. But when Laura was in the 3rd grade, she was 8 years old, and she was my baby. Then, I went back to teaching school. And now we're getting into the --so, you see, the first couple of decades, I was busy with -- at home, and with the synagogue and with Jewish activities. When -- except this course -- I started to work in interior design a little bit -- but, I didn't like the money part of it. It's business. So, I said, let me see if I can't go back to teaching school. So, in the early '60's, I went back to teaching school. And that decade -- the '60's to the '70's -- I taught school full-time, the first two years. And then I decided that was too hard with four children who were still at home. Stevan was starting to go to college. And I left. And you know, they gave me a two-day-a-week job at the William S. Baer School. Well, that was wonderful. And, I stayed there until about '70.

MCF: And, what was the name of this?

RL: The William S. Baer School -- Special Education.

MCF: William Baer?

RL: William S. -- that's the way it's called.

MCF: So, B-A--?

RL: B-A-E-R. And, that was to the '70's. And then, I retired from teaching. And, I spent the next 14 years working at Apex drapery, where I started to use the Interior Design. But, I worked out of the store for them -- and, I worked there two days a week.



See, I like those two-days a week. It was great for me with the kids. And, I did that. And that was the '60's -- from the '70's. And then, I started to get involved in other kind of community activities. I became a member of the -- I was appointed to the War Memorial Commission. And, as I told you -- Shoshanna Cardin was the one who recommended me for that. And I was on that over 20 years.

MCF: And, what was that?

RL: There's a building downtown call the War Memorial Building. And, they have a special commission to run it. Who uses it. What kind of activities can be held there. This sort of thing. So, I was on that Commission. I was on it over 20 years. And then, also during this period of time, I went from this medical world that I'd been involved with my husband to the legal world. I became a -- I was appointed to the Attorney Grievance Commission, which is very interesting. And, when I'd finished that, I did a three-year stint on the Review Board. The Attorney Grievance Re-Board -- which really took time. It met once a month, and it was very serious stuff. And, then, I get up to the mid-'90's by that time. And, when I'd finished with that -- I had done all these other things -- I started to play bridge, and I golfed. And, Stanley was retired. And we do a lot of theater. We both love the theater. So, we go to a lot of theater. And, I'm very grateful -- we live a very beautiful life. I'm involved with my grandchildren, as much as I can be. As much as they'll let me -- you know? (laughter)

MCF: When did Stanley retire?

RL: Stanley retired 16 years ago. So that would be -- that would be '84, I guess. Or '85.

MCF: Now, what was that like for you? When he retired?

RL: Then I retired. I left Apex -- we both retired. It was wonderful. I belong to a women's discussion group. I have -- one day I was listening to -- she was going to a



psychiatrist, because her husband was planning to retire, and she didn't know how she could take it. Well, I loved it being retired. But see, we have a very good relationship. I mean, we can spend a lot of time together - -but I can go off and do my thing, and he can go off and do his thing.

MCF: What do you think has been really key to your relationship to it being so successful?

RL: Just loving him. I don't know what else to say. I think that -- we have a mantra. Another mantra -- a few things. Where it is important to him, I go along with it, if I don't like it. What's important to me -- he goes along with it, even if he doesn't like it. And, we never go to bed angry. Those are two very important things.

MCF: Yes.

RL: And we do it just that simple.

MCF: And, in your marriage, when you were raising your children -- did you take on fairly traditional roles about responsibilities in the house? Or, did he help at all the kids?

RL: No. Oh, he helped with the children-- he was always involved with his children. But he didn't do -- like it's funny -- when I broke my leg -- what? Seven years ago -- Joyce had to come over and show him how to use the washing machine. (laughter) Now, he does the laundry all the time. It's wonder --- but men didn't do this. And I didn't need him to do it. It didn't make any difference. Always very involved with his children. Especially, I told him -- I said, I think boys need a father. I mean -- so Laura wasn't -- but he was wonderful. He was active in Brownies or Boy Scouts. Or he took them to games. He used to take the boys and their friends to basketball games. Spent a lot of time with them. We see some fathers don't pay any attention. But, I notice that all of my boys are very involved with their children.



MCF: And, how did you go about structuring and creating a Jewish life together in the home?

RL: Well, Stanley left that mostly to me and went along with it. That's it. Like for instance -- we have -- we talk about his contract -- he goes with me to Kol Nidre and he goes with me the first day of Rosh Hashonah. But, he doesn't go the second day. Fine. Good enough.

MCF: And which temple is that?

RL: Now, we belong to Beth Am, which is in the old Chizuk Amuno Building. Like Rachel said to me as she's coming in -- she said, "Well, she'd like to go the second day, too. Would I go with her?" And I said, "Of course, darling, I'll go with you."-- you know?

MCF: How do you spell Beth Am?

RL: B-E-T-H -- and then, A-M. Jane Shapiro also belongs to that.

MCF: OK. And is that a Conservative, or --

RL: It's now Conservative -- yes. It had been unaffiliated for a while. But, they were having difficulty getting the proper Rabbi and stuff -- because a lot of the good ones, don't want to be unaffiliated. It is to their advantage to be affiliated.

MCF: So, what were you doing about religious training for the kids?

RL: Oh, they all went to Hebrew School.

MCF: Where were they going when they were -- what Temple were you all a part of when they were there?

RL: Well, Chizuk Amuno -- they were all of them bar mitzvahed, and bat mitzvahed. And, Laura was confirmed as well as bat mitzvahed. Now, they all had a good



background -- that they do.

MCF: Did you go to temple -- you didn't go to temple on Friday nights or anything, did you?

RL: We weren't big on that. Yes.

MCF: Did you do Shabbat?

RL: We had a lovely Friday night dinner at home.

MCF: A Shabbat dinner?

RL: Yes. With family and friends. Children's friends. I don't go to Shul very often. Every once in a while something comes up and I want to. But I'm not a real Shul goer. Especially now that we're both retired.

MCF: And then, what about the -- did you do the cooking in the house?

RL: Yes. I always cooked. I always cooked. My maids didn't cook.

MCF: But you had African-American housekeepers?

RL: I had African-American.

MCF: To help?

RL: Yes.

MCF: Tell me about what kind of things you like to cook. How did you learn to cook?

RL: Well, you see, I was a Home Ec major. I told you that. So I had some background. And, things of my mother, and read recipes. I've always said -- anybody who can read, and wants to cook, can cook. If you can't read, you're in trouble.



MCF: When the kids were little, did you just do like supper every night? And, regular dinner every night?

RL: We had dinners every night here -- because they were at school. As a matter of fact, didn't like to buy lunch. We used to make lunch.

MCF: Yes.

RL: I used to -- did you used to like to make lunch?

MCF: Mmm hmm.

RL: I can tell a famous story about this. One night, we were out on a Wednesday night -- with another couple. And, we had a great time. We were coming home. And, I had maybe had a little more to drink that I should have. And, I'd been working hard, and I said, "Oh my God, I've got to get up and make those lunches. I've got to make those lunches when I get home tonight." And, Stanley pats me on the back and he says, "No darling, don't do that." And I say, "Oh my God, he's going to offer to make the lunches." He didn't say that -- he said, "Go to bed, get up a little earlier and make them." (laughter) Isn't that a great story? But, can't you just see ... (laughter) Yes, but I made lunches for them. As a matter of fact, when I went back to teaching school -- I used to cook on Sundays, and fix up frozen dinners. That's when I got my freezer. And put them in the freezer, so that I could have a real meal every night.

MCF: That's hard.

RL: It was hard. Yes. It was hard. Well, my quote unquote was -- after teaching full time two years -- after the first year it was so hard, I said, I think I better try it a second year to see if the second year will be easier. Well, it was easier, in a sense. But I said, it was too much. And I said to Stanley -- "I don't think I can have the kind of married life and family life that I want working full-time." I mean, we didn't need it. I mean,



everybody can always use extra money. I could buy a fancier car. Or get a mink coat. But I mean, we didn't really need it to get by on. And he said, "Then don't do it." And I was out six months when this supervisor came and offered me this two-day a week job. Man, I grabbed it. And, I stayed there. And, when I left they filled my job with a full-time teacher, right?

MCF: Yes.

RL: That was a very good break for me.

MCF: Yes.

RL: That was perfect. I loved being busy. Having some sort of organized activity a couple of days a week.

MCF: Right.

RL: But it gave me time to go to my kids' games. To do what I wanted to do. And to shop.

MCF: Yes.

RL: To do it - -without --

RL: Yes. And, I did.

MCF: Yes. Good women friends?

RL: Yes. I have very nice women friends. Very nice women friends. And, as a matter of fact, a lot of my good friends -- their husbands are Stanley's good friends, which make it very nice.

MCF: What about -- you said you did keep kind of a Jewish, kosher-style home?



RL: I keep a Jewish Home -- that's about all we said. And -

MCF: So, what did that mean to you?

RL: It meant that I didn't have ham in the house. I didn't have pork in the house. I didn't make that as a meal. Now, as I said, I'm older. I'll bring in some sliced ham for a sandwich or something. But, I never would make a roast ham for you know -- or a glazed ham. As a matter of fact, I make a glazed pickled corn beef -- which is made like a ham that I make for Rosh Hashonah every year. And, I love home-made chicken soup, and all this -- I make home-made soups. And, when you make them with kosher meat there's also much better -- cross-piece, if you can ever find it.

MCF: What did you say?

RL: Cross-piece. Only can get it in a kosher market.

MCF: What's that?

RL: I don't know what's -- it's a cut of a meat. It's -- what it is exactly. But that's what I used to make my soups.

MCF: And, where do you buy it? Where would you go for -- once you were married and you wanted to buy kosher meats, and all that kind of stuff?

RL: Well, for a long time, my father was still in business.

MCF: Yes.

RL: So like --

MCF: Like Passover supplies and all that kind of stuff?



RL: Well, the supermarkets all sell that now. There's no problem with that. But the meats are the only problem. So, got that from my father. And, then there are a couple of kosher butchers in town where I -- 7 Mile Market and --

MCF: Today?

RL: Yes. And, Wasserman & Limburger (sp?) That's where I placed my order for Rosh Hashonah. Because I like it to be fresh. They make the pickled corn beefs and so --

MCF: Wasserman and --?

RL: Lemburger. There's only three in town now. Wasserman and Limburger. Seven Mile Market. And, I forgot who the third is. They're both not too far from here. As a matter of fact, Friday morning, I'll pick up my order. It's already placed. My honey cakes are in the freezer.

MCF: So tell me what you make on the Holiday?

RL: OK. Well, I buy the gefilte fish. I order that. And I have to pick that up on Sunday.

MCF: So, it's still home-made? Somebody makes it?

RL: Oh, the caterers.

MCF: Wow.

RL: But, it's a home-made caterer.

MCF: Who makes it? A lot of people do. But, I'm getting it this year from the Biddle Street Caterers. And, it's kosher. And, I get the horse radish and that. And, I get the round challah from them. And then, the chopped liver I make myself. So that -- we have a system. I'll put a round table in the living room. And we have the gefilte fish and the chopped liver as hors d'oeuvres with wine. And then, for Friday night dinner, I have a



traditional meal. I have this glazed corn beef. I have a turkey with gravy, of course. I make a certain rice stuffing. But, I make it in a big pan – I don't put it in the turkey. It's a really good rice and mushroom and pecans. A very good dish. And, I have a whole platter of marinated vegetables, instead of an individual salad.

MCF: And, this is for Rosh Hashonah?

RL: Yes, this is -- it will be next Friday -- next Monday night. And, I have you know asparagus. And string beans, and olives -- all kinds of marinated vegetables. And then, we have honey cake for dessert. As I said, that's already made and in the freezer. And then, Monday for lunch, after Shul, I have the home-made chicken soup, and the leftovers. And, I have enough for that.

MCF: So, who comes?

RL: I'm going to have 18 -- well, Michael and Bonny usually come. But this year they're not because of her father's 90th birthday. So, we'll miss them dreadfully.

MCF: That's amazing.

RL: Yes.

MCF: So, you'll have 18 for Rosh Hashonah?

RL: I'll have -- a Rosh Hashonah dinner -- and 10 for lunch. Now, I do have help coming in that night. I don't want to have to do the clean-up. That's one night I really do treat myself to that.

MCF: Oh, yes.

RL: Because then they'll set the table for me for the next day for lunch, so that I'll be ready. And what they'll do is that they'll fix the leftovers on platters for me, and put them



in the refrigerator. And the soup, I'll just heat when I come home -- and I'll be set. In fact, I'm going to do it --

MCF: That's great.

RL: Yes.

MCF: What a nice meal.

RL: Oh yes. Nobody will go hungry. (laughter)

MCF: And then, so it sounds like creating that Jewish life in the house when the kids were growing up -- you were just doing the holiday meals and making sure that they had their religious training?

RL: And, Friday night you had -- of course, my father was a big influence. See, my father was here for a long time. And, he would take them to -- did Michael ever tell you how he used to come and get them up to make a minyan in the morning?

MCF: No.

RL: Oh yes. And, Michael was the most -- he really had a Jewish feeling. And, he was living in the Esplanade -- the Emersonian, which was right -- which was right across the street from the synagogue. My father often would come and get him early -- and then wake him up in the morning, to come make the minyan.

MCF: Yes. So, tell me -- you all moved at some point from --

RL: Eutaw Place to here.

MCF: OK.

RL: 44 years ago. We've been in this house 44 years.



MCF: What year did you move here?

RL: It will be 1957, I guess.

MCF: And what part of town is this in?

RL: It's called the Mt. Washington area.

MCF: Why did you all move?

RL: The real reason is neighborhood changed. Schools became a problem. That's it.

MCF: Who was moving in?

RL: Hillbillies, more. It's now -- I hate to use that term. But, the defense workers. It was different. And, well Michael will tell you -- when he had to walk to -- walk to elementary school, he'd get tackled sometimes. We didn't know what -- anyway, it was time. And then, the neighborhood just changed. It's sad.

MCF: And where did Stanley have an office then?

RL: Well, he would have the 2422 place. Then, he moved this office first -- 6414 Park Heights Avenue. That's not too far from here. And then, when we went to look for a -- see that's one of the reasons he changed the office first. When we went to look for a house, he wanted to be not too far from that. Do you know, he came home every day for lunch?

MCF: (laughter)

RL: But here's an example. You talk about how -- oh, I could be out. I'll just leave a sandwich in the refrigerator for him. And, I'd set the table, and put a glass there. And, he would come in and take the sandwich out. He'd pour his own Coke, or whatever he was going to have to drink and then he'd take a little nap in the lounge chair down there,



or read the paper and then go back to work. Because his office was only five minutes from here. Very nice.

MCF: Yes. It really is. All right, Ruth -- what have I forgotten to ask you?

RL: I don't know. I told you that the most important thing in my life has been my family. The family I was born to. The family that evolved. I told you that the Navy and I'd had a big experience. I told you about my outside activities. I told you what a kick I got out of seeing all the other names of the ladies who'd be narrators, and going back to the relationship with them.

MCF: Tell me maybe in closing about what do you think -- why is -- how is Judaism important to you now, or why it has been? And how do you feel about kind of the Jewish issues that you see today?

RL: That's a big question.

MCF: Yes, I know.

RL: But just off-the-cuff. I am intensely Jewish. I've been that way as long as I can remember. Israel's very important to me. And, I feel it's very important to all Jews. I feel that you can embrace many other things in the world, but your Jewish identity is important and distinctive.

MCF: So, Jewish identity is really central?

RL: Yes, I don't go off the deep end about people who don't. It's interesting. You know, my daughter's married to a non-Jewish boy. But they've raised all three of their daughters Jewish. And I can remember when I first saw that they were serious, and I said to them both -- I said, "I want you to know I'm very fond of you. And, I think that you and Laura are wonderful together." I said, "But I think that marriage has sufficient



number of problems you'll have to tackle without adding the one of religion. So, you're going to have to think about it carefully." Well, they thought about it carefully, and then Laura said, "We want to get married. We love each other dearly. And, our children will be Jewish." And according to Jewish Law, they were -- all our girls were bat mitzvahed -- up in Massachusetts. We went to three beautiful bat mitzvahs -- and they all did very well. They consider themselves Jewish. Now, whether or not they'll marry Jewish, I don't know. But you have no control over that today. In this ecumenical world, I mean you just don't know who will, and who won't. And my boys all married Jewish girls. You know, my grandson's married to a non-Jewish girl. And, they're going to have their first child -- and what they'll do, they'll do. But, my second grandchild's married to a Jewish boy, and if anything, Rachel's going to become frum.

MCF: Just real quick -- the boys and Laura went to school where?

RL: Well, the boys -- Stevan went to School #61. Michael went to School #61.

MCF: Where did that go?

RL: That's Elementary School. Johnny --

MCF: Go to -- I guess to College?

RL: Oh, a college. Stevan went to Johns Hopkins. Michael went to Brown. Edward went to Hobart and Towson University. And, Laura went to University of Vermont. They all graduated.

MCF: And what do they do today?

RL: Well, Stevan, as you know, is a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. He works for the V.A., and has private practice. Michael, you know, has a Ph.D. in Political Theory. He's a Professor at Georgetown, and associated with a law firm. And Edward is a C.P.A., and



works here in Baltimore. Has his own practice with a partner. And, Laura, who has her Bachelor of Arts from Vermont -- sells real estate now. A loving mother, wife, and sells real estate.

MCF: And, how many grand children do you have?

RL: I have nine biological grandchildren. And two grandchildren in-laws. And, I'm about to get my first great-grandchild in January.

MCF: So, nine biological. And two?

RL: Two grand-children -in-laws. You know, two of them are married, in other words. So I consider I have 11 now.

MCF: And then the first?

RL: Great-grandchild, due in January.

MCF: So what's the experience of grandmothering been like for you?

RL: Wonderful. Wonderful. Exciting. Like with everything -- you have to know when to keep your mouth shut. (laughter) And, you've got to -- and sometimes I guess I don't. But, I get along very well with all my grandchildren, and my children. I think so anyway. I mean I'm -- well, I'm lucky. Actually the boys married wonderful girls. And Laura married a wonderful man. And, as I said, they all treat each other well. So what more can I ask for.

MCF: Yes.

RL: I'm very happy.

MCF: No problems.



RL: Yes.

MCF: I think it's your model.

RL: (laughter) I don't know what it is. But, that's like I said -- I'm very happy with my husband. And, I think he's very happy with me. We have a good time together.

MCF: Yes, so.

RL: Most important---we've always told the children -- have a date with your mate, all the time. Young people get so busy in their work, and so did we. But, we used to go out on Wednesday nights -- the two of us. And, another thing I see today -- drives me crazy. I do see a young couple who are out -- and they're busy talking on the cell phones, instead of to each other. I'm glad I didn't have a cell phone when I was young! I mean you both work hard all day. You should have a night out! And, we'll go to the theater, and as I said -- that's what we loved. The theater, or wherever. Have dinner together, and come home. It was great!

RL: Yes.

MCF: I think that's key. I'm going to stop this.

[END OF INTERVIEW]