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Marion Eiseman Transcript

EMILY MEHLMAN: This is Emily Mehlman and today is Monday, May 19th, 1997 and I'm here with Marion Eiseman in her apartment at 1010 Memorial Drive in Cambridge. And we're about to begin an oral history interview in conjunction with the Jewish Women's Archive and the Temple Israel Oral History Project. Now you filled out a form, Marion, some time ago. Do you remember?

MARION EISEMAN: Not a bit.

EM: Not a bit, all right. Well you did fill it out because I've got it right here.

ME: I don't dispute it

EM: You don't dispute it. You volunteered as one of many people who volunteered to become part of this project. And we're trying to get women's stories down on tape because many, many years ago when you were active in your life, nothing like this was ever done. And we want to hear stories of women. And many people say, "Well I really have nothing to tell you." But it's not true. Everybody has something to tell. So let's begin at the beginning. When were you born?

ME: In 1905.

EM: And the date.

ME: October 24th.

[Recorder is turned off and then back on.]

EM: So that means that you're going to be celebrating your ninety-second birthday in four or five months. Is that true?

ME: Yes. You're a good mathematician.

EM: No I always said that had I not been born a woman I would have been excellent in math. But because I was born a woman I was never encouraged in math and science I never excelled at it. And, do you agree, the same thing with you?

ME: I really hadn't thought about that at all.

EM: Never thought about it.

ME: No.

EM: All right. Your parents were Ian and Gabriel. And where were you born?

ME: New York City.

EM: And you lived there—

ME: Umm-hmm, all my life.

EM: Until you were married.

ME: And then some. We've always lived in--. We've either lived in Boston or across the river.

EM: When did you come to Boston, what year?

ME: I think it was about a year and a half.

EM: Oh, so you were born in New York but you came right away to Boston.

ME: Um-hmm.

EM: Do you—did you have brothers and sisters?

ME: No.

EM: Only child.

ME: Um-hmm.

EM: Tell me about your parents. What did they do?

ME: I really can't tell you much about them. I don't know much about my father because he died very, very young. And I really—

EM: Was he born in this country?

ME: He was born in Philadelphia and lived in Boston, married my mother. And they moved to Chicago—New York. And then he had a major—I don't know what it is—cerebral hemorrhage or something and died. And she moved back to Boston.

EM: Did she remarry?

ME: No.

EM: And how did she support you and her?

ME: We lived with my grandparents.

EM: Where was that?

ME: In Boston, in the South End.

EM: In the South End. Do you remember the street?

ME: I'm all mixed up. I'm not sure.

EM: Where did you go to grammar school, high school? Did you stay in Boston?

ME: I went to Edward Devotion School in Brookline to grammar school. And before that I went to a small school on St. Mary's Street. I think it was called the St. Mary's School at that time.

EM: And did you go to college?

ME: I went to Smith

EM: And what year did you graduate?

ME: In '27.

EM: So you're observing a seventieth—

ME: Yeah.

EM: Reunion.

ME: Yes, they are.

EM: You're not planning to go.

ME: No.

EM: Have you ever gone to any reunions?

ME: Yes. I went to my fortieth. I didn't enjoy it.

EM: Did you enjoy your years in college?

ME: Very much.

EM: Can you tell me anything about your college years, anything you might want to share with me?

ME: Well they were wonderful. I was a very enthusiastic—

EM: Student.

ME: Yeah. I loved everything.

EM: What did you major in?

ME: Economics and history, I think, in which I didn't do very well. I loved the professor.

EM: And after you graduated, what did you do?

ME: Well for a while I had a job at a bookstore. And then, I don't know. And then I was married.

EM: Right after you graduated or--?

ME: Sure.

EM: A year after. What year was your wedding?

ME: Nineteen—I don't know—19--. No I wasn't married until the depression. When was that?

EM: Thirties?

ME: Twenty-nine, thirty-nine.

EM: Oh no. You were married before '39. I'm sure of that.

ME: Well let me see.

EM: You graduated from college in '27.

ME: Yeah, but I don't remember—I don't remember the date of our marriage. June 14th something or other, but I don't remember.

EM: How about 1930? Does that sound good?

ME: That sounds good.

EM: Okay. And your husband, Philip, how did you meet him?

ME: I have no idea, no idea, how or where. I only remember him when he was at college. But I have a picture of us standing next to each other in a French play when we must have been about eight years old.

EM: So you knew him mostly all your life?

ME: Yeah, I guess so.

EM: The families were friendly?

ME: Mildly, just mildly.

EM: Tell me about your wedding because I've seen pictures of your wedding. So I know—

ME: Well—

EM: And I've seen pictures of your wedding dress. I've actually seen your wedding dress.

ME: Well it was, you know, it was traditional.

EM: Was it inside, outside?

ME: Outdoors.

EM: And where was it?

ME: Beautiful day. In Swampscott.

EM: How did you happen to get married in Swampscott?

ME: Well it's where my grandparents lived and I lived with them forever.

EM: Oh, I see. Their home? And Philip, where was he from?

ME: Swampscott. And his family lived there, too.

EM: Did you have a honeymoon?

ME: Yes. We went to Europe. We went to England and then we went to Germany to meet some of his family.

EM: And this was during the depression?

ME: It certainly was.

EM: Now were either of your families affected by the depression?

ME: I suppose they were both very much affected. But we seemed to have—we seemed to have come out all right.

EM: When you came back where did you settle?

ME: On Beacon Hill, lower part of Beacon Hill.

EM: And what did Philip do?

ME: He had a job with something called the Old Colony Trust Company, which developed into Bay Bank that has just merged with Bank of Boston.

EM: So was his family in the banking business—

ME: No.

EM: Or it just so happened that he went into the banking business?

ME: No. His family were not. I don't know why—I don't know how he got into it. I don't have any idea. He got a job, I guess. He got a job, did well at it. So I really can't tell you too much about it except it was successful.

EM: And how did you spend your days? You didn't work, did you?

ME: No. I became interested in—oh, I supposed you'd call it social services of some kind or other. I was interested in the head neighborhood house for a while.

EM: On American Legion Highway. Was it there in those days?

ME: Yeah, yeah. And then from that I sort of graduated to household nursing, which was practical nursing. And from that I ended up being particularly interested in public health nursing, visiting nurses. And that's been my interest largely ever since.

EM: As a supporter.

ME: Yeah. But I've been the president of the organization—

EM: Of the Visiting Nurse.

ME: The national one, the Massachusetts one.

EM: I didn't know that.

ME: Maybe not the Boston--. Yes, I was part of the Boston one, too.

EM: So you've seen Visiting Nurses, the organization's really changed a great deal over the years.

ME: Oh yeah.

EM: Can you talk about that a little bit, some of the changes that you've seen?

ME: No. I just think it's the most cost effective, quality home nursing there is. I wish everybody else realized how good it is. It is.

EM: Do you have—you have one daughter I understand.

ME: Yeah.

EM: And what's her name?

ME: Ann.

EM: And where does she live?

ME: She lives in Manchester, Mass.

EM: And she was born--?

ME: Three years later.

EM: Thirty-three.

ME: Um-hmm.

EM: Were you involved a hundred percent in her child rearing or did you have help in the house?

ME: Oh yes, well, very inadequate. I had a little kind of a nursemaid at one point. But she really knew less than I did. No. I think mostly I did it. But then begins my anger. Because then she became engaged to someone who wasn't Jewish and Dr. Gittelsohn would not marry them. And I have been angry ever since. And I have nothing good to say about the reformed Judaism, nothing. So [laughs]—

EM: Okay. Let's talk about it.

ME: Well—

EM: Just because of that?

ME: Yes.

EM: Or other things, too?

ME: That particularly. That really galled me.

EM: So who officiated at her wedding?

ME: A gentleman from Wellesley, a faculty member at Wellesley.

EM: A justice of the peace?

ME: No, no. I don't know—

EM: Did she go to Wellesley?

ME: No. She went to Smith. I don't know. He--. I'm not sure under what auspices he was able to do it. But it was gracious, loving, caring, warm, nice. I had been—he had been highly recommended to us. Judge Laurie had not—[telephone rings].

EM: You want to take the phone?

[Recorder is turned off and then back on.]

EM: So somebody from Wellesley officiated at your daughter's wedding.

ME: Yeah. And I can't remember his name. Professor of religion, but I don't remember his name, very nice man.

EM: Now when did you join Temple Israel, when you were living on Beacon Hill?

ME: Well I don't know. I was confirmed. I'd been a member forever.

EM: You were confirmed at Temple Israel. From Swampscott did you live in—or was Swampscott a summer home?

ME: Um-hmm.

EM: And your winter home was in the South End?

ME: Boston.

EM: What street, do you remember?

ME: Well, by that time it was Commonwealth Avenue.

EM: And you joined Temple Israel. Your family was a member of Temple Israel, your mother's family.

ME: Yeah.

EM: What was their names?

ME: Vorenberg.

EM: And you must remember Rabbi Levi—

ME: Of course I remember.

EM: Maybe before Rabbi Levi.

ME: No. But Rabbi Levi was the rabbi when we all were confirmed.

EM: I see.

ME: And Lee Friedman was very interested in Sunday School. It was just normal. We all went to Sunday school. We all were confirmed, whole bunch of us.

EM: And then when it came time for your daughter to get married you just expected that she would be married in Temple Israel.

ME: They wanted a rabbi. No way could—

EM: And did Rabbi Gittelsohn offer to find you—

ME: Not at all. He could not have been more of a fool. So consequently, they have no religion whatsoever. And they don't have any respect for Judaism, which just kills me, but it's true.

EM: Do they have children?

ME: Um-hmm, three.

EM: You must have great-grandchildren at this point.

ME: I have one, Heidi.

EM: And they do not live a Jewish life, any of them?

ME: No. They have never been inside a Temple; they never go with me. It never occurs to them. I mean, you know—

EM: But you never ended your affiliation.

ME: Never, never.

EM: You weren't that angry.

ME: Yes. I am that angry. And my anger stems from the fact that I've always been a member. And I've always sent my membership, whatever it is. And the temple keeps asking for more and more and more and more members so new Americans can send their children to Sunday school at my expense. But I think this is all wrong.

And the services are all in Hebrew, which I don't understand, which I never learned. And it's—to me it's just a bore. I wouldn't dream of taking my kids because it doesn't mean anything to me. And I think the new prayer book that they used when they started that talking about relevancy--. It had none of the spiritual qualities of the old one.

EM: You mean the Union prayer book?

ME: Yeah, the—

EM: The black one.

ME: But this is not news. I don't need to tell you all about that.

EM: How do you feel about--? Actually, let me rephrase my question. Are you aware of the fact—this is a better way of putting it—that as reformed tries to even reform more, we are trying to become more inclusive of women in the service.

ME: No. You become more orthodox. That's all. That's all you do. More conservative, more orthodox, more people wearing shawls and yarmulkes. And I don't believe in any of that.

I never was—I never was brought up that way. My family never behaved that way. I mean we always—we always celebrated whatever the holidays were. My grandfather always fasted. The rest of us sometimes did, but mostly didn't. We always had a Seder. We lived an absolutely—what I call a perfectly natural Jewish life. But it was without all these ceremonials.

I remember the first time somebody in the congregation gave some very fancy covers for the Torah, I guess it was. I remember my family were just horrified at all the tinsel and what not that came out of the little Ark. I mean it was just revolting. And it has been ever since. So it's hard for me to say that, but it's true.

EM: When's the last time you were there?

ME: Last fall.

EM: The holidays.

ME: Um-hmm.

EM: And do you feel a stranger in your own synagogue?

ME: Oh sure. I hate that new building. I think it's absolutely revolting, that little rowboat, whatever it is. We never understood who designed it or what it's meant to be or anything about it. It looks like a rowboat to me. Absolutely—

EM: In the synagogue you're talking about. You mean the renovation of about six years ago?

ME: Um-hmm, whenever.

EM: Rowboat.

ME: We call it a rowboat.

EM: Who's we?

ME: Well, all my friends.

EM: Who are your friends?

ME: Well, you probably don't know them. One of them--. Well, who are my friends? None of my friends go to temple anymore. Yes, a few do. Ruth Collin goes to temple. A couple named Westheimer, who you don't know, they go to temple. And there's a whole lot of people but sparsely that I see there. But I don't know many people who go regularly. I really don't.

EM: You said that you observed the holidays; that your father fasted around Yom Kippur. And I'm sure you observed Passover to a certain degree.

ME: Well we used to eat matzos. I don't know how much we observed it. I mean my grandfather wouldn't have had ham just because he grew up not eating ham. But he wouldn't have not had--. I mean he was perfectly able to realize that the reason they didn't have ham was because they didn't have refrigeration probably, you know. I mean it didn't have anything to do with—

EM: What about in your home with Philip and Ann, what was your—did you have kind of Jewish observance in your home?

ME: No, not much. We had—we used to—

EM: Did she go to Sunday school?

ME: She went to Sunday school and she was confirmed. And she hated every minute of it. And at one point we asked whether she could possibly join the next grade up because she had a lot of friends in it. No way would he consider such a thing, no way.

EM: Who's he?

ME: Well he was then the head of the Sunday school. And I like to think that I've forgotten his name because I don't want to remember it.

EM: Mr. Mimsof or before Mr. Mimsof?

ME: Mr. who?

EM: Mimsof.

ME: Mimsof. That may have been him. He came after Levi. That may have been him.

EM: He was the principal of the school or the president you're talking about?

ME: No, I think he was the head of the school. But he was absolutely unwilling. He couldn't see why we asked him. And he said, "No way could that happen." And I think if she had been among people that she knew maybe she wouldn't have been so alienated. But she didn't know anybody so she was sort of a stranger.

EM: None of her school friends came to Sunday school with her?

ME: No. The next grade up there were people like Ann Morse, the Morses and Charlie Rizansky. I don't remember who they all were. But the people that were in her class—and I don't remember who they were—were just total strangers to her. So she'd see them once a week and she'd sit through a couple of hours.

EM: Where'd she go to school at that time? Do you remember? Was it grade school, high school? She was confirmed when she was about sixteen so it was the beginnings of high school or junior high school.

ME: Well she went to a school, which was called the Cambridge-Haskell School. She had gone to Shady Hills Grammar School. And then she went to something—it used to

be the Haskell School in Boston and it moved to Cambridge. So it was called the Cambridge-Haskell School.

EM: Were you living at Beacon Hill at the time or you had moved?

ME: We had moved.

EM: To Cambridge?

ME: We moved when we chose the school.

EM: Where did you live?

ME: In Cambridge?

EM: In Cambridge, yes.

ME: On Brattle Street, 142.

EM: So you moved from Brattle Street to this apartment?

ME: Yeah.

EM: So you've really been in Cambridge most of your adult life?

ME: Oh fifty years, yeah. And I feel very much a part of it, too.

EM: Most of your friends in those years were Jewish people, your friends?

ME: All of them.

EM: All Jewish people. And most of them were members of Temple Israel.

ME: I would say many of them.

EM: But in your social circle was temple a part of your social life.

ME: No.

EM: Not at all.

ME: Never, not at all. No. We had a very, kind of friends who were not all my girlhood friends. But they were all part of my wedding—so—every one of them.

EM: Were business associates of your husband's part of your social circle?

ME: No, not at all.

EM: There couldn't have been very many Jewish people in banking in those days.

ME: There weren't.

EM: The Morses.

ME: No.

EM: The Eisemans.

ME: Well, only Phil, not his father, not his brother.

EM: What did they do?

ME: Well his father had been out of will business. And his brother worked for--. Well he worked for Frank Vorenberg at Gilchrest Company. And before that he had been at R. H. White's. He was in, you know, retail business.

EM: Was that—that was your father's family or your mother's family?

ME: Vorenberg? He's my grandfather's half-brother's son. Very close, very close relationship.

EM: And he—

ME: And his son was a very close cousin.

EM: And they ran department stores.

ME: They ran one department.

EM: Gilchrest.

ME: Yeah. And his son has been the dean of a hospital. We are very close. And his father and I were very close.

EM: Getting back to the—

ME: And the Eisemans part of the family were close relatives.

EM: Your husband was a banker and you were at home.

ME: Yeah.

EM: And most of your friends were Jewish, most of his associates were not.

ME: That's right.

EM: Did you have any problems merging these two identities, so to speak?

ME: No, never had any problems, never.

EM: Did you observe Christmas in any way?

ME: Well, he always wanted a Christmas tree because he was used to it. He was brought up as a Christian Scientist. But he threw that out when he was communed or whatever. So--And we had a variety of friends. We had academic friends. We had business friends, business people. We had a variety of interests. So it didn't seem to have--. And they were largely Jewish. Not all together, but—

EM: Not necessarily observant Jews.

ME: I would say—

EM: In a traditional mean.

ME: Not at all. Not at all. I mean they all came from Jewish backgrounds from New Orleans where they were married in a temple, and in Chicago and in New York. I mean they were all—they all had major Jewish backgrounds. The Lehmanns, the governor of New York State, and his niece and her husband, they were all as Jewish as could be. And none of them would have subscribed to all of this foolishness, which is the nicest thing I can say about them. And I may say I have many friends here now who feel exactly the same way.

EM: In the late thirties and early forties when Jews were trying to get out of Germany. Did you and Phil--?

ME: Oh yes.

EM: Were you involved in resettlement?

ME: We brought many members of the—

EM: I want to hear about it.

ME: Well I can't tell you much. We brought them over. We helped support them. We helped them get started. And we were all very close.

EM: Can you name some of these people?

ME: Well the most, I guess—the one I loved the most was a man named—what was his name—Fred Oppenheimer in Germany, but Oppen when he got here. And he, you know, he didn't know the language. He was a lawyer over there. He couldn't be a lawyer over here. And we got him set up. He was very happy. And if we ever had a Seder we'd get Fred and he'd come over and help us. And they did. But it was all very, you know, low key, and no ceremonies.

EM: Did you actually sponsor anybody with an affidavit?

ME: Oh I think many people. I mean my husband did. I can't tell you just who besides Fred and his sister and Philip and oh yes. And then there's—there's another whole family.

EM: You obviously have very warm and good feelings about this.

ME: Oh yeah, very. I loved them dearly. I went to see them when we were on our wedding trip. We went to see where they lived, how they lived. They gave a beautiful mybola party for us the first day we were there. And I had been brought up—

EM: So you knew these people—you—actually when you were first married and you brought them over.

ME: We brought some of them.

EM: Yes. I'm sure some of them never made it.

ME: And on my mother's side of the family there's a whole host of people we brought over. And they were, you know, devoted. We were devoted to each other.

EM: Do you still have contact with some of these families?

ME: The son of the one cousin I haven't kept in touch with. He lives in Westport, Connecticut. And I had an announcement of his daughter's wedding a couple of years ago. But I haven't kept up with them and it's my fault. I'm lazy. [Unclear]

EM: You mentioned, when you were talking about your anger you mentioned how people pay dues at synagogue and support new Americans. It's the same thing that you did only these people are Russian and those people were German. But it's the same idea, really. Don't you see it?

ME: I don't see it the same way because I think these people--. In the first place, I think the temple is trying to crowd itself with people, human beings. I think that's unnecessary.

EM: You probably don't see these people as being in the same situation obviously. Their lives—

ME: They're all in the same situation. And—

EM: But they are persecuted. They were persecuted to a different degree, of course. Did you ever think about that, equating the two groups?

ME: People are--. Well, I don't—I don't think people are quite as quick to accept, you know, everything as if it was their due as it is now.

EM: I see.

ME: It was a different conception of what to expect. And I don't--. Sure they were new Americans then. But they had people who were ready to take care of them, too. They weren't just being, you know, left at the mercy of whoever. I don't know.

EM: I want to get back to some of the holidays. You started to say before that your husband wanted to have a Christmas tree. But you probably didn't grow up with a Christmas tree, did you?

ME: No. But I had an aunt—my father's sister—in New York. And I used to go to New York during Christmas holidays always to visit her. And they always had a Christmas tree for me because they thought it was terrible that I shouldn't have one.

EM: Well did you have one with Ann when she was growing up?

ME: Oh yeah.

EM: You did. And stockings?

ME: Yeah because my husband wanted one.

EM: I see.

ME: Not because I wanted one. I thought it was just a lot of foolishness and a lot of work.

EM: You didn't see it as a religious thing?

ME: No, not at all.

EM: Not at all.

ME: Not at all.

EM: How did you observe Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur? You went to the temple.

ME: Well I did when I was younger because I went with my mother and my grandfather.

EM: And when you were married?

ME: No.

EM: No. Did you have special holiday meals?

ME: Hmm-umm.

EM: Did you do your own cooking?

ME: Badly.

EM: Did you have a cook?

ME: Well we had a maid, shall we say.

EM: She moved in and helped you out.

ME: Yes. Sometimes they moved out with others. Sometimes they knew something about cooking holiday meals but mostly they didn't. I mean I happen to like matzos. So, you know, no problem to me. And I love haroset. I just don't know how to make it properly.

And I go—I go even now to seder where Tony Lewis does all the chanting. And it's perfectly beautiful. He's just lovely. He has one grandchild. Betty has one grandchild. Both of whom could read all the prayers in Hebrew. The rest of us are just as foreign to it as we can be. But it's fun to see them. I think its something that everything…

EM: What about your volunteer activities besides the visiting nurse? I know that you've been involved in other things.

ME: Well I have two other pets. One is grandparenting. And I'm mostly just supporting of them. But I'm very friendly with the president of it. And I think they're doing a fine job.

EM: I know you were involved in Call for Action because when I sat [unclear]—

ME: Well I loved that. I was terribly sorry that I flunked—I flunked on the computer.

EM: When did you start a Call for Action, at the very beginning?

ME: Yes.

EM: So it was close to thirty years ago?

ME: Yeah, yeah.

EM: And who was with you in those days?

ME: Well Nancy Lazarus started it.

EM: Yes. I'd like to hear about this.

ME: There's Joan Finn. I'm going to have lunch with Joan tomorrow. And Sheila Perkins. Who else?

EM: What was it like—

ME: Oh, and Julia Kaufmanm.

EM: What was it like at the beginning?

ME: Well it was—

EM: Was it always the WBZ.

ME: Yeah. It was WBZ. And they never gave us much time, or much enthusiasm or much backing.

EM: And what kinds of calls did you get in the early days?

ME: Every kind of call. Everything from runaways to divorces to real estate, to anything, to illness, to anything. And Nancy really—and Julia Kaufman and Joan Finn--. Those were the three. There might have been another one that I've forgotten. Actually made up the volume that we used and I guess have used ever since. I'm not sure about the last few years. But I just loved it.

EM: You went every Monday.

ME: Loved it. Just enjoyed all the time I spent. Felt I'd, you know, done something for humanity. And I think it is a wonderful service. And, apparently, is getting much more backing from the radio station now than it used to get, which is great. But I just loved it. And felt very badly that I flunked. And I just could not learn how to use a computer. I was so stupid. And my children think I'm so stupid because I can't still learn how to use it. But I now learned how to type in the beginning. So I had to—I had to learn how to type. So I certainly didn't know how to use all those other buttons.

EM: So you must have been there about twenty-five years, would you say?

ME: Hmm?

EM: About twenty-five years, would you say?

ME: I'd say about twenty.

EM: Twenty.

ME: Which is a long piece and I loved it.

EM: The nature of problems have changed, don't you think, in that time? It's over the same problem, people always have trouble with their cars. But do you think there have been more social service kind of problems as—

ME: Many more. Or rather, I guess, I'm very aware of them because most of my friends are social service minded.

EM: Were you involved with Family Service of Boston?

ME: No, no.

EM: Never, no.

ME: Terese Morse was.

EM: Yes, I know that.

ME: No.

EM: But you were most involved with Visiting Nurse in terms of social service. Any other social service organizations?

ME: No. I think of Planned Parenthood—

EM: Of course. Were you in it from the beginning?

ME: Yes. Really Lorraine Lisam is one of the starters and the Faulkners. I was interested from the beginning. And I'm very supportive—not so active anymore—in something called the Cambridge Foundation, which is a community foundation like the Boston Foundation.

EM: What do they do?

ME: They support good agency programs in Cambridge that serve. well actually Cambridge, some of them. And I think it's a wonderful organization. And, you know, should be supported in perpetuity or whatever you want to call it.

EM: You noted in your questionnaire—still talking about volunteer activities—some things you did during World War II.

ME: Oh yes.

EM: What did you do?

ME: Well we tracked airplanes. Don't ask me how. But we went—we went to the telephone company downtown near Scully Square at six in the morning and we tracked airplanes coming into Boston. God knows what we were supposed to be doing.

EM: Commercial airplanes, military airplanes?

ME: Military airplanes.

EM: American military airplanes.

ME: Yeah. Well I guess we were looking for anything. And then it was for somebody else to tell us whether they were friendly or not friendly.

EM: Day or night? Are you—

ME: Well we served, you know, I don't remember how many days a week, very early in the morning for some hours.

EM: Was there a name of this organization that you—

ME: I'm sure it had a name. But God knows what it's called. That was a long time ago.

EM: Did you ever do anything with Temple Israel during the war in terms of bandages and that kind of thing, sewing?

ME: No. I wasn't in Sisterhood.

EM: Are you handy with your hands?

ME: Not anymore.

EM: Were you?

ME: Could have been.

EM: You were never involved with the Sisterhood.

ME: Never, never. That was my mother's generation. They were all Sisterhood girls.

EM: Do you remember any of her friends?

ME: Oh all of them.

EM: Any of their names?

ME: Oh, every one of them.

EM: So who were they?

ME: Well, Mrs. Joe Herman.

EM: Did she have a first name, Mrs. Herman.

ME: Penny Herman. And Bessie Abrams and Gurdy. And they were all in a sewing circle.

EM: And they went every Wednesday.

ME: Oh they went all the time. Who were they all? I don't--. There were about ten or twelve of them. It's hard to remember all of them.

EM: Did you ever go to Temple Israel on Sundays when you were growing up, to Sunday services?

ME: No.

EM: No. You don't remember that.

ME: I'm sure I never went. I don't think so.

EM: Do you remember the tea dances at the temple?

ME: No. I don't think so. I don't think I ever went to a tea dance at the temple. No. I'm sure I didn't but I don't know. I don't remember. I went to tea dancing but not at the temple.

EM: What about your political interests?

ME: They're very democratic.

EM: Okay.

ME: [Laughs] Very. I'm wondering what Mr. Harshbarger. How's he going to get along with Mr. Kennedy.

EM: What about historically speaking. Were you involved in political campaigns?

ME: I was all the time I was in college. Then it was something called the League of Women Voters [unclear].

EM: Well that's still around.

ME: Well that's around. But this was something that had to do with Geneva. Well whatever it was, I was on some committee.

EM: Were you involved in local democratic politics as well as—

ME: Not then.

EM: Never?

ME: I was just interested--. It was long before the Marshall Plan. But I was interested, you know, in Europe—

[end of side A]

EM: This is the continuation of my oral history memoir with Marion Eiseman, side B, May 19th 1997.

We were talking about politics. [Clock chimes] We'll wait for the clock to finish.

ME: Well I've always been ready. I've always been interested in politics. I guess when I was in college that's what got me interested.

EM: Who was the president in those days? Do you remember?

ME: I certainly do, William Allen Neilson, the most remarkable man.

EM: That was president of Smith College.

ME: Um-hmm.

EM: Who was president of the United States? Coolidge, probably. Calvin Coolidge.

ME: Oh it was before that. Was it president Coolidge? He lived in Swampscott in the summer in the summer White House in Swampscott.

EM: Did you know him?

ME: No. She used to walk by with her collie all the time. No. I didn't know him.

EM: Not too many people can say that.

ME: Huh?

EM: Not too many people can say that. The first lady walked by with her collie in Swampscott, Massachusetts. And you continued your political activities. Was your husband politically active?

ME: No. He was cynically active.

EM: What were you involved in together as a couple?

ME: Not much. I don't know. I really don't--. I can't think what we did together. I mean he was—

EM: You were married in '30. Hoover was the president then.

ME: Yeah.

EM: And then Roosevelt came in. And I imagined you must have been a supporter of Roosevelt.

ME: Oh sure we were.

EM: Did you ever meet him?

ME: No, no. I know his nephew here, James, a wonderful fellow. No. I guess maybe I've become more interested in politics since I'm on my own.

EM: When did your husband die?

ME: I think about 1980. But I'm not absolutely sure of that either.

EM: Was he ill?

ME: Well he had a heart condition. But he died in London. We were on our way--. We were on a trip and we'd gotten as far as London.

EM: That must have been a nightmare.

ME: Yeah. It was not good. But, you know, my friends all rallied round. And so it wasn't bad. I mean I managed. I managed fine. But—

EM: I'll have one, thank you.

ME: Those are cheese. The others are sweet.

EM: Oh cheese. I'll try it.

ME: Okay.

EM: Did you make them?

ME: I didn't. But somebody did. [Laughs] I'm not a—I can't cook. I know what I like to eat but I don't know how to cook it.

EM: Good.

ME: No I guess I became more interested because it was something I could do. I could support people. I could write letters. I could, you know--. I could have a rally. I could do

things.

I don’t think that he and I did much--. I mean we did things for Smith College, you know. We’d have an annual wine tasting type of thing. You know, he was an enthusiastic planner but not wildly enthusiastic. I guess neither of us have really wanted to stand up for the league. But he was a leader as a Bostonian. He was definitely.

EM: What were his major involvements?

ME: Well I think mostly it was his business that he spent most of his energy on.

EM: After the—the Old Colony Trust became what?

ME: Books, books, he was a collector of books.

EM: Any special area?

ME: Yeah, early Americana.

EM: Do you have them here in your home?

ME: Oh yeah. It’s a small but it’s a good collection. And he loved bookish people. George Goodsby that just died was an old friend of his. And most of our friends have been activists with a capital A. I would say we never were. But that’s not to say that we weren’t very much interested. I mean I have friends in New York, Philadelphia, all of whom you could say were real activists. But I would say we never were.

EM: But you were financially supportive of—

ME: Yeah. On a lot of things.

EM: What were your favorite charities?

ME: Well I suppose I would say that United Jewish Philanthropies would be my favorite if they didn't give the congregations money.

EM: Okay.

ME: Which I have told you is how I feel. Planned Parenthood, the Boston Symphony and Visiting Nurses and the Cambridge Foundation, those are mine—my babies.

EM: You have a big family, a lot of babies.

ME: Yeah. Not such big babies.

EM: Right. How has your health been? Have you been—

ME: Horrible.

EM: Always or just lately.

ME: Lately.

EM: Well let's go back. Were you a healthy woman?

ME: Always.

EM: Were you an athletic woman?

ME: Yeah, mildly, not--. I wasn't a hiker or a mountain climber or anything like that. But, yeah—

EM: Did you like tennis and swimming?

ME: Played terrible tennis, not really good golf. Yeah, a lot of swimming. But, you know, I wasn't great at anything.

EM: Your health right now is so-so.

ME: Oh my health now is just abominable, absolutely terrible. I can't go out for a walk because I can't walk. I don't know why. The doctor says I'm going to leave it just well enough alone. If we can keep you like this, that's good enough.

EM Are you still driving?

ME: Um-hmm. But don't tell because my children think it's absolutely wicked that I should drive.

EM: Well how do you get back and forth to Swampscott? Or not really go back and forth but just go and stay.

ME: Yeah. I go and stay. Well, you know, I could get there on my own. I could drive. It isn't that I can't drive. I haven't yet.

EM: Is the house in Swampscott the one that belonged to your grandparents?

ME: No. We go by its front door at about five hundred yards. And we bought a little one down at the end.

EM: Where is it? Is it on the water?

ME: Um-hmm right on the water.

EM: How long have you had it?

ME: Since '79.

EM: So really relatively speaking not that long.

ME: No, no.

EM: So you must have bought it before Phil died.

ME: Yeah, about a year and a half before, two years before.

EM: And when you go there do you stay by yourself or you have somebody with you?

ME: Well I have always stayed by myself. But Ann says that it isn't the way it should be. So we have somebody coming who's going to live there part of the time, five days a week. I don't know who's going to be there two days a week.

EM: But you're here by yourself.

ME: I don't mind being alone. In fact right now I'm much happier alone than I am talking to people because it takes energy to talk. So I don't know the summer's going to work out.

EM: But this is the first time you're going to be going with a companion?

ME: Oh I have a maid coming. And I hope she's going to be useful. But seeing as I don't know her, I'm not sure.

EM: Who picks her?

ME: Huh?

EM: Ann picked her out?

ME: No, I picked her. She's a friend of a friend's maid. They--. And she wants to come up from Florida and I'm looking for somebody.

EM: Sure, sure. You don't want to stay in Florida for the summer.

ME: It's all about—

EM: Yeah.

ME: You know, I don't know if things will work out or not. I hope so.

EM: How long do you stay there?

ME: Well I've always been there at least three months. I love it and I always hate to leave. But, you know, this is very easy, you know, no stairs. And there's not much to take care of. There's no garden. There are no storms.

EM: You have a big garden there.

ME: Well I have a ball garden, yeah.

EM: Somebody else takes care of it.

ME: Well they're going to have to. I can't. So it's a big question. I'm not sure how it's going to work out.

EM: Now where is Ann?

ME: She--. Well she's married to a sailor. And he would rather be on board a sailboat than breathe. And they were gone all winter. Thank God they left their boat somewhere off the coast of Florida in the Bahamas or somewhere. And this summer they're going to sail with somebody else to Alaska. So they won't be around.

EM: Where do they live whenever they're not on the sailboat?

ME: In Manchester, Mass.

EM: Also on the water?

ME: No. They're not really on the water. They're a block away from the water. But their life is entirely among sailors. And the sailors don't know the golfers. And they have many very nice friends. But I don't know who they are. Yes, I do know who they are. I mean I've met them all but—

EM: Where are your grandchildren?

ME: Well I have three grandchildren. The oldest is a grandson and he's married and lives in Connecticut. And they had a brand new little baby. And he's the closest. And then I have a granddaughter her who teaches. She's just spent two years in Japan teaching. And she just adored it. And she got a lot out of it. Although she didn't come home talking Japanese she could read her away around. She could travel anywhere. She had a wonderful time. But we felt that really she ought to come back because she didn't meet anyone outside of the school really.

EM: She's unmarried?

ME: She's unmarried. And would love to be. So she's back here. She's been teaching at a local school there.

EM: Number three.

ME: And we have one more who's married in Washington to a Catholic, which burns me up. [Laughs] But he seems to be like a perfectly alright fellow. I can't feel terribly warmly about him.

EM: Was the wedding in the church, the Catholic church?

ME: Oh sure, it was. And, you know, it was like all weddings. It was very their generation. Everything about it was very their generation, which was all right, you know, if that's the way they wanted it. The food was their generation. It was all their

generation.

EM: Was the wedding very recent?

ME: Almost two years ago, about a year and a half ago. But I have an example of what it should be like. And that is I have a wonderful maid who's been with me about twenty years who's Irish-Catholic. And her daughter is celebrating her first anniversary today. And her daughter married a Jewish boy.

And all the time she was seeing him and they were a little bit—they were wildly enthusiastic. I kept telling them they make wonderful husbands. Jewish boys make marvelous husbands. And this boy has turned out to be just that. And he is looking around for a congregation that he might like to affiliate with.

And they go to Catholic mass every Sunday. And he celebrates March 17th and she goes to Seders. They do Seders at home. And it's just a perfect—I think it's just a perfect union. I think they are as lucky as all get out. He's adorable. So—

EM: Would you think about perhaps any experiences in your life that maybe we could call it like defining experience—any incidents that changed your life. Can you think of anything you might want to talk about?

ME: No. I think more when I was left alone. I mean that was, you know, I had to make all the decisions and not have anybody that you could talk back and forth with, that's—

EM: Was your husband a take charge kind of person?

ME: No. You could depend on him for good judgement. But he wasn't the slightest bit bossy. He was just very strong. I guess that was the—

EM: I'm sure he was very hard working.

ME: Well he worked hard but not unusually hard. He had a wonderful saying, I thought. He said, “Nobody ever thanks you for not taking a vacation.” Which I always thought was wonderful. And we did a lot of traveling.

EM: Oh let’s talk about that.

ME: We did. We did a great deal of traveling.

EM: Where were your favorite—what were your favorite trips?

ME: Well—

EM: I guess your honeymoon to Europe. Did you go on a ship?

ME: Yes, right out of Boston.

EM: Obviously you did. Do you remember the name of the ship?

ME: The Scthia, S-C-T-H-I-A. With two friends of ours, two boys who were going over [unclear] good friends of ours. We didn’t know they were going. They didn’t know we were going.

No. I think our best trip was the first trip to North Africa when Ann was quite young. She was about six or seven years old. And we had a little fraulein then. And I remember that we thought, “Oh goody she’s got a cold before we go.” So she’s immune. She’ll be all right while we’re gone. Only to come home three weeks later to find that she had had a cold all of the time. And they were waiting for us to get here to give the permission to take out her tonsils. But that was a marvelous trip.

EM: Where did you go?

ME: Well we went to Morocco, Algiers, Casablanca. We did the whole strip north. Anyway that was wonderful. And I remember my husband saying to me the night before

we left, “What the hell am I taking a three week holiday for?” And I said, “Because my music teacher says that the music is so wonderful.” Well we got there and you couldn’t transpose any of their music, their Berber music, onto the piano. And that absolutely bounced him because he was musical and played piano very well. But we had a wonderful—that was a wonderful trip.

EM: Africa must have been quite something. That was probably around 1940.

ME: It was early on.

EM: It was before the war?

ME: Yeah. Yes, it was because he joined the--. He was in—he was--. Well I remember we lived in Washington for two different times, the first in 1934 for a year. And then in 1940, one or two, I think. I don’t remember just the dates.

EM: Did he work for the government?

ME: He was in the Single Corps in the Army and he was in the Philippines. And then he came back. He was stationed at Washington. So that’s why we went there. And we loved living in Washington, just adored it. Had a lot of friends there plus there was a lot of Cambridge there. So we had a—

EM: Did you think about staying?

ME: No.

EM: This was home.

ME: Yeah. Well at that point my husband was offered a superb job in New York City. But I said, “No way.” So we never went. And it was much better.

EM: So he listened to you.

ME: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

EM: So after the early forties when you came back from Washington to Boston, where was he working at that time?

ME: Well the Old Colony Trust by that time had changed into a Bay State Corporation. That was the first time it changed its name. And then Bay State turned into Bay Bank. That's where he ended up.

EM: He was the president or the CEO.

ME: Until Michigan. I mean, until it shifted in the Bank of Boston. So—

EM: So where else did you like to travel?

ME: Well I think we loved our trip to Japan—to China. And we got to China just after they stopped making all their people work on farms and giving up their careers.

EM: What year was that would you say?

ME: I'm terrible about this.

EM: Seventies, sixties.

ME: I would say maybe seventy.

EM: So you flew to China. But you probably took the boat to Morocco.

ME: We took a boat to, yes, to Casablanca across there with all the animals. Oh it was fun. No we flew to China. It was a long ride, much too long.

EM: I know; it is a long plane trip.

ME: But it was a wonderful trip, very interesting. And it was--. We weren't as discouraged then as we might be now because they were letting people out from the farms, letting them get back in their careers. And that was fun. I think that was good. And we saw wonderful things. And that was a marvelous trip. We had wonderful friends with us who took the trip with us. And that was—

EM: Who were they?

ME: Well their name is Friedlander. And he was writing the Adams' papers for the Mass Historical Society. And that was great fun. Well we've always traveled with friends, all Jewish, always Jewish and always interested.

I can't—I can't describe how Jewish I am and feel. And whatever I do in Cambridge I do because I'm Jewish, not because I'm somebody I'm not. And people even make use of the adult not as an—not as an example of Judaism at all, not as a specimen. I think I'm just—I just feel part of the Jewish community—part of the Cambridge community.

EM: But you represent yourself in the Cambridge community as a Jewish woman.

ME: Oh yeah.

EM: Exclusively.

ME: Oh yes, without any question.

EM: Even though ritualistically speaking, you have no interest at all.

ME: None whatsoever.

EM: None whatsoever.

ME: Uh-huh, not any. And none of my friends have, not any of them, except maybe Tony Lewis, who I don't consider a close friend. But my cousin Fred Vorenberg who is

considered truly one of the great citizens of the city of Boston would also have considered him as a Jew—himself as a Jew, but not of—not of—what do I want to say—I mean he was not—

EM: In the traditional sense.

ME: Yeah.

EM: Ritualistic sense.

ME: Not a bit. So I guess this is a whole breed of cats.

EM: There's a group of you.

ME: There's a breed of cats. Unfortunately there's not enough of us to make ourselves heard. I hear that from meetings at the temple all the time. There are a very few voices.

EM: Do you read the temple bulletin?

ME: I do and I think whoever Jim Seigel is has got a wonderful job, wonderful, because he truly does try to lay out what he's explaining in very fair terms. The rest of the time I thought that people just had no idea what was going on. But I think he's awfully good. So I do read what he writes. When he doesn't write it, I don't read it. He's good.

EM: I'm thinking about your whole life. And I know you're leaving out a few things. I just know it.

ME: Do what?

EM: I know you're leaving out a few things.

ME: I don't know what I'm leaving out.

EM: I know you lived in Boston from approximately 1905 to 1997. You saw big changes in the city of Boston.

ME: Oh gosh, yes, and the world.

EM: And the world.

ME: Yeah, telephones, electric lights—

EM: Do you remember when some of these things came in and you were around? Do you remember how they affected your life? How they affected the city, the world?

ME: I only remember the subway being built in Kenmore Square.

EM: Let's talk about that. That's certainly something not too many people remember.

ME: Well I don't remember much about it except there was noise, and confusion and mess. And we had a house right there.

EM: You lived on Commonwealth Avenue.

ME: Yes, but on the corner of Kenmore Street, which now is a drugstore or something. The house was torn down.

EM: So you actually walked to Temple Israel when it was on Commonwealth Avenue.

ME: Certainly could have, certainly could have. But I don't know—

EM: Did you mother drive?

ME: No. She never learned to drive.

EM: Did you have a chauffeur?

ME: My grandfather did.

EM: Your mother's father, your mother's parents, when you lived with them.

ME: Um-hmm. Well I think she had no other means. So she had to come home. I don't think my father was established enough to provide for her. I never heard about that. All I know was that she came home. And I lived with not only my grandfather and my grandmother and my mother, but also two bachelor uncles who lived at home, which is the most unusual mess I ever heard of.

EM: You all sat down to dinner together?

ME: All of us, all of us.

EM: Did your mother cook? Did your grandmother cook?

ME: No, she—. My grandmother was a wonderful cook. No, but not my mother. My mother didn't know anything about cooking, never taught me how to cook. And my grandmother, you know, she used to say, mein nept, take it. And that was it.

EM: Your grandmother spoke German?

ME: Yeah. And I spoke German until I was in kindergarten.

EM: That was your first language, German?

ME: Um-hmm. And my mother's friends said, "You're crazy. She's going to grow up with an accent. You're going to regret it." And she said, "I don't think I'm going to regret it."

EM: Well when did your grandparents come over to this country? Do you know?

ME: Well they came over--. Well my grandfather was nineteen years old, I heard. And he had a pushcart.

EM: Where? On the North End?

ME: Um-hmm.

EM: So your grandparents went to the North End?

ME: Well I don't know where he lived then.

EM: I see.

ME: When they—at some point when they were married and got established they were living in the South End. Yes. I don't know East Concord Street or whatever. I used to be able to find the house. I don't think I could find it now. But, at any rate--. And dad, he went into the retail business, men's clothing. And he had a very good business, very successful I think. And his two sons were in it.

EM: What's the name of the store?

ME: It was called S. Vorenberg.

EM: Where was it?

ME: Corner of Washington Street and Hanover, corner store. And across the street was a family named Wolf who also had a store there. And the Wolf boys, Bob—Junior Wolf and Bob Wolf—were two of the sons. They moved to Bay State Road at some point. I don't know where they were before that. But I remember them quite well. And – where were we? What did I say?

After that area wasn't as good as it used to be, my grandfather managed to buy something called the Gilchrest Company, which was a huge department store. And his half brother, Felix, he invited him in. And he was, I think, perhaps more competent than my grandfather in running an emporium like this. And—

EM: It was at the corner of Summer, Winter, and Washington?

ME: Yeah, yeah. And they owned it until it went out of business a few years ago. And Frank Vorenberg was the man who ran it. And, you know, he was very interested in human relations, very. They had a very good record, you know, for not hiring people at too low wages or not giving them decent leave, all those things. He was much more modern in his thinking.

And right in the center of that corner of Filenes and Gilchrest and what used to be Jordans, there is a tremendous plaque in the street that has Frank Vorenberg's name on it as being one of the leading citizens of Boston. And, indeed, he was.

EM: The next time I go to Balline's I'll have to—

ME: Look. It's right there.

EM: Were you ever a Filene's basement shopper?

ME: Used to shop for my mother there. I used to buy all her clothes there because I knew what she liked. And she loved bargains.

EM: Do you?

ME: I like bargains. But I'm lazy now.

EM: You're entitled.

ME: Yeah. Well it's over a long period of time.

EM: Are you getting tired?

ME: No. It isn't very interesting though. I don't think any of it is very interesting. [Laughs]

EM: Did you ever work in the store, in Gilchrest?

ME: No. I only had a paid working job at a bookstore, and only then for maybe two years after college. But I enjoyed it.

EM: Did you do a lot of entertaining for your husband while he was at the banks.

ME: No. He didn't do much. We did a lot of entertaining because we both were people minded. I'm very people minded. He was less so. But we had a lot of friends. And a lot of friends all with different, very different—from different angles.

EM: People with different interests and occupations.

ME: Yeah. Well, a very close friend of mine whose husband was at the Heller School at Brandeis. And his specialty was what to do if there was a crime—an explosion or something happened, threw everybody off base. That was his specialty. And he was damn good at it.

EM: Who's that?

ME: His name was John Speigel. All Jewish.

EM: I hear that. I see that.

ME: And then we had a very good friend who was in a radio, RCA, business. And he was—he came from a New Haven family whose name was Steiner. And they were the Steiner piano people. And not only was he, you know, interested in music, he didn't play very well. But he was--. Not there's Lee Freeman's sister was his mother. That's how close he was. And he was totally un-Jewish in his, in all his interests, totally. We used to kid him about it. Is it running or did it stop?

EM: No it's running.

ME: Well, anyway—

EM: You mentioned before that your husband was a pianist.

ME: Yes.

EM: And you, too?

ME: Well I played piano really until he came along. And he was too good. So I sort of relaxed. But his mother, for an eighteenth birthday present—and I always remember it because it was so unusual—she gave a musicale in her music room in Boston. And she had the famous local pianist here in Boston who was someone we all knew at the time. I can't think of her name now. Not Nadia Bolachay, but somebody like that, gave a concert.

EM: For his eighteenth birthday.

ME: For his eighteenth birthday.

EM: Were you there?

ME: Yeah, sure I was there. But his friends' eighteenth birthdays were all drunks, you know. Westchester, that's the kind of party they have. She had the nerve to do this. I thought that was sort of extraordinary. And she was a great friend of a rabbi at the temple. I don't know. We always wondered whether something was going on. And I'm not sure. What's his name? It wasn't Schindler. What was his—

EM: Fleischer?

ME: Fleischer. I think that was it. She--. I'm not sure that was the name. But anyway--. But she was Christian Scientist.

EM: You know you mentioned that before.

ME: Huh?

EM: You mentioned that before. How did you get your husband away from that?

ME: He didn't have to. As soon as he graduated from Sunday school he kicked the bucket, both he and his brother did.

EM: But the parents stayed in Christian Science.

ME: The mother did, not the father.

EM: Oh.

ME: The father--. There was an Althiet club, which was a man's club on Huntington Avenue right opposite the Christian Science park. My father-in-law was a pinochle player and they had a pinochle playing every Wednesday. And Wednesday was the night that the church met, every Wednesday.

EM: So your mother-in-law went.

ME: He used to call it my ideal night. He could deal and it was ideal for him because she was at church. He had a wonderful sense of humor. My husband had a wonderful sense of humor.

EM: Well when your mother-in-law died was her funeral in a Christian Science church?

ME: When my mother-in-law died--. No not from the church.

EM: You said she was a Christian Scientist.

ME: It was at home

EM: But she was a Christian Scientist and she practiced Christian Science her whole life.

ME: Oh yeah, she did, all her life.

EM: But nobody else did.

ME: Nobody else did, nobody.

EM: Did you know many people who were Christian Science.

ME: I knew her--. My father-in-law's brother, Julius Eiseman, who also was in the War, he was married to a Scientist, also. And I think both these ladies joined the Science church because they needed some help with their marriage. I mean both men were German. And shall we say they weren't as ethereal as the women.

And Aunt Gertrude became the first woman head of the mother church. She was the first and you know, Uncle Julius couldn't wait to have a whiskey from his desk drawer. And he was a gay blade. He was a wonderful father, very attractive. And my father-in-law was brilliant, terribly smart and German.

EM: Do you think these women were attracted to Christian Science because they were alone a lot?

ME: They were unhappy.

EM: They were unhappy.

ME: They were unhappy.

EM: And, of course, there was no divorce in those days.

ME: Well I guess they never thought about that. It was so interesting because none of the kids took, none of them--. My sister-in-law did and she died of Christian Science.

EM: Because she didn't take any medicine.

ME: Well, of course. She had diabetes. And we used to talk to her and say, “You know when automobiles will run without gas we won’t put the gasoline in. But until that time you have to.” And she would not take any insulin. So twice her brother—not my husband but his younger brother—had to carry her off to the hospital. And twice they said, “Well what does she usually weigh?” as if he had any idea. So we talked with her.

And I will say that foolish as my husband thought it was, they really respected their parents’ and their sisters’ insistence on trying to practice it. My feeling was that neither of them were quite successful at it or they wouldn’t have died. But all their friends were Scientists, all these ladies friends, and wonderful people.

EM: Do you daughter and son-in-law subscribe to any religion?

ME: No.

EM: Nothing.

ME: Nothing. Well I think my son-in-law, yeah, he was brought up, I guess, an Episcopalian. But they joined the Unitarian church thinking the children would go to Sunday school. It lasted about a year or two and that ended. So I would say, maybe they think they’re Unitarians. I don’t know what they think. We don’t talk about it.

EM: Is there anything else you’d like to talk about in this interview?

ME: No, not a thing. I’d like to retract mostly everything I’ve said. [Laughs]

EM: Well, as always Marion, I’ve enjoyed my time with you today and I want to thank you for participating.

ME: You’re so good to listen to all this drivel. To me it’s just a lot of drivel.

[END OF INTERVIEW]