Laurie Schwab Zabin Transcript

JF: This is an interview with Laurie Schwab Zabin. It's April 29th, 2001. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. I'm Jean Freedman. Okay. I always start my interviews out the same way, and that's by asking you to tell me your full name and when and where you were born.

LSZ: My name is Laurie Schwab Zabin, and I was born in New York City, in 1926, on April 9th, 1926. And today is my parent's anniversary.

JF: Oh. Happy anniversary. Could you tell me something about your family and where you grew up?

LSZ: I grew up in New York City, in Manhattan. I was born in Manhattan, and our family went up to Scarsdale, in Westchester, for only about three years when I was maybe seven, eight, nine.

JF: Where in Manhattan did you live?

LSZ: I was born on West 86th Street. Born in Lenox Hill Hospital and lived at 27 West 86th Street. We went up to Scarsdale because my thoughts that – everybody was telling them their children needed country air, and so on. They hated it so that after three years, they decided that millions of kids had survived in cities. Since my mother didn't like bridge or golf, she didn't want another year up there. So, we moved back, and I was brought up from the age of ten at 90th and Park Avenue. I went to the Dalton School, which was a block away.

JF: Okay. What did your father do for a living?

LSZ: He was an importer. He imported the materials for women's hats. Therefore, we were able to be with his family in France a lot and in Italy and in Switzerland. That will come back into the later story.

JF: Oh, okay. I was about to ask you if you wanted to say more about that.

LSZ: Well, I can tell you that my father was born in a small town in Alsace-Lorraine, of a French family.

JF: Jewish?

LSZ: Yes. A French family. But it didn't matter what's one's religion, if you came from a French family in Alsace, you felt that you were always French, even though between the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War, it belonged to Germany. So technically, their citizenship was German. But they all felt French.

JF: They spoke French.

LSZ: They spoke French. I don't know if you've read Alphonse Daudet's The Last Lesson –

JF: No.

LSZ: – but they uniformly thought of themselves as French people. As each boy reached seventeen, he was sent to spend a year with the oldest sister, who had married and lived in Paris before coming to America. That way, they got citified in Paris and came to America. And that way, none of them had to serve in the German Army.

JF: Ah, so the plan was to come to America.

LSZ: The plan definitely was. There were relatives in America that had been here since the – oh, I think probably between 1850 and 1870, around then.

JF: Why did they want to come to America?

LSZ: I don't know. It's a very good question. I never asked my father directly why; it was just always assumed that they would. My father's mother had older brothers that had come to America many, many years before in the 1800s, and it was assumed that all of the boys would come. They came, stayed for a little while with the older sister who lived – and with these uncles who lived – in Cincinnati and then came to New York.

JF: I see. That's an interesting trajectory. What did your grandparents do in Alsace?

LSZ: I never knew my grandfather. He was a merchant in a small town called Diemeringen. We all went back there a few years ago as a family.

JF: Is he buried there?

LSZ: Yes, yes, yes, in a small graveyard in that town that was totally desecrated, of course, by the Germans. But the family did have it rebuilt for the whole village, so it's in good shape now.

JF: Oh, that's good.

LSZ: Anyway, [my father] left a substantial amount of his family. He was one of nine children. The four boys and the one college-educated girl came to America, which fit exactly into the demographic pattern of the time – just exactly. And the other four sisters stayed in Paris.

JF: Do you still have contact with your French family?

LSZ: Very close contact. We can talk anytime that you wish about our family reunion tradition, which I can tell you about at some point.

JF: Okay. All right. We will definitely get back to that. How about your mother? Where was she from?

LSZ: She was born in New York of parents, both of whose families had been here since early in the 19th century. Her father, as a matter of fact, my grandfather, was born in Baltimore before the Civil War. He was born in 1855 in Baltimore.

JF: And where did their family come from?

LSZ: We have a document in which my mother's grandfather on her mother’s side foreswore his allegiance to the King of the French. So, we know that was during the Restoration there, during the 1830 to 1848 period.

JF: So both sides of your family were French?

LSZ: My Baltimore grandfather's family was German. And, of course, many people would say that my father was, but he, in his heart, was not.

JF: Culturally French.

LSZ: Yeah.

JF: Right. Okay. Well, tell me what it was like growing up in New York, then.

LSZ: Don't we all think that growing up the way we did is the normal way to grow up?

JF: Right. Well, let me rephrase that.

LSZ: No, I think it was a lot of fun. It was really a wonderful life in that we were within two blocks of Central Park, and we could use Central Park as our playground. It was still

a time when an eleven, twelve, thirteen-year-old girl and her girlfriends could go bike riding in the park, or roller skating in the park alone. So you had a lot of the same freedom – well, you had even more freedom than a lot of country or suburban kids have, who are dependent on cars.

JF: And can you tell me about school? You mentioned going to Dalton.

LSZ: Well, it was a fascinating school because it was really the first truly progressive school in the country. The plan that was devised in Dalton, Massachusetts, by Ms. Parkhurst, and was called the Dalton Plan. And it was a plan in which most of the work that you did, you did independently. By the age of nine, ten, eleven, you already were given your assignments a month at a time and learned to plan your own time and do your own distribution of the work.

JF: It sounds like college.

LSZ: It was. It made it very easy when you got to college. We didn't realize how spoiled we were. [laughter] There was a large part of each day that you were freely working on your own assignments in whichever room you wished, called laboratories. The art faculty included well-known artists such as Archipenko, Vytlacil, and Tamayo. It was a very exciting place. And it was also a place where you learned a lot about different cultures. For example, my first learning of anything about Judaism and the Old Testament came in school, in the same year that I also studied the New Testament and Catholicism, and the American Renaissance in the 1800s and Protestantism, and so on. So, it was a school that gave you a very broad introduction to the world and world culture at large.

JF: Did you learn a lot about different cultures because the student body was diverse or because the curriculum covered that?

LSZ: Well, the curriculum was broad. The student body was also, but not as diverse as the learning.

JF: Okay. You mentioned something very interesting, and that is your first real knowledge of Judaism came in school. So tell me about how your family identified as Jews or not.

LSZ: Well, we certainly were all very aware of it and proud of it. Certainly, nobody growing up in the 1930s could not be aware of its challenges as well. But I was not brought up with any religious ritual at all. The holidays that were important to us were Christmas and Easter. I remember my parents feeling so guilty moving us out of suburbia and back into the city that there was a live rabbit behind the couch when we did our Easter egg hunt the first Easter back in the city. [laughter] But that's what comes to mind when I think of holidays in New York – that and the excitement of the caroling on Park Avenue when the lights went on from the church next door, and being a part of that world, a very different world than I found when I moved to Baltimore. People of my sort of social group had had a very different religious experience as kids.

JF: At Dalton, were there many other Jews or were you --?

LSZ: Oh, yes.

JF: There were?

LSZ: Yes, there were. I'd say the majority of my close friends – certainly not all, but the majority of my close friends then were Jewish, which is very different from now, when the majority of my friends are not. But still, I feel, and always have felt, a very close identification, socially and historically, to Judaism, to a Jewish heritage, if not to religious Judaism.

JF: Why is that, do you think?

LSZ: Why? I think because I was brought up thinking of it as a very positive thing, being very proud of the fact that I was Jewish. I think also because of the negatives of those years. I think we all felt that not to identify, whether one did religiously or not, that not to identify was almost sinful.

JF: Did you experience antisemitism as a child personally?

LSZ: No, I don't think I did. Let me put it this way: I'm sure I did but didn't know it. I think that is probably true. I'm sure now, in retrospect, that I did at college, and I sure didn't know it then. I took any slight at all as if it were totally a personal thing, and it wasn't until years later that I had any sense that it might have been anything else.

JF: Okay. So while you were at school, what were your ambitions, your plans?

LSZ: Well, I had a broad range of interests. I was very interested in literature and philosophy, but I also loved mathematics. I went to art school and did a lot of painting – no, that's not a fair statement – not a lot. But certainly, I was much more drawn to art lessons than the traditional piano lesson. And I knew I was going to do something that kept me in academia, but I didn't know exactly what it would be. I know my parents assumed always that I would be staying in academia.

JF: They did?

LSZ: Yes.

JF: Okay. I should have asked you this earlier: Did you have siblings?

LSZ: Yes. I have an older brother and a younger sister, both wonderful people, both very important to me. My sister has since married a Swiss, who is the son of my parents' close friends in Switzerland. In fact, there are home movies of me in her home at the age of one, four years before she was born. So, it's been a long tradition in the same home.

She's raised her children there, and my kids are very familiar with that home, too.

JF: How lovely. What is your sister's name?

LSZ: Her name is Jacqueline, Jackie we call her, Isler, I-s-l-e-r. Her husband is a Swiss Protestant. Her kids have all been brought up, though not deeply religiously, but in the Swiss Protestant church.

JF: And where do they live?

LSZ: Her children?

JF: Yes.

LSZ: Her children live all within an hour or so of her in – one in an adjacent town; one in Zurich, which is only about thirty minutes away; and one about an hour away.

JF: And how about your brother? You said he was older?

LSZ: Yes, a couple of years older. He lives in New York. He was managing editor of The Scientific American for most of his life. When he retired, he started teaching science writing at NYU, which is what he's doing now.

JF: Oh, what's his name?

LSZ: Armand – A-R-M-A-N-D – Schwab, Jr. My father was also Armand Schwab. And my mother was Carol Heilner, which was an old Baltimore name, Schwab.

JF: Okay. So after Dalton, what?

LSZ: After Dalton, Vassar.

JF: Okay. So tell me about that.

LSZ: Well, it was--

JF: This would have been during the war?

LSZ: It was during the war, and for that reason, we went through in three years. We went six days a week, ten months a year, and we did it in three years. The idea, of course, was to get us out into the jobs that were emptied at the time. But by the time we got out, the war was over, and we were told there was something un-American about taking the jobs away from the men. [laughter]

JF: Even at Vassar they said that?

LSZ: No, no. The world at large, not Vassar. But while I was there, I did major in English literature. I got very interested in Dylan Thomas's work. And he, at that point, had not yet been published in America, so I had to send to England and get his poetry in little paper pamphlets.

JF: Really?

LSZ: I wrote a thesis on him and was very committed to going on in the field of modern poetry. So then I was sent on a Vassar fellowship to Harvard for a master’s the next year.

JF: Okay. Let me just ask you a few questions about the war years.

LSZ: Yeah.

JF: How did that affect your life?

LSZ: Well, I think it affected us all deeply, in the sense that one of my most profound memories is the day that my brother left for overseas.

JF: Tell me about that.

LSZ: He was given, I imagine, about a week between being at camp in the South and reporting to San Francisco to ship overseas. He stopped by to see the woman he subsequently married in New Orleans and then got on a train to get up to spend Christmas with us before leaving the day after Christmas. And he managed to arrive in the middle of the night on the night before Christmas Eve, having stood up on the train most of the way from the South to get to us. I remember that we thought he was still asleep on Christmas Eve morning, and we heard the notes of “White Christmas” from the piano and his trumpet. He was sitting at the piano, picking out the melody on the trumpet by playing it on the piano. And he had that evening with us. The next day, a big storm came up, and it was clear that he wouldn’t be able to fly. So, Christmas afternoon, we took him down to Penn Station to put him on the train to leave. Just as the train started moving, my father said to my mother, my sister, and me, “He can't leave us all at once. I'm going as far as Chicago,” He jumped on the train and rode to Chicago with him. I can remember being so proud that Dad had done that and so worried about my brother and the three of us walking through the dark streets, looking at all the other soldiers, and wanting to take them all home. So that is a very profound memory. It just triggered something that I thought you might be interested in. A year ago, the week before Christmas, I was in the Philippines for work with a group of people I had spent the last week or two with. And we were all singing songs our farewell night. And when one of us said, “Let's do some Christmas carols,” the first thing they sang was “White Christmas.” The notion that I was sitting with a group of Philippines, which is where he went, of course, singing that same song, was a mind-boggling and emotional experience. [laughter]

JF: Yes. How long was he gone?

LSZ: Gee, that's a good question. I imagine about -- well, he was gone for the rest of the war and then for a year of occupation in Japan.

JF: Did you hear from him?

LSZ: Oh, yes.

JF: So you knew he was okay.

LSZ: Yes, oh, yes. We knew he was fine. But in addition to that, if you ask how it affected us, it was not only one's own family but that everybody was involved, a spirit that I wish our kids had ever known. They have never in their lives known that spirit of unity in this country that we knew then. The guys that I went out with would be writing every day from camps in one place or another and then would show up just before they went overseas. It was a very moving time. And then when the girl a few doors down the hall got news that her brother was gone – no, it was with you every minute. This was not something that ever left you – and we were lucky. We were the ones that weren't suffering the way our families in Europe were.

JF: Did you have contact with your family in Europe during the war?

LSZ: Yes, we did have contact. Fortunately, one of my father's sisters with her grown daughter and son-in-law and their children, did come and spend a couple of years in New York with us. The other ones all managed to make it –

JF: Wow.

LSZ: – in one way or another. And we were very, very lucky.

JF: Yes. Going back, actually, a little. We discussed the war, so I suppose we ought to talk about the Depression a bit. How did that impact on your life?

LSZ: Interestingly enough, not at all. For some reason that we don't quite understand, it didn't have any effect on my father's business to speak of. If anything, because of that, because nobody had any money, and his business was – he was not a well-to-do man, but very “comfortable.” That was always the word that was used about us. My mother would say, “Yes, we're very comfortable.” But because of that, I think we probably led a more luxurious life in the ‘30s than we would have otherwise because, indeed, having any income at all made life very livable. And I never quite understood that as a child. I do know that there is a level, though, of frugality that all of us have from that era that our kids and grandkids don't have at all. And I think it probably was partly a result of the Depression. But I think it's a natural progression anyway.

JF: Okay. So we've gotten your life story up to the time when you graduated from Vassar and you went to Harvard for your master's.

LSZ: That's right.

JF: And this was '46?

LSZ: That would have been ’46-7, yes.

JF: Okay. So tell me about Harvard.

LSZ: Well, my brother got back from overseas about a week before college opened. And he was going back to finish his undergraduate career there. And everybody that I knew from there was pouring back in. Cambridge was going to be overflowing. And so they put sixteen of us female graduate students in St. John's Episcopal Theological Seminary, the ETS, which is for anybody that knows Cambridge, was a wonderful small sort of 19th century enclave behind the old Commander Hotel. We lived there very

happily for the year, had an absolutely incredible year. Knew people who ended up becoming famous poets in the country.

JF: Can you tell me more about that?

LSZ: Well, yes. We'd go for a Saturday night with Richard Wilbur and his wife, and Gray Burr and a lot of people who went on to become well-known poets and writers in the field. And I very much thought that I was going to be in that world.

JF: As a poet or as a critic?

LSZ: No, no, I was studying literary criticism at Vassar. And then at Harvard, it was just a general master's in English literature. I remember the first day they gave us a list of books. And they said, “Since we're giving you so much time on this and there are only twenty books on the list, we'll feel free in the comprehensive to ask you any passage in any of them to identify. And after all, twenty books, how can you consider that too much?” And we looked at the list, and one of the books was The Works of Shakespeare: Histories, Tragedies, Comedies, and Poems.

JF: [laughter] One book.

LSZ: [laughter] That was one book. It was a wonderful and exciting year. And at the end of that year, I was engaged.

JF: Can you tell me about that? How did you meet your fiancé?

LSZ: I actually met him at the little party we gave my brother in New York before going back. In the middle of it, the phone rang, and it was he. I knew his name, but I'd never known him. And he called and said he was trying to see who was going back to Harvard. He had been in the Navy and had gotten back, was going back to finish up. And that's how that happened. Then, that summer after graduating, my father had asked that we all

go to Europe together to be with the family again. We hadn't seen them, of course. He had seen them in 1939. We hadn't seen them since '36. And this was '47, so it was quite a change. And one of the stops, of course, after being in Paris with the French family and other travels, was Switzerland, with the family that we had known so well as kids. And their son was, by then, oh, I guess about twenty-six and my sister sixteen, and that began that romance.

JF: Oh, that's very romantic. Did your family have a lot of stories about what happened during the war? Did they talk much about that?

LSZ: Some. Not an awful lot. I think we were all just very excited at being together again and seeing everybody – and most everybody in good shape. One uncle had died during the war, and one uncle had died in America during the war, the one that had come over. But mainly, the family was just extraordinarily intact. Yes, we did get stories about the fourteen or fifteen-year-old cousin in the Maquis – the French resistance - and the kinds of things that they did, but the family had survived. I don't think there was a lot of desire to rehash every little event.

JF: Just get on with life?

LSZ: Yes.

JF: Okay. So after the summer, you come back to the States, and then what?

LSZ: Well, I had gotten a telegram while I was at Harvard – in those days, of course, we used telegrams all the time, not necessarily telephones. And I had gotten a telegram while I was at Harvard asking me if I would take over the junior high school English department at the Dalton School. Of course, I had accepted. I'm telling you this because there is such a difference when I think, in retrospect, from how we would act today. I can't imagine how I could have given that up.

But my husband-to-be was to be getting his master's at Lehigh. And my father said to me just as we were about to sail to Europe, “Did you let them know at Dalton that you wouldn't be there next year?” And I said, “No, I assumed I would.” And he said, “Well, how can you do that?” So I sent a telegram saying I couldn't do it. [laughter] What I, of course, would have done in a different era would have been to teach for one year and postpone the wedding, and that would have been that. But it never occurred to me.

JF: But that was the ethos of the time?

LSZ: That was the ethos of the time. And I'm glad that ethos is behind us. But anyway, we did get married later in the year, and I went down to Pennsylvania. And there I had a big stroke of luck. I went to see the head of the English department because I figured if anybody knew of jobs for somebody like me in a town like Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, he might. He immediately offered me a job as his assistant. And he was the editor of the Shakespeare Association Quarterly. So I got deeply involved in helping him edit it and corresponding with people all over the world on Shakespeare and was more committed than ever to that field.

JF: That sounds wonderful.

LSZ: It should have been. It was. And he was a delight. I was there about a year and a half. And then, my husband decided that he wanted to come to Johns Hopkins.

JF: To get another degree?

LSZ: Yes. He was studying physics, and he wanted to come down here and get a doctorate. So I enrolled for – I applied for a doctorate. This is another feminist story. I applied for a doctorate at Hopkins, which I would never have chosen, because it had a

very, very old-fashioned English department where English literature sort of ended with Chaucer instead of beginning with him. And I got turned down. I was rather surprised because of the record that I'd had before. That would have been the end of it, except that my husband was coming down to interview. So, while I was here, I just wandered into the English department. There was the head of the English department behind a pile of books. He invited me in, and I said, “I just was a little curious. What was the problem?” He pulled out the record and said, “Well, nothing really, except, you see, you're a woman.” And I said, “I had noticed.” He said, “Well, you're married.” I said, “I thought I'd be less risky to your little boys being married than not married.” I didn't understand the problem. And he said, “Well, you see” – and by then he was absolutely pink around gills – he said, “You see, you might have a baby, and we'd have wasted all our time.” I acknowledged that I might indeed have a baby, but I wasn't exactly sure why that would waste his time. [laughter] I have to say, to his credit, that two days later, there was a hand-delivered apology and acceptance delivered to us in Pennsylvania, which I thought was quite remarkable. So, I did go there and was in the middle of working on my Ph.D. at the time when I did get pregnant. I did go back. But then they told me I needed a year of Old Icelandic and that Henry James wasn't a proven classic, and that I couldn't work on any writer any later than 1850. At which point, somebody had taken me to a Planned Parenthood meeting. I had gotten fascinated by the field of population and family planning, and my life changed.

JF: So if the Johns Hopkins English department had thought that literature continued after 1850, your life would have been completely different.

LSZ: Who knows? Who knows what I would have done? But that's what I thought – I thought it was going a different direction.

JF: So someone took you to a Planned Parenthood meeting, and then what? Had you had a baby by this time?

LSZ: It all was sort of simultaneous, that somebody took me to a Planned Parenthood meeting and that a man named Alan Guttmacher delivered my first child. People in the field will know that he went on to become president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. He was also medical director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. And we talked about the field, and I got more and more excited about it. And then some years later – that's jumping over a whole lot of personal life we can go back to – but some years later, when he became president of the National Planned Parenthood, he saw to it that I was invited onto the board. By then, I'd been working in Baltimore for many, many years as a volunteer in the field. And that's how I got interested in the international and national, as well as the local scene.

JF: I see. I see. Okay. If we could go back and cover those years. I find it easier to continue chronologically.

LSZ: Of course. We should do that.

JF: So you had your first child what year?

LSZ: First child in '51.

JF: '51.

LSZ: And that was my son, Lewis, L-E-W-I-S – Lewis Carroll, C-A-R-R-O-L-L Strauss, S-T-R-A-U-S-S.

JF: Named after the writer?

LSZ: Well, he was, in a way. The family, for years – for four generations, I guess, before that, he would have been the fifth – had used the mother's maiden name as the middle

name. But somehow, Lewis Schwab Strauss sounded a little bit impossible. My mother's name was Carol, and his mother's name was Alice. And we thought [laughter] this was the perfect solution – and also he was interested in math and science, and I was interested in literature, a combination that matched Lewis Carroll.

JF: Perfect.

LSZ: It was the perfect Lewis Carroll. Anyway, we then had a daughter named Jeremy and another daughter whom we call Jacy, J-A-C-Y – now Jessica.

JF: And when was that? What are the dates?

LSZ: They were '51, '53, and '55.

JF: Okay. So during those years, were you a full-time mom?

LSZ: I was a full-time mom, but also very much a volunteer for Planned Parenthood. When I joined Planned Parenthood as a volunteer, in those days one could really function as a professional volunteer, in the sense that organizations of that kind had such very small staffs that volunteers did jobs which later became professionalized. So I was handling their public relations and public speaking and writing. I wrote a journal for them and was doing that kind of thing. When I started with them, they had a budget of about $6,000 a year. And when I left in '74 to go back to school, we had a budget of about three million a year. So, it was a very, very exciting time.

JF: Was there much controversy surrounding Planned Parenthood at the time?

LSZ: We can't even use the word "controversy" because it was kept so quiet. You couldn't even announce the name in the newspaper. The press wouldn't announce a meeting because they wouldn't print the words in the Baltimore Sun. One episode explains it better than anything else: at one point, we realized that the only way you could

truly accuse a newspaper of not covering something is if that something was really newsworthy. So, we decided we had to have an absolutely newsworthy event that they couldn't, with any self-respect, ignore. We invited the ambassador from India to address a meeting at the Belvedere Hotel, a dinner with two hundred or three hundred people present. At that time, an ambassador could not be ignored by the local press. We announced a press conference at 6:30 and the dinner at 7:00. And when, that morning, I called to be sure everything was in order and that he would indeed be at the hotel at 6:30, his staff said, “Yes, but he says to tell you that he'll see you just before that, of course, at the cocktail party.” And we said, “What cocktail party?” “At the Baltimore Sun. Isn't that part of what you arranged?” And we said, “No, indeed.” The next day the Sun had a headline saying, "Indian Ambassador Visits Sun Papers." It was their gimmick to avoid having to mention why he was really in town. So when he was being interviewed by the radio stations during the event, he said, “Why don't you ask me why I'm in town?” And he did go on the air with why he was in town. But this is why I say, we can't even say "controversy," because controversy implies some noise, and we couldn't even get noise going.

JF: How did you get information to people who would want to use the services? You couldn't advertise.

LSZ: No, that's right. You couldn't advertise in the newspapers. You could occasionally make announcements in the radio and so on. But mainly, the word got around from patient to patient. And, of course, the patient load was very small in those days. And the entire budget was quite small. We had an office at 25th Street in a small private house. I remember one day being called in by the wonderful executive director, Ann Huppman, who came from an old Baltimore family and had really made this a marvelous career for herself and was doing a beautiful job. But there we were, crammed in this little private house with the clinics upstairs and the reception desk downstairs. She called me and said that a woman in town here who wanted to remain anonymous – but obviously, I had

to know who she was – wanted to come in and see us at twelve o'clock because it was possible she could give us a big contribution. And at that point, Ann said, “You know, it could be as much as five hundred dollars. I mean, she's talking about big money.” So I went on in, and we were sitting in her little office in the back, which had a door to a little tiny parking pad behind. And all of a sudden, there was a knock on the door because the office was also the back door into the building. A delivery man came in with a huge box of Kotex. And the donor, the prospective donor, the executive director, and I had to squeeze in behind the desk so that he could get by because the room was so tiny. After we sat down, the prospective donor said to us, “Don't you think you really need space?” And we said, “Yes, indeed.” And she said, “Get a proposal on my desk by noon tomorrow.” It turned out that her family had a big family foundation in Chicago, and it was her turn to choose the year’s major recipient. And so a friend of mine, Herbert Davis, and I spent the night writing the proposal. He was a real estate agent, and he figured out how much it would be a square foot. I figured out the patient flow and the square feet we needed. We had it on her desk at noon the next day. We got a call from Chicago at 6:00 that evening saying we had a hundred thousand dollars. And with that, we moved Planned Parenthood to Charles Street, where it was very visible. Had its name on a glass window at the corner of Hamilton and Charles. And we were really on the map.

JF: I'm curious about why it was so controversial in the '50s. Abortion was illegal at the time, correct?

LSZ: That's right.

JF: So it was mainly birth control and education.

LSZ: Yes. But even birth control was considered controversial then, as indeed it is now. I mean, most people don't realize, but the Right-to-Lifers are opposed to birth control. And everything they do to kill freedom of choice is also aimed at killing birth control clinics.

JF: Was there also an attitude that anything to do with sex was not to be discussed?

LSZ: I think it was partly that, but I think it was much more the fact that the Church opposed it. And Baltimore, of course, has an old tradition. Baltimore is one of the few cities in the United States that was actually founded by Catholics. So, rather than the Catholic population being largely an immigrant population, a later population to come to Baltimore – in Baltimore, immigrant Catholic populations are paralleled by old Baltimore Catholic families. And the newspaper was in the hands of that Catholic tradition, and so on. On the other hand, I remember a priest saying to me once that he believed so firmly in family planning that if there was anything he could do to help patients who came into the clinic and were torn about it, he would love to talk to them and help them.

JF: That was quite risky for him.

LSZ: It was indeed. But there are many brave people like that.

JF: Okay. Let me just ask you a few questions, more personal questions, about those years.

LSZ: Yes.

JF: Where were you living when you came back to Baltimore?

LSZ: Well, there's an interesting story about that too. We were living in an area called Kerneway, which is right next to Loyola College on the northern edge of Guilford, which is probably the loveliest part of Baltimore and very close to the university, which of course, was good for us. When we first came to town, some people we had met at a wedding, an old Jewish family, a wonderful couple who were then, what I guess we, as twenty-year-olds, thought was old. They must have been in their late forties or something. Something ghastly old like that. [laughter] They had given us the name of a real estate agent. And we came to town several times to look for a place. It being so shortly after

the war, there was very, very little on the market, very little available to show us. He finally showed us something in an area called Lochearn over on the west side of town, in a really quite crummy area, when it came right down to it, off Liberty Road. But the house was brand new or close to new, and it looked doable. We asked my husband's parents, who were in DC at the time – his father was chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington. No, I guess at that point, he was just a member of the first Atomic Energy Commission – to come over to take a look at it for us because we didn't think we had much experience in buying houses. In the course of looking out at a very cramped lot, his mother said something like, “Are they allowed to build a fence, or are there any restrictions on this property at all?”

And the owner of the development said, “Oh, not that kind of restriction. But we would hope that they'd agree not to sell to Jews.” Whereupon, of course, the real estate agent that had been with us for weeks and had never thought to ask our religion – and it had never occurred to us that this was a matter of any concern – was very embarrassed. Of course, they left and said we were not interested. And shortly thereafter, we got a letter from the development asking if we would please buy the house and please move in, and there would be no such – et cetera. But of course, we didn't consider it and ended up in this beautiful part of the city, right between Homeland and Guilford. Couldn't have been a more beautiful part of the city to live in.

JF: And your husband was a student at that time?

LSZ: He was a student at the time. He never finished the degree. He decided to leave it. And things pretty much fell apart. We built the home that we're sitting in now, and it fulfilled all of my desires because I was a frustrated architect at heart.

JF: Did you plan it?

LSZ: Well, a lot of it. We had a wonderful architect. But the general layout, yes. But when we first moved to town, I had thought of giving up the English literature and going to architectural school instead. But unfortunately, there was none in Baltimore, and commuting to Philadelphia didn't fill the bill. So anyway, the house fulfilled a lot of those frustrations.

JF: And let me say, for the record, that this is a gorgeous house, beautifully laid out. So if you had become an architect, I'm sure you would have been a most successful one.

LSZ: Well, we had a very fine architect to whom I would give the credit for the house. But anyway, we moved into the house, and very shortly thereafter, the marriage did fall apart. And I stayed here with the children.

JF: Do you want to talk any more about that, or shall we move on?

LSZ: I think only to say that – well, one episode that might be interesting in view of the religious subject matter of these interviews. There was, at that point, a small group formed in the city called the Baltimore Family Life Commission or Coalition – I forget its actual name. But it consisted of four clergy – a rabbi, a Protestant – an Episcopal – minister, a Catholic priest, and a Greek Orthodox priest. And each one appointed one layperson of his religion to it. So there were only eight of us on this little board.

JF: And you were the –?

LSZ: I was the Jew. Well, it was interesting because I had not known the rabbi before, but I had known the Episcopal priest very well because he was on the Planned Parenthood Clergymen’s Advisory Committee. The Clergyman's Advisory Committee, by the way, of Planned Parenthood, played a very, very important role, and we can come back to that at some point.

JF: Yes. I’d like to hear more about that.

LSZ: A very important role in the history of the movement in town here. He had suggested me to the rabbi, who I then came to know. But anyway, I said to the minister, who was the one that I knew best, "You know, if this was a large board, I would not feel this way. But with only one layperson from each religion and such a small group, I think it's really inappropriate for somebody that's in the middle of a divorce to be on it, so I'd like to resign, to tender you all my resignation." And he said, "Let me talk it over with Sam Glaser, the rabbi." They came to me the next week, and they said, "We won't accept the resignation." They said, "There are some divorces that are based on disrespect for marriage and some that are based on respect for it. And we both feel that when it's based on respect for marriage, that it is the right thing to do." So, I was able to stay on the Commission. And I must say that to have two men of that stature affirm that point of view was terribly important to me and helped me through the ghastly years.

JF: It's a very enlightened point of view.

LSZ: It was an enlightened point of view, and it was so well expressed and so kind, and so supportive that it really helped.

JF: How did religion impact on your family during those years, if at all?

LSZ: During the years that I was with my first husband -- his family were a much more practicing family. Reform Judaism was very much a part of their tradition. His parents -- his father in particular -- were very interested in the temple. Temple Emmanuel in New York was a totally different kind of an experience than even the Reform temples in Baltimore.

JF: So they were affiliated with Temple Emmanuel in New York?

LSZ: Yes. His father had been president of the temple at one point – very committed. And so when I first knew the family, I did, for the first time, start to go to Friday night services and was introduced to a very different approach to Judaism than I had

experienced.

JF: How did you like it?

LSZ: I liked it very much because it -- I think, especially, because it was what it was. It was a very liberal approach, with very intelligent and sensitive clergy, and I liked what I saw. When we had children, we started lighting the candles on Friday night and definitely making that an important part of our lives. The very words of that Friday night service are still very much with me, and I love them, you know: "Like a bride, radiant and joyous comes the Sabbath." And this was a revelation to me and something that I'd never experienced before, but I liked very much. I also had a very amusing experience, which I can tell you about – more than amusing. My first Passover I ever attended was while I was at Harvard. And if we can come back to that, it was a very exciting time. But let me finish answering your question. Passover was the holiday that we did enjoy very much. And we always saw to it that our kids, as they were in elementary school and so on, each one would have a chance, one year or another, to invite an entire family of non-Jewish friends to it. We always felt that it was a very, very important occasion to share, this whole notion that nobody is free until everybody is free. And that spirit was very important to us. So, I'd say it was the Friday night services and Passover that meant the most to me, coming to it as late in life as I did .

JF: If we could go back a minute. You said your first seder was at Harvard.

LSZ: It wasn't at Harvard, but it was while I was there. There was a man that I met there. I remember he loved to act. He was the Dauphin in [George Bernard] Shaw's Saint Joan. My brother was managing editor, and then president, of the Harvard Crimson and my introduction to Harvard when I was still in high school had been going up to dances at the Harvard Crimson. And the guys that I went with during the war years were all from the Crimson, so it wasn't surprising when I was up there for that year for a master's that I was hanging around the Crimson a lot. This young man, his last name

was Weisgal, which of course, didn't mean anything to me at the time, nor was I very aware of what was going on in the Middle East. But he said to me, the one and only time he took me out – an amusing aside: I remember that I was wearing my first strapless dress and was very much afraid that if we danced it would fall down. He arrived at the Theological School to pick me up – and I remember his standing on the doorstep and saying, "We can't dance because I couldn't find my suspenders." [laughter] I remember pinning his trousers to his shirt, and we went off. By halfway through the evening, we were dancing happily, and nothing catastrophic happened. But back to Seder: at the end of the evening, he said something about, "Are you going to be going to New York for Easter holidays?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Where are you doing Passover?" And I said, "I've never been to a Passover." Then he said, "Well, then you have to come." He picked me up on Passover and took me to his home, which was a huge apartment way high up on West End Avenue, looking over the Hudson River. A table was set up that started in the dining room and then went out and across the foyer and living room. Quite obviously, this was going to be a very, very festive occasion. And the door started to ring, and people poured in, and kids were dancing and singing. And I was really quite impressed. But then, a woman named Dorothy Thompson walked in. Now, Dorothy Thompson was sort of the Walter Cronkite of the era. And she also, as a matter of fact, had, for reasons that I've never known, been very, very supportive to the idea of a Jewish state. And as people continued to come, it turned out several of them were from what was to become Israel, and obviously, this was but a few months before the state was declared. There was a general feeling of excitement and joy.

And when glasses were raised to "next year in Jerusalem," you can imagine what it meant to them all. And I had thought this was an ordinary Passover. I had no idea until the evening wore on that this was a very, very special occasion. And then, in fact, it wasn't until I got to Israel, actually, in the '70s, and saw statues to the Weisgals all over the place that I realized [laughter] what I had been privileged to join.

JF: That's wonderful.

LSZ: Isn't that marvelous?

JF: So religion then did become – religious traditions became a part of your family. Did you keep that up after you were divorced?

LSZ: We did. And interestingly enough, I should say that a few months after the divorce came through, I met one of the most wonderful human beings I've ever known. I met him at about four o'clock in the afternoon. And about eight o'clock he said, "We'd better get somewhere alone," and by nine o'clock, he had proposed.

This was in fall of 1963 – in August of 1963, actually, that we met. I told him that I was in no condition to remarry so soon after my divorce. He was twenty years older than I. His wife had died the year before. His daughters each had a child or two already. And the idea of his taking over three kids and me seemed a bit much. And I also didn't think that I was ready after the experience I had been through.

But then came a day whose date I think most people will remember. It was November 22nd, 1963. And I picked him up at the airport. As we drove home, he said, "If life is this short" – and for those many years from now that may not remember the date, it was the date of the assassination of John F. Kennedy – as we drove home from the airport he said, "If life is this short, why are you wasting our time?" And so, before we were home, we were engaged. And we were married a month later.

JF: Wow. And what was his name?

LSZ: His name was James Barton Zabin.

JF: And how did you meet? You said you met at 4:00 in the afternoon, and he proposed at 9:00 o'clock.

LSZ: Well, it was the first time my kids were to go off with their father. They hadn't seen him for a long, long time. He had disappeared entirely for a year, and when he showed up, they saw him for a very brief time. This was the first time they were actually to visit him. They drove off with him at twelve o'clock. And five after 12:00, the phone rang. Some old, old friends – they were considerably older than I – they were also twenty years older than I. I knew them because the woman's father had actually been a partner of my father's in New York back in the 1920s. I had known of the family for years. So when I moved to Baltimore, and we met each other, they had become the kind of friends that you sort of have something in common with from years past, but I didn't see them more than once or twice a year. What made them call five minutes after the kids had driven off?

They said they had a friend in from New York and were going to have a cookout and would like to pick me up at four o'clock. And I said, "No." I had told all my friends I intended to mope that night. When they found out that that meant I'd be alone, they simply came and picked me up at 4:00. And they had this wonderful guy with them.

JF: That's quite a story.

LSZ: It is, yeah.

JF: What did he do?

LSZ: He was in advertising and public relations. And he had his own small company in New York with a partner. And his assumption was that when we married, the kids and I would move to New York. But as time went on – not a lot of time, as you can figure – but as it went on and we were married, we all went together to my sister in Switzerland for Christmas. We had all of six days on our own for a honeymoon first. And then my mother brought the children over, and we were all together in Switzerland for Christmas. When we came on back,

he started a pattern of commuting to New York. He would go up on Tuesday morning and spend Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday there. He lived at my mother's, who still lived in the apartment we'd been brought up in. And then he would spend Tuesday and Friday down here. But then he decided that he really didn't want to move us. I thought that, long before an era of women's lib, his judgment was quite amazing that there were four of us and one of him and that he, at the age of fifty-seven, should start all over again in Baltimore rather than move us.

JF: Did you not want to move back to New York?

LSZ: No. I didn't want to move back. I didn't want to leave this home. I thought the kids had had enough changes, and to keep them in this home was much better than starting them in a new place with new schools. The schools that my brother had gone to and Dalton were wonderful. They had literally years-long waiting lists. And when I went to see them and told them there was a chance that I might be in New York, they both said there'd be a place instantly if we moved to New York. That had happened even when I thought we might leave in the course of the divorce. So I must say, these schools were very supportive and helpful. But nonetheless, I didn't want to move them if I could help it. And once he had lived here a while in this home and met the people of Baltimore and the whole community of Baltimore – he was willing to move. He was very much afraid of moving here at first. He said it was the South, and he didn't like the attitudes of the South. And when I pointed out to him that I had very many more African-American close friends than most of the New Yorkers I knew, in fact, that my closest friend was, [laughter] he realized it was not the Deep South.

JF: So you had developed quite an attachment to Baltimore, then.

LSZ: Oh, yes, yes. I loved the city. I also felt that it was a wonderful place to bring up kids. It was small enough so that you could really make something happen. You could change the policy of the city. You could change the texture of the city by the work that

you did through organizations, not individually, but I mean, but one could as a group. It was small enough to really be able to encompass. It was small enough also so that you could live in a way that encompassed people from every walk of life and every part of the city.

When I saw the way people in the New York scene, or especially in suburbia of New York, lived -- or the same is true in Chicago or many, many other places, where their lives become limited to people very much like themselves. In Baltimore, it's small enough, and you can get around well enough so that your friends can be from every part of the city and every social and religious and economic group. And I like that much, much better. He came to like it very much, and ended up, as I say, going up on Tuesday morning, working there Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and spending Friday and Monday trying to put together enough work in town here so that he could move down.

JF: Did he eventually bring all his business down here?

LSZ: What he did was sell his business in New York to his partner and started from scratch down here. And he loved it. He also then started to teach, which he hadn't done before. He had written a textbook on advertising, but then he wrote a much more important textbook on advertising and public relations after he moved here. He started to teach first at Baltimore Community College and then at the University of Maryland. And he liked that very much.

JF: Okay. And what were you doing during this time?

LSZ: Oh, my goodness.

JF: Were you still volunteering for Planned Parenthood?

LSZ: Let's get the dates, then. You know, I was volunteering, yes. But then in the middle of the 1960s, when President Johnson started the War on Poverty, the Office of

Economic Opportunity – you're probably too young to remember that, but you know of it, I'm sure. And it involved a community action program. I wrote a proposal for Planned Parenthood and for the Baltimore Community Action Agency to start a family planning – a Community Action family planning clinic in East Baltimore. It was a few blocks from Hopkins. It was near Gay Street, in a very poor part of town, at the corner of Ashland and Eden. And I actually wrote the proposal and then was convinced by Ann Huppman to take over as its director when we got it. I found us a place for a clinic at that corner that we rented from Target City CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, and staffed mainly with people from CORE, so that it became very much of a community operation. And that was my first paid work in the field. Though I must say, I find it hard to say "first professional work" because, in those days, what you were doing, even as a volunteer, was professional.

JF: What was your job title?

LSZ: I was director of the Community Action Agency Family Planning Clinic and responsible not only to Planned Parenthood, but to Parren Mitchell, who later became a congressman from Maryland, but was, at the time, the director of the Community Action Agency for Baltimore. It was a wonderful experience because it was working with people from the community. I remember at that time that Floyd McKissick, who was the director of the Congress of Racial Equality, came to town. He had been going all over the country condemning family planning clinics as genocidal. And I just was dreading his visit. And he came and was with me for quite a while, and we talked. And finally, he said the words that I was really dreading, which were: "I called a press conference for tomorrow." He said, "Do you mind if I hold it here?" And I said, "No, that's all right. Why?" And he said, "Well, because I'd like, if I have your permission, to announce that I'm a sponsor of this clinic."

JF: What made him change his mind?

LSZ: Well, it turned out – and this was a very important lesson to me – that what he'd been speaking of in these other clinics was their disrespect for the patients, that they were behind curtains in church basements. That they were clinics that only offered family planning in areas that had no maternal and child health, no well-baby clinics. He felt that this was being done for the wrong reasons. But he was so happy with what he saw here that he ended up endorsing it. The clinic lasted for many, many years. I only stayed a couple of years in that capacity. We handed it over to the community, and it was the only one in the country where the community actually took ownership of the clinic.

JF: So was it a branch of Planned Parenthood, or was it –?

LSZ: It was. It was technically responsible – yes, it was a branch of Planned Parenthood, but totally separately run.

JF: I see. Was it less controversial by this time?

LSZ: It was different.

JF: Or in different ways?

LSZ: Yes. Very true, Jean. It was controversial but in very different ways. There were many African-American males, in particular, that thought that family planning was a way of keeping down the Black people. But the best thing to do in that case was to let their own women answer them because the women didn't feel that way. They wanted access to these services. I should say that what had happened historically was a big switch. The beginning of the '60s is when the pill came on the market. So there was a possibility for family planning that there hadn't been before. The diaphragm was the only method that really could be prescribed before and that was not necessarily a popular method. So, a lot of change had taken place. Those were years of a very steep change between the late '60s and into the early '70s. In fact, if anybody had told us in the early '70s that we'd be where we are today, none of us would ever have believed it.

JF: Really?

LSZ: Yeah.

JF: Why is that?

LSZ: Well, because in the first place, in the ‘60s, through the Community Action Agencies, the very, very first federal money started to trickle into family planning. Until then, only Planned Parenthood had offered these kinds of services. Publicly funded by the federal government, there were none. I should say, going back a few years, Baltimore had been in the forefront of a lot of change. In the late ‘50s, we were able to run a rather major campaign in which we influenced the Commission on Public Welfare to change their policy in which social workers had never been permitted even to answer the direct question: What is it that rich people do to prevent birth? A social worker in the welfare department faced with a woman with seven or eight kids and with illness, who asked that question, was not allowed to answer. And we were the first city to be able to change that policy. It was a big mobilization of leaders of all kinds from the city. Religious leaders, medical leaders, all kinds of people. We were able to change that policy. And as a result of that change, the Department of Public Health, which was headed by a member of our board, sent out a memo to all of the counties saying, “Now that the policy of the Public Welfare Commission has changed, be prepared in the counties to accept these patients.” So things had begun to change. And as a matter of fact, it was as a result of that that I was first called to New York to the National Planned Parenthood. It was just the year, in ‘61, when Alan Guttmacher took over as president and asked me to come up and report to the nationwide representatives on this campaign and how it had worked. And that’s when I started to work on the national and, subsequently, international scene. But back to the ‘60s and ‘70s. Well, money started to go to family planning from the federal government in a trickle through the Community Action Agency. And then, in 1970, a bill was passed, which was then called Title X, but

the real name of the bill was the Tydings-Bush Bill. Joe Tydings was the senator from Maryland. And with a lot of us standing behind him and pushing him, and with the Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York writing the actual bill, the first money from the federal government was put in to establish a network of family planning clinics around the whole country.

And what is missed by everybody is the rest of the name of the bill. It was the Tydings-Bush Bill. Tydings was the sponsor in the Senate, and a man named George Bush, who was a congressman, was the sponsor of the Family Planning Act in the House. This man also wrote the introduction to a friend of mine's book, saying that population was the most important issue in the world. It was when he became Reagan's vice president that he was crass enough and false enough to his own ideals to go back on that because he saw that opposing family planning and opposing abortion were good for his political career. But he had been the author of the bill that, to this day – or one of the sponsors, excuse me – not author, but the sponsor of the bill that gives family planning to American women through Title X.

JF: That's an interesting piece of history.

LSZ: Of course, his wife never came publicly out against it. She had been a strong supporter. And unfortunately, his son is just as crass and political as he. Very tragic. But that's why. And then, in, of course, the early '70s, we also had Roe v. Wade. And during the '70s, with an increase in clinics under Title X, the discrepancies between the rich and the poor in family size started to come down, and the discrepancies between different religious groups and social groups came down. It was because women finally had access. And we thought the battles were won, but clearly, they weren't.

JF: A swing to the right. You mentioned the committee of clergymen that was on the board of Planned Parenthood. You said it was very important here in Baltimore.

LSZ: It was, I think, in many parts of the country. The Protestant and Jewish clergy took a real leadership position, as they were later to do, many of them in civil rights. They took a strong leadership position in trying to make family planning services available to the poor.

JF: Okay. We've been talking about, sort of, the temper of the times.

LSZ: Yeah.

JF: And how that's --

[CD NUMBER ONE/THREE ENDS. CD NUMBER TWO/THREE BEGINS.]

JF: This is disc number two, interview with Laurie Schwab Zabin. It's April 29th, 2001. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. I'm Jean Freedman. We had just left off talking about how the temper of the times affects one's life, one's work. Before we leave the '50s and '60s, I'd like to talk about what are some of the big historical events of the time and if they/how they affected your own life. During the '50s, there was McCarthy, Korea, and in the '60s, the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam.

LSZ: Well, in the '50s, there was a time when my first husband's father, who had been involved with Hoover many years – during World War I in Belgium, and so he had known King Leopold and his son, Prince – I guess, it was Baudouin, his son, was coming to America and wanted to see the atomic installations or one of the laboratories. I imagine it was Oak Ridge that he wanted to see. Since my husband was in the field of physics, he thought that it might be sort of touching to have him show his old friend's son the facility. But he had to get him clearance. Now, my husband had had clearance during World War II. He had been in the Naval Technical Mission in Europe, and so he had clearance. So, everybody was rather surprised when the clearance didn't come through, and didn't come through, and didn't come through. I came home from school one day, and he was standing out on the front lawn with a man with a short crew cut and beige

chinos, who turned out to be just what he looked like, which was either an FBI agent or a representative of something like it, that had come over to find out from me, it turned out, why I had been a member of the Marxist Study Group at Vassar.

JF: Were you?

LSZ: That was what I was faced with as I got out of the car. And I said, “Well, member? No. No, no. I went to a meeting once.” Turned out that during World War II, while I was at Vassar, something had been in my mailbox saying there would be a meeting of the Marxist Study Group in such-and-such a room. And since the room was a few doors down the hall from me and I was willing to study anything, I showed up. And there were a total of two or three people in the room. And the whole thing lasted a few minutes and was so dull that I left. And when the next announcement came, I thought there must be more to it than that, and I went one more time. There were a total of three people there, the woman that called it and her best friend, and one other person. In retrospect, it means that that third person was a mole and was reporting. I stayed again for a few minutes and left and never went again. That was on his record. Now, what was so appalling to me at the time was that if his father had not been in public office and not had this kind of access, he would simply have been turned down for clearance, and we’d never have known why. This really underlined the horror of the time, the witch hunt, the assumption that any association with the word was guilty. Indeed, at a time when I was growing up, one almost felt that the people that were not at least leaning toward communism as young people were ultraconservative. It was not looked on that way at all. In high school at Dalton, we read the Communist Manifesto. This was a part of our upbringing. It didn’t mean anything ideological, it meant that you knew the world that you were growing up in and that you were studying the world that you were growing up in. It was rather appalling to see what happened.

I remember being at a cocktail party in Baltimore and bringing a very funny recording we

had had that made fun of McCarthy if you could make fun of anything as horrible as that. But it did use his ghastly voice, and it was quite comic. We brought it along because we knew our friends at the cocktail party would love it. And we put it on and realized that we had done something terrible, because in the room was Owen Lattimore, who had just been through that investigation – a McCarthy inquisition – a few weeks before. So you know, it came very close to home at times. And you realized the suffering people were put through because of it.

JF: How about Korea? Did that affect your life at all?

LSZ: Much less. And I think it affected many, many people, of course, that were in that particular age group. But the effect on us had been much more from World War II than from Korea. There were some rather amusing episodes in the ‘50s during the time that Eisenhower was president. He was a friend of my husband’s family. He got to know my husband’s family because they had a farm in Virginia, and he also had a farm, and they both raised Aberdeen Angus. And so they decided to share a bull because a bull was very expensive. And it always sort of amused me what one would ship back and forth between farms. But anyway, he would come down to the farm on occasion for lunch on a Sunday or something. And as a matter of fact, if I can take the time, I’d love to tell you about his first visit.

JF: Please. This is Eisenhower himself?

LSZ: This was Eisenhower himself. His wife was not with him, but his – I forget the name of his sidekick that was always with him, supplying the words he couldn’t remember. But anyway, he was coming down, and the Secret Service came down in advance to look through the place and comb through it and be sure it was all alright. There was a huge living room, a two-story high living room, and they were very careful to sweep everything. And the night before, I was getting so – I guess I was a bit irreverent – and also, incidentally, a Democrat. But I was being a little put off by the whole family

feeling as if God was going to descend on the farm. My father-in-law had one of the few copies of Robert E. Lee's "Farewell to his Troops'' from Appomattox, just saying, "The war is over, and go on home, and thanks a lot." In order to protect it, he had it mounted behind glass on a frame on the wall. And in front of it, to keep it from the light was a small portrait of Lee with a little door that opened, and behind Robert E. Lee was this manuscript.

And we always said that when you opened the door, you should see his entrails. So that night, I took a little piece of paper and made some very lurid entrails and pasted it over the glass of the "Farewell to the Troops." And, of course, no sooner was Ike there with his martini in hand that Pop was showing him around the various mementos in the living room, and he opened this little door. You know how when you're showing somebody something, you watch his expression instead of looking at the thing itself? And he couldn't quite make out Ike's expression of total bewilderment; and turned around, and of course, there were the bile duct and the liver and the stomach and the digestive tract. I realized at that moment that I probably had overstepped [laughter] the limits, that this was indeed the President of the United States. And we were finally settling down on a couple of facing couches with the drinks, and I was forgiven, at which point there was a small noise from the little windows way up on the second floor that opened – home movies used to be shown, and when they built that house, they had made these little doors on the second floor looking over the living room so that they could put a projector and it would project across the room. My kids had apparently gotten up from their naps, which I had thought I had them settled in, and were peering out those windows, and all of a sudden, I heard them going, "Ack, ack, ack, ack," from there. And the Secret Service came and threw Eisenhower onto the floor and threw themselves on top of him. [laughter] I thought I would never be invited to that occasion again. [laughter]

JF: [laughter] Were you?

LSZ: Yes, yes. There were several times with him back at the farm. But everybody, apparently, had enough of a sense of humor to rally around.

JF: That's good. [laughter] So, into the '60s. How about the Civil Rights Movement?

LSZ: Oh, well, the Civil Rights Movement was very important to all of us. To this day, I have to say that I regret that I wasn't as physically in the South as I should have been. I guess, with small kids and what was going on at that point in my life, my work in the movement was more the kind of thing that I described, of working with Target City Corps and my urban clinic. As a matter of fact, one event that I remember tremendously was the Martin Luther King riots in Baltimore. They were rather slight riots compared to many other cities, but they were not slight.

JF: This was after the assassination.

LSZ: This was after the assassination. I went down immediately with a portrait of Martin Luther King and put in it the window of our little clinic. We opened the clinic to serve the people that were hurt. My whole staff, of course, were African-American down there. And we were very close by that time. And they said I'd better not come down. That made me feel terrible because I wanted to be a part of it. What we would do is that I would drive to within a few blocks of the clinic, and they would come with all of the linens and so on, and I would bring them home to wash them and bring them back because we couldn't get supplies into that part of the city; it was in very rough shape. Hopkins, I was told – though I've never been able to confirm this – actually closed its emergency room. So we served as an emergency spot at that point.

JF: Was this still the clinic you were telling me about that you –?

LSZ: It was the same family planning clinic. But what we did was to get some of the young doctors from Hopkins to come over and help us out. And when I think in this era of AIDS, I would never have picked up all the bloody bandages and sheets and so on

and brought them home in order to wash them and bring them back to the clinic. But that's what we did during that period. It was a very sad time in a way, but in a way, it also taught us a lot. The area, for example, on Lombard Street, was right in the middle of it because of the housing projects that were around there. There was one small Italian delicatessen, Pastori's, that was on a corner down there. And the people from the housing project formed a shield, themselves, with their bodies, around that place to keep the windows from being broken and to keep the place from being ransacked, as many of the others were on the block because those owners had been good to them and extended credit when they needed it. So I think what we learned more and more – the same way that I learned it from Floyd McKissick – was that when there was anger, when there was fury, it was often well-deserved, and when people had behaved in humane and human ways, that even in the heat of controversy, the African-American people of the city would defend them.

JF: How did things change in Baltimore as a result of the Civil Rights Movement?

LSZ: Oh, I think the same way they changed everywhere in the country. I think that the big disappointment to us all is that economic change didn't come along in the same way. I think that's something that we failed on miserably and we still have to work on. It's been tragic to see the city as divided as it is. This is a city, after all, that at one point – when Schaefer was running for mayor, and Kurt Schmoke was running for state's attorney – if not a single white had voted, Shaefer would still have been elected. And if not a single Black had voted, Schmoke would still have been elected. In other words, in this city, when there was true choice and real preference, race didn't stand in the way. It should have stayed that way. It should always stay that way. But the economic conditions have continued to divide it and will until we do something about it. For example, I firmly feel that there should be metropolitan taxation. Those of us that live right outside the city but are here because of the city and earning our living in the city shouldn't be paying half the taxes that people in the city are paying. It's wrong.

JF: I imagine that's an unpopular view in the suburbs.

LSZ: I'm sure it is. And if I ever retire, I'll be working on it.

JF: Okay. So tell me more about your own career trajectory. You continued to work at this clinic, to be the director of this clinic for –

LSZ: Just for a few years. And then I went back to being a volunteer briefly because Ann Huppman was stepping down as executive director, and she wanted me to run the board during that transition period. And so after that and after a few other things had happened there, I was being asked to become director of the Planned Parenthood of Maryland, I knew I didn't want to do it, but I wasn't sure why. And then, one night, I met Carl Taylor, who was a professor of international health at the School of Public Health at Hopkins. And we spent the evening – actually, it was at my house, at something that somebody from out of town had asked me to have him attend. And we talked. The next day at work, at Planned Parenthood, somebody said, "Why are you not taking this job?" I should tell you that Planned Parenthood of Maryland, at that point, was probably the largest single-site provider of family planning in the world. It was a very important clinic. We had done a marvelous job down here. It has not continued to grow apace. I hope it will in the future. But I kept asking myself why I didn't want this job.

And when somebody asked me, I heard myself say, "Well, I really can't take it because I'm going back to school." And until I heard myself say it out loud, I didn't realize that that is indeed what had happened the night before, that I had made the decision that academia was what I loved, that I wanted to approach family planning, demography, population in ways that I hadn't been able to up to that time. I had done a lot of work for the National Planned Parenthood at that point and was their representative to the International, to the western hemisphere region. I had represented the National Planned Parenthood at the Conference in Stockholm, the United Nations Conference on the

Environment so I had gotten more and more involved in larger issues than the delivery of services in Baltimore. I had helped in New York to start National Planned Parenthood's first International Committee, their first Public Affairs network, in which we actually started to get involved on the political scene; their first Information and Education Committee, and so on. So I had been doing that kind of thing. But I hadn't done it from any kind of an academic base that I thought was strong enough. And so when I realized that this potential existed in Baltimore to do this, I went a few days later and looked into the possibility of becoming a student in the department of population dynamics in the School of Public Health at Hopkins. And when I talked to the head of the department, who has since become my closest colleague, he said, "It's not that you're lacking a prerequisite; it's that you're lacking every prerequisite." [laughter] Not the most encouraging kind of reception. But I did start.

JF: What year was that?

LSZ: That was in fall of '74. And I took a couple of courses for the first eight-week term and was walking down the hall, and somebody said, "Congratulations." And I said, "Why?" They said, "Well, you've just been voted doctoral candidacy." And I said, "Well, I didn't know I'd applied." So, I went into high gear that winter, of course, and took my comprehensives that spring, and that was it.

JF: That was fast.

LSZ: [laughter] Yeah. The same spring as my daughter was married in the garden. So it's always been a "Many Faces of Eve" kind of a life.

JF: Tell me how things changed in the field of family planning after Roe v. Wade.

LSZ: Oh, that's a hard question. I think one of the things that happened to the family planning movement itself, to Planned Parenthood itself. They got very involved in the field of choice. And I think, at times, it has actually led them from what ought to be front

and center, which is sticking with the family planning message. It's still just as important as it ever was, but I think in the public's image, the controversy surrounding freedom of choice and anti-choice movements has permeated the controversy around family planning. And it's too bad because the focus, it seems to me, of the family planning movement when I first heard about it and first joined it would have been "Every child a wanted child." The focus was on the importance to the child of being born, as Guttmacher used to say, "with joy" into the world. And I think a lot of that focus has been lost in the controversies over abortion that have followed.

JF: Tell me about your own children.

LSZ: Oh, they're incredible people. I'd love to tell you about them. We had a lot of fun during the years that they were growing up. They did, of course, have the sadness of the divorce, which couldn't have been easy for any of them. But Jim was a wonderful father to them in the years that followed and very undemanding of them in terms of allegiance. He didn't want in any way to separate them from their own father. The girls went to Friends School all the way through. My son went to Friends School through lower school and middle school. And then, thinking that he would otherwise be in a very feminine environment and could certainly use an all-boys school, I enrolled him in Gilman, not knowing that there would soon be a man of the house anyway. But Gilman was a very fine school. And they went through school here. They went on – my son, to Harvard, and then to medical school at Cornell in New York, and then came back to Baltimore and spent fourteen years at Hopkins, where he was – first, he was an intern and resident in pediatrics and went into pediatric oncology. He then, having always been interested in neurology as well, became very deeply involved in brain tumor work for children and infants; and finally left Baltimore to become director of the Brain Tumor Unit at Children's Memorial in Chicago. He had married by that time and had children. He did stay in that

job for several more years and then really couldn't watch another dying baby, I think. He'd had twenty years by then of that very, very draining work. He's now the medical director of a drug company in the Chicago region and working on organizing the scientific trials, the trials of new drugs in the field. So he's followed along very much on the track that he was on to begin with but from a little different angle. And he has three children, a son and two daughters, just as we had had, and a wife who's very interested in the energy field. She's an energy engineer and has also gotten her degree at the School of Public Health while she was in town here. So that's the family of the son, who is the oldest one. My daughter, Jeremy, lives in Potomac. When she finished Friends School here, she went for a year to Vassar but then moved down to Washington, finished at American University, was married in Washington, and has two sons and a daughter in that area. Her husband is a gastroenterologist. And she then made up her mind a few years later to go back to school and got her degree – her Ph.D. – as a clinical psychologist at Catholic University. And she practices now in Potomac, where they live. She has a son who is a graduate of Princeton and who, while he was a senior at Princeton, set up a voluntary agency called Land Mine Clearance, International. That is now merged into a larger development corporation with whom he is now working with the Pentagon and others on training and land mine removal. Her second son is now at Georgetown; he had to remain on the Potomac because he is a kayaker. And he's on the river by 5:00 every morning. He's represented the United States on the Junior International Kayak Team and is hoping someday to be in the Olympics. So that's his work. But he's also studying at Georgetown. He gets back in time for classes, and then by late afternoon, he's back on the river again. And his younger sister has now started kayaking and is also on the international circuit. I don't know serious she'll be, but she is where they all were at school, at the Potomac School in McLean, Virginia. They're a wonderful family. And they were all up here for Easter, as usual, this year for our egg hunt in the woods. My youngest daughter lives only about seven minutes from here. She went to Oxford for a year or so right after graduating in political science from

Wellesley, came back, and started to work on her doctorate. She got her masters over there, started to work on her doctorate, and very near the end, decided that she really was an activist and not an academician. She started a family support center down in the inner city some years ago, but now she is a national consultant in community organization and especially interested now in the after-school movement, trying to get community schools to serve the communities, these poor communities so that the young people receive the kind of support that they need.

JF: It sounds like the apples didn't fall too far from the tree.

LSZ: She was married to a lovely guy from Princeton and went with him to Oxford. That marriage did break up after they had two wonderful sons. But they've stayed so close that he's very much a part of the family and is with us all the time on every important occasion and in between. He's remained very much a part of all our lives. Then she remarried an African-American man who works in very similar work to hers. He does focus group work around the country in conflict resolution and organizational development. And he had a son who we now consider another grandson. Together they adopted a baby, at birth, from the inner city. And she is the light of all our lives. Their oldest son is now on a work-study program in Southeast Asia. He should have just left India and gone to Nepal. He was working in Philippines and Thailand, and working and seeing and playing. It's a wonderful program for the year between graduating from McDonough and going to Oberlin.

JF: They sound wonderful.

LSZ: They are all marvelous, exciting, great people. And then, of course, there's a whole other family in New York, what I call my "real" husband's two daughters, who are very close to my age. And, of course, their children are close to my kids' ages. And so there's a whole – there are [eight] of his great-grandchildren now in New York and Philadelphia, and we're all also very close. So I try to get to see them during the holiday

seasons, too. As a matter of fact, this year, after being down here, I just jumped on a train to get up there to have Christmas dinner on Christmas night up there with them. So it's a very big family. I think there are something like thirty-five or six in the direct line, but we don't much get together. [laughter]

JF: If we could, I'd like to go back to – on your own life history. We had you in the doctoral program at Hopkins, in the School of Public Health.

LSZ: While we're speaking of family, though, could I tell you something that is pretty close to that same period?

JF: Yes, please.

LSZ: In 1982 – my father had died many years before. And in 1982, the year after my mother died, I started to think about the fact that we'd had this wonderful good fortune. [Interruption in Recording.]

JF: Okay. You were talking about family occurrences before we go back to school.

LSZ: Yes. I think we were speaking of 1982, the year after my mother died. And I had realized how terribly fortunate we'd been to have this wonderful family on both sides of the Atlantic, and all know each other, and all be in contact, at least on a yearly basis, if not all the time. I realized that with my mother's death and the death of two of her sisters-in-law, my father's brothers' wives had all been very much in contact with each other. And when any of the French family would come to New York, for example, one of them would get everybody together so that we would see them. I realized that with all three of them gone, there was nobody that was going to do that. So in February of '82, I sent a letter to –

[Interruption in Recording.]

JF: Okay. Continuing after a pause for technical failure.

LSZ: I sent a letter to my cousins, both around the United States and in Paris, asking whether they would like to get together with their families and children in August of that year. And in August of ‘82, we had, at this place where we are sitting right now, a reunion of the entire family, 108 out of the 112 members of the family – all descendants of our Alsatian grandmother and grandfather – came together. And we had an absolutely wonderful time. The mayor declared it Schwab Family Reunion Day in Baltimore. We have pictures taken – out by the wall that is behind you of the whole family together. And interestingly enough, we shared with one another how surprised we had each been individually when our friends and acquaintances hearing about it had said, “But how did you know where your cousins were?” Because we took it for granted that everybody knew where their first cousins were. None of us had ever thought that was very surprising. And yet we found that many people have lost track even of first cousins. Anyway, we all got together and had a wonderful time. We were out on a boat in the inner harbor together. We had a wonderful banquet together one night. We had cookouts here. Everybody, for one of the meals, brought potluck -- anybody that came driving from anywhere on the East Coast brought supper. And the French family had sent ten cases of wine from Burgundy that were labeled “Cuvee Schwab, Pour la Reunion a Baltimore.” So it was a very festive and wonderful occasion, and we were very, very happy to be together. And five years later, the French family arranged a reunion back in the area in Alsace-Lorraine that the family had come from. And on that occasion, as we drove together on a bus into Diemeringen, the town in which my father and his brothers and sisters were born, we were greeted by banners over the road saying, “Bienvenue au Famille Schwab [Welcome to the Schwab family].”

JF: That’s lovely.

LSZ: And the mayor was waiting with champagne in the town gym because the town hall wasn't big enough for the family. [laughter] So that has been repeated now every five years. After five more years, in the U.S., and then near Paris in '97. And it will be back here in America in 2002. The wonderful thing about it is that it puts the young people of the family, my kids' generation, in touch; they are now friends with one another. They visit one another and spend vacations together at times. And their children are getting to know each other. And now it means that even when my grandchildren are traveling in Europe, they stop by to see the family in Paris, just as they do to my sister in Switzerland. And it's made a marvelous link. And I'd say, if I were to look back on my life, I'm probably prouder of that occasion than anything I've ever done.

JF: That's lovely. Is that what prompted you to make a family tree

LSZ: One of the beautiful things that happened at the occasion of the first reunion was that everybody's response was: "What can I bring? What can I do?" It was like that wonderful Christmas carol about the drummer boy who says, "I don't have anything to give him. What shall I do? I'll play for them." Well, everybody had that reaction. And an artist in the family did the family tree, put it together very beautifully, and then duplicated it for everyone but gave me the original. Similarly, one cousin and his children play the violin together. And so, during the cocktail hour at the banquet, they simply sat down, having prepared to do string quartets for us during that period. Everybody did their thing. The one who was a Unitarian minister did the invocation. And many of us wrote songs. And it was just a very, very wonderful occasion, with everybody bringing their own offering.

JF: That sounds lovely. Okay. Well, let's go back to your career trajectory.

LSZ: Okay.

JF: Continuing back to when you were a doctoral student at Hopkins.

LSZ: Well, yes, the doctoral student that had no prerequisites. [laughter] Well, as I say, I finished that year and took my comprehensives. That spring was another high point because my older daughter was married in our garden and surrounded by dogwood and azalea – probably much more important than what I was doing downtown – in fact, definitely more important, and launched her beautiful life with her family. But in the meantime, I was trying to finish up that first year and went on into the second year. During the second year, I had my first experience of work internationally in the field. I'd been at meetings – international meetings and things like that before – but I hadn't actually done a job in the field. I went in 1976 for the State Department with a – team of three of us to look at the family planning program in Morocco. It was my first taste of doing overseas work of that kind. But I went on at school and concentrated mainly on the US, which was, after all, where I'd done my work. Two of the professors in the department had done the very first collection of data on adolescents in the United States in 1971 and again in '76 and showed not only how much sexual activity there was but also what a steep rise there was even between 1971 and '76. They repeated it in '79, including males as well as females, and again, there'd been a rise. So we knew a lot was happening. And in 1977 or '78, I started to use their '76 data to do a thesis on adolescent sexual activity in the United States. And in that, I was very surprised to find that fifty percent of all the conceptions to adolescents were happening within the first six months of their sexual activity. That was a rather important finding for the time because, as I say, it was rather late in the '70s. And the '70s had been the period that we spoke of before when Title X clinics had started all over the country, and teenagers were able to go to those clinics. People were very surprised that with the teenagers going to these clinics at the rate they were, there was still such a high rate of unintended pregnancy among them. The thesis showed that many were only attending after they already thought themselves to be pregnant. When I finished with that thesis, I had to figure out what to do next. The department had a very strict law that it didn't hire its own students, so I didn't know what I'd do. My husband was already weakening by then, and I couldn't

accept appointments to any other university because I wanted to stay right in town here. He had moved here for me; I wasn't going to move him at that stage. So I was fortunate enough, the afternoon of my doctoral defense, to get a call from the head of the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics offering me an appointment in his department to do anything in the social science of reproduction. And so I was an assistant professor in the School of Medicine for a few years.

JF: Were you there as a researcher?

LSZ: As a researcher, able to do anything I wanted in the field – in that research field. And it was wonderful because I didn't have departmental responsibilities. I could just really concentrate on the work. So I concentrated on that early period of exposure, having found out how important it was to get to young people quickly. And I found out that the vast – that a very large proportion – not the majority, but at least thirty-six or seven percent of the girls that were arriving at these clinics were arriving when they thought they were pregnant and not in time for preventive intervention. So that was sort of my first finding after the doctorate. And it focused a lot of our attention on that early period of exposure. And from there, I worked with Dr. Janet Hardy, who was the head of adolescent medicine in pediatrics at Hopkins. She had done a lot of work in caring for pregnant teenagers but now wanted to get into prevention too. We established a clinic that was just for teenagers across the street from the Dunbar Senior High School and a few blocks from Lombard School, which was a junior high. We actually had a social worker/educator in the schools in the morning and in the clinic in the afternoon

And we were able to demonstrate, some years later, that we had cut the pregnancy rate over thirty percent just in three years, while in the control schools, the ones that didn't have the program, it was soaring, fifty-eight percent. So here we were able to show that these schools that had started with pretty much the same pregnancy rate ended up with ninety percentage points between them and were really beginning to understand the kind

of intervention that was necessary. So, it was a very exciting period.

JF: How long did you continue at Hopkins – or are you still there?

LSZ: I'm still there. I'm still there. If we can return for a moment to the more domestic scene –

JF: Please.

LSZ: – I mentioned not wanting to leave – to take my husband out of town. He was becoming ill at that point. And he was increasingly limited to the house. And finally, after a long period of illness, died in 1987. All during that time, I was at the School of Public Health, having been asked to come back across the street from the School of Medicine. They always used to call it the "Chasm of Wolfe Street." In other words, the chasm between medicine and public health. But increasingly, that was disappearing as a chasm, and I think it's much better today. But I went back into the department of population, and that would have been in about '85 or so, and just worked in doing my own research, working with doctoral students.

My first doctoral student was from Kenya. And I was able to go with her back to Kenya to collect data in the Nakuru District. We did our reports on the sexual behavior and knowledge and attitudes of these teenagers in Kenya. It was very exciting. And I started to become more and more interested in doing international work. But because of the nature of the original work in adolescence, most of what I was called upon to do was national work – various different roles, a National Academy of Science committee on research in HIV and AIDS, that kind of thing.

JF: What was your role in that?

LSZ: Just a member of that committee. But that kind of thing. Or there was a White House conference called. And then there was some work when Joycelyn Elders came

in. She was very interested in the field and had many of us working with her. All kinds of things, both national and local, but my main work outside of Hopkins in the field had been with the Alan Guttmacher Institute, as it's called, which is the institute for research and policy that grew out of Planned Parenthood, but then became an independent organization. I helped to negotiate its separation in the mid-'70s from Planned Parenthood, and then have been on their board and served as chair of their board and on their various committees ever since. And I'm still working very closely with them. That's my really closest volunteer association. In the meantime, research went on, and I was able to do some work that showed that abortion had no negative consequences for teens. There were people that were opposing it and saying that it would have dire psychological consequences. And the National Institutes of Health put out a request for proposals to explore whether that was indeed true. We were able to demonstrate that not only was it not true, but that these young people were much, much better off economically and educationally after it than those who had proceeded to have babies; and also that they were much, much more likely to avoid unintended conceptions in future, which was important. But in the course of that study, we also found out that the young women that came in and had tests that were negative – in other words, they came in, they had a test, they were not pregnant – and we thought they might be very cautious young women who had managed to avoid it. But we found out that, no, indeed, they were at very, very high risk. And fifty-eight percent of them were pregnant within eighteen months. So that started me on another sort of direction, which was trying to see if we could find ways of intervening when they came in for a test so it wouldn't continue to happen. And we've been a little less successful with that one.

JF: Have you found anything that works? Is there any education or –?

LSZ: There is, but unfortunately, clinics have such a difficult time trying to handle their loads and giving enough counseling. We found that, really, case management on a one-on-one level is needed to really turn people around when they're in environments that are

so difficult and that are so hopeless. In a way, we need to make them feel that there really is reason to expect the future to be better than the present – and to give them the tools to make that happen. Their level of hopelessness is a bad breeding ground for breeding, I think. What we're trying to do is to find ways to change their calculus of choice so that they really will see a future ahead of them, and only then I think we have a real possibility of changing their behaviors.

JF: That goes beyond just planning conceptions, now, doesn't it?

LSZ: That's right. That's right. Although I do feel, as I have ever since the '50s when I first was introduced to the field, and ever since the '60s in the very poor neighborhood of Baltimore where we ran the clinic, that in a way, giving a woman control over her own life even in one area, like family planning, can help her begin to get control over it in many other areas.

JF: Did you teach as well?

LSZ: Always have taught. I teach a course – but our main teaching, of course, at that level is our work with our doctoral and some masters students, but mainly our doctoral students with whom you work very closely, one-on-one, as they plan either research and intervention in the field, or some kind of basic sociological research, and all of those kinds of activities. We really have many jobs in one. We are academic advisors and mentors to these doctoral students. We teach courses. We do our own research. And, of course, in an environment like Hopkins, you raise the money for every single thing you do. You have to write the proposals and get the money. And then, a few years ago, something absolutely remarkable happened. I got a phone call from a colleague of mine out in Seattle who said that Bill Gates, the father of the famous Microsoft Bill Gates, had asked her who to call if they wanted to do work in the field of population, just to get some advice and that she had given him my name, and to be in contact if I was going to be anywhere around. So when I was in California some months later, I went on up. When I

met him, we realized that we had been on the national Planned Parenthood board together many years ago. The important thing there was that after talking with him and then some correspondence, I was able to get him to come and visit the School of Public Health.

JF: Now, this is Gates, Sr.?

LSZ: Well, he is a Jr., so we don't call him Sr.

JF: I see.

LSZ: But he is the father, yes. And as a matter of fact, since he's six-foot-seven, and his son quite normal sized, they are lovingly called, out there, Macro and Micro. [laughter] Quite delightful. But anyway, when he came to visit – the father, that is, who was in charge of the foundation at that point – when he came to visit and saw what a remarkable institution it is – it is, by far, the most – well, it's many times the size of any other school of public health in the world and sort of the key institution in the field – he just kept saying, "It blows my mind, it blows my mind." And they, very shortly thereafter, gave me a couple of million dollars to start a leadership training program. That was supposed to be for five years. But one year later, they were so pleased with it all that they asked for another proposal. And at that point, we put together a proposal for an Institute of Population and Reproductive Health and shortly thereafter, were awarded twenty million dollars more to start the institute. And one of the more exciting things about it was that the night before we gave the announcement to the press, they changed their minds and decided to name it the Bill and Melinda Gates Institute. So it is, I think, the only such thing that bears their name. And we're trying to live up to it, and working all over the world at this point, bringing in people from all over the world for leadership training here, then bringing it to their countries, and working with them to try to build the capacity to do their own programming, rather than receive it all from here.

JF: So the idea is – is it largely a training institute, or is it also a research institute?

LSZ: The mission of the institute is to develop the in-country capacity, not only to do the research but to develop the policies and run and monitor and evaluate the programs that will improve things for women and families in the developing world. To that end, we do both this leadership training, we also bring individuals from those countries for either short-term training or masters or doctoral degrees with us. But we also work with them to develop the same capacity within their countries. So, for example, just last week, ten Indonesians who had been involved in training programs we've done there and want to institutionalize these leadership training programs in their own universities spent two weeks here. They were people from the highest level of the ministry. The people in charge of training and in charge of human resources, and all, were here, and from universities as well. And in August, we will be there again, helping them to train trainers in order to reach six thousand of their leaders in the field.

JF: That's a very exciting –

LSZ: And it's very exciting. The same thing is happening in China at this point. We're setting up a Research and Policy Institute of Population in Peru at this point because with all their governmental changes and the difficulties that they have when administrations change rapidly, they felt that what they most needed was to have some institution that was separate from government, that would withstand all those changes. So putting it all together, we're trying to find something different in every part of the world to sort of encourage that translation process where small local programs become national, where the work of a private agency can become the work of the government, where public policy responds to the best that's known in the field, and where we develop sort of a cadre of really highly trained and motivated professionals that can carry the work forward. And in the process, we want to learn from them. One of the things that I want to dedicate myself to – I'm trying to find a new director now to take over from me because

I'm not an administrator type, and I'd rather develop new programs. And one of the things that we're very anxious to do is to develop a reciprocal learning center where we can learn as much from them as they learn from us. This is not a one-way street.

JF: Is the focus on international policy?

LSZ: It is totally international. The Gates Institute only focuses on the developing world – on Latin America, on sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia and China.

JF: And so you say you would like to step down from administration and return to research.

LSZ: Well, I've tried to carry through my research at this point, yes. I have an NIH grant in which we're trying to look at the factors that are protective of teens against risk behaviors and so on. I just had the feeling that too much of the work is negative. It all says, "What makes things go wrong?" Well, what you need to look at is: "What makes things go right? How do young people in the most dangerous environments manage to make it?" And if we can find some of those factors, I think we can be more helpful than we can just with the negatives.

JF: What have you found?

LSZ: Not much yet. We're just beginning on that one. But I think basically if we find that – if we can strengthen their ability to cope with their environments, whether it's through language skills, through intellectual skills and so on -- but also, I'm sure, it will show up some family factors though we haven't gotten that far yet.

JF: Have you any plans to retire?

LSZ: No, I don't. As I said to somebody the other day, "I'd love to cut down to full-time." [laughter] But the one real regret is that I don't have as much time as I'd like to spend

with my family. What I've done ever since many years ago, when the now twenty-four-year-old was twelve, I got the idea that one way I could spend some time – more quality time – with them was if I traveled alone with them. So I started when each one is about eleven, twelve, or thirteen, taking them somewhere in the world, just alone. That's been an absolutely wonderful experience. The first wanted to go to Egypt, and we had a marvelous time. And the next one wanted to go to the Galapagos. The third one wanted to go to Greece and the Greek islands. And I took two of them together to a safari in Tanzania, then one up to Machu Picchu and the Amazon, and one to Alaska, along with a good friend.

JF: How marvelous.

LSZ: And it's been a wonderful experience for me and for them.

JF: I want to ask you a question that touches on something that we were discussing earlier, and that was about the role of religion, religious ritual in your life. And you mentioned that when your children were small and with your first husband, you incorporated a number of – some of the religious rituals and synagogue attendance. And then you indicated that that fell away. Could you tell me about that?

LSZ: Well, it fell away in the sense of any deep religious commitment on my part to going any further than that in ritual. But we certainly continued some attendance and the Friday candle lighting all the time the kids were growing up.

My husband, when I remarried, was a man who had been born into a Jewish household, brought up as Jewish. When he and his first wife had married and had children, they had left the religion and joined the Ethical Society. The Ethical Humanist movement was very

strong at that point. He was not at all sure that he was a theist and wanted yet to have some focal point for their morality and religious feeling. And he had been very active – they had been very active in the Ethical movement. So when he came to Baltimore, there was an Ethical Society for him to join. And at first, he didn't know how he would react to our Friday night ritual, but he came to love it as much as the kids and I did. And so we always kept that going. In fact, I was very happy when my son, a few years ago, asked if I still had the words that we used because he wanted to duplicate them in his home. And we continued with the Passover tradition and so on, and the kids have certainly picked that up and have followed through strongly with it. I should say that my son and his wife do practice – they keep the High Holy days. They do the Friday night service, and they are practicing Reform Jews. My youngest daughter in Baltimore became a member of the Reconstructionist movement. And as a matter of fact, I was with her last night at her temple for a celebration and talk. And I think she's found that very, very meaningful in her life. It's a very different form of the religion that makes a lot more of ritual but is very liberal in its sort of political tradition as opposed to its rather conservative ritual tradition. But some things did happen along the way that really had a big impact on me. We did remain members of the temple to which we had belonged all the time the kids were young.

JF: Which one was that?

LSZ: Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. I should say that my great-grandfather in Baltimore was a cantor at the Lloyd Street Synagogue back in the 1850s.

JF: No kidding.

LSZ: Yes. It wasn't his main work. He had many children, and this was to help support them. But as a matter of fact, I don't, to this day, even know what his main work was. And there's another side light there that might amuse you. I don't know whether we should go this far afield, but –

JF: Go for it.

LSZ: My mother got a call back in about the ‘70s from a woman that had moved to Westchester County and had seen her maiden name in the phone book and called. And it turned out to be a cousin of mine who said he knew nothing about the family, but his aunt did. She called my mother, and they became very good friends. It turned out that she was raised as a Mormon in Portland, Oregon. And being Mormons, they had done this extensive research on genealogy, and she wanted to know if my mother was the relative she thought she was. It turned out that when my great-grandfather was in Baltimore in the, probably, early 1840s, he heard from his brother in Germany that his two sons, who were young men that wanted to come to the States, and could they stay with him? And they did. They came, and shortly thereafter they set out in the Gold Rush to the West. Somewhere along the line, the family lost track of them. There were, indeed, found in their attic by this woman who was in touch with my mother, correspondence with their uncle back in Baltimore, my great-grandfather, as they traveled west. But apparently, the correspondence didn’t continue to the point where they became Mormons. So this young woman had been brought up in a Mormon family in Portland and had done all the genealogical tracking and found us again. The one time I ever met her, she said to me, “Would you double-check something or other with the Jewish Historical Society in Baltimore? There is a Professor Aberbach who runs it, and if you would call him.” So I did. And at the end of my talk with him, I said, “She said something so strange to me.” She said, “Don’t tell him we’re Mormon.” And I said, “Why would she say anything so silly?” There was a long pause, and he said in his very heavy Viennese accent, “Can you really be so naive?” I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Don’t you know why they do this genealogy?” And, of course, I didn’t at the time, as I do now. And he said it was to take this scroll into the inner sanctum and remarry everybody in the faith so that they wouldn’t be bastards. Of course, many people are offended by that act. And I said that I thought my forebears were powerful enough people so that a piece of paper with their names was not going to affect their memory. But anyway, that

was a sidelight on the family's religious history I wanted to share. And here is another: as I say, we were still members of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation –and there was a temporary rabbi, I think, an acting rabbi because they were looking for a senior person. At that point, my younger daughter was about to get married. Her fiancé's cousin was a minister. And they wanted very much to have him take part in the ceremony. So I called the temple, which had been perfectly open to marrying them, despite the fact that it was a mixed marriage. I didn't, at that time, know that that was unusual, but I found that out later. But anyway, when I said that we just wanted to be sure that they knew that the benediction was going to be given by the cousin, I was told, no, that was not going to happen. I said, "What do you mean?" And they said, "No non-Jew can officiate on the premises." I was horrified. And I said, "Is this the will of the board?" The rabbi said that it was the board that insisted upon it. The board said that it was the rabbi that insisted upon it. And the unwillingness of either to take the responsibility turned me off completely. But even more, was the very notion that the congregation could possibly be that bigoted. We moved the wedding, of course. We moved it to the Interfaith Center in Columbia, which was perfectly happy to have it there. It was very hurtful to me that the temple would behave in that way. I wrote them a letter at the time, resigning and saying that this was not a matter of convenience; this was a matter of conscience – of my total inability to worship among people that could possibly perpetuate this kind of bigotry through the ages. At that point, I really psychologically left. I didn't stop being Jewish; I had been Jewish before, and from birth, and always will be, and will always be proud of it. But I'm not proud of that kind of behavior. I'm not proud of what Jews have done in Israel now that they've come to power. I think that we have to stop thinking in terms of separation and hatred. I think we're just perpetuating it. To me, the notion that a temple, that a place of God, should perpetuate it was even more frightening.

I never got a response to the letter, not from anyone there, not from the board, not from the rabbi. But a few months later, I got a phone call. And on the phone was a man

whose voice was not familiar to me. He said he was the new rabbi, and on his desk was the letter, and that this call was one of the first things he'd done; he asked me to come in and see him. And when I did, he said, "You know, they're going to have to change this policy this week because next week at my installation, I'm having a Catholic priest do the invocation and a minister do the benediction, and so I think it better change. And you've got to come back and help me change it." I just found [that] I couldn't. I have always wondered whether I should have. But I didn't. And I think, combined with some other things, it has helped to make me feel as strongly as I do that organized religion is not serving us well, that religious principles are serving us beautifully, and organized religion is not serving us well.

JF: Theory and practice get in the way of each other.

LSZ: They do, they do.

JF: Okay. As you look back on your life, what would you say are the major changes that you've seen, either personally or in the world?

LSZ: That would be hard to say. I hope, and this is coming back to Judaism too, that one of the things I see happening. [Interruption in Recording] We were interrupted by the telephone of my sister calling from Switzerland. We talk at least once a week. I told her what was going on. I said, "Can you remember anything I should tell her about our religious experience as young people?" And she said, "Well, we were brought up ethically, not religiously. But you sure have told her about Sunday school, haven't you?" I said, "No, I'd quite forgotten." My parents belonged to the Stephen Wise Synagogue, which was extremely "reform." It didn't have its own temple -- the High Holy Days were held at Carnegie Hall. But they did have, at one time, a Sunday school. We were taken to it. My brother managed to get out of it almost instantly after the first time. But they weren't listening to me. My father had said, "What did you do today, dear," when he picked me up. And I said, "Well, we played a game called Daniel's in the lion's den, lion's

den." And I realized that he was slightly horrified by this. So the next week, when he insisted that I try again, I came out, and he said, "What did you do today?" And I said, "Well, we sang another song." It went, "A Tisket, a Tasket, Moses in the Basket," and he was so horrified that he let me quit. It was a long time before I admitted to him that it was the first and only real lie of my life. [laughter] I had made up the Moses song out of whole cloth. But it did get me out of it. But anyway, that is going way, way back into the past.

JF: That's a lovely story, though.

LSZ: But anyhow, where were –? We were at "how has it changed?"

JF: Just how have things changed? And if I could just add another part to that question: How have things changed for women?

LSZ: Well, I think they have changed very much in our expectations. There never was a question, even when my kids were growing up, that they would have careers, that they would have lives of their own that went way beyond the home. On the other hand, I hope that that doesn't in any way diminish the importance of the home. I know that my mother's life and my father's life were so centered in the home. My childhood was so idyllic in that sense. I remember the moment when I first realized that all families weren't like that. We, all of us, as children, think that what we know is what it's like. And I remember being in some sort of a summer family camp for a few weeks, and somebody saying to me after dinner – I was about thirteen or fourteen – "Where are the prince and princess tonight?" I looked down, and I could see my parents walking hand-in-hand down to the lake. And all of a sudden, it occurred to me that the other parents weren't doing that, and I hadn't realized it. So I think we, all of us – we think that what we have around us is the norm, and in fact, we only come to realize how lucky we are when we have those kinds of experiences. And when I see my kids with their families now, and when I see the strength of the family of so many of my friends and their kids and all, I think it's wonderful that in this hectic life, so many people are able to keep it up. But I

think the intensity of life and I think the intensity of two adults in the family working in opposite directions and with opposite pulls while trying to keep family going is just an incredibly stressful situation. I think we're all working at paces that none of us believed we could, but especially those with young children. I think it's extremely difficult.

JF: Okay. Well, is there anything that I have not asked that I should have asked? Is there anything - any other things you would like to talk about?

[Interruption in Recording]

JF: Okay. We're recording again.

LSZ: Okay. Well, what would you like to talk about?

JF: Well, there are a number of things that we haven't touched upon. You were talking about women's networks and friendships.

LSZ: Well, I think that I've noticed as life has gone on, and probably, especially since being without Jim, how incredibly important friendships are, and what an important part of one's life they are, not only touching base again after many years with some people that I was in grammar school with – that's been wonderful – but the main thing is just the network of people that you build up around you when you live in a city as long as I've lived here now. And those friendships are like family. They become just as strong as family. Sometimes, they actually develop into what feels like a family relationship. One of my best friends died some years ago. Her son, who was a friend of my son's in the five-year group at Friends School, is now, with his wife and children, a part of our family and so close to my Washington daughter and her family that they do nothing separately. Their vacations are together, their celebrations are together. And they're here with us on those occasions. So I think that friendships and family are sometimes hard to take apart. I love that aspect of them. Several of my friends are as close to me as that. One that I'll be seeing later this afternoon just gave a seventy-fifth birthday party for me a couple of

weeks ago.

JF: Congratulations.

LSZ: And all of these relationships are, I think, tremendously invigorating and caring and supportive. They're not only supportive in times of stress, but they're such fun. And the same thing is true of the – whether male or female – you mentioned female networks. But you know, there are –

[CD NUMBER TWO/THREE ENDS. CD NUMBER THREE/THREE BEGINS]

JF: Okay. This is disc number three, interview with Laurie Schwab Zabin. It's April 29th, 2001. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. I'm Jean Freedman. We were talking about friends.

LSZ: I was saying that it's not just female networks, but the men who have been very important to me since Jim's death, and that are very much a part of my regular life. All of it is a lot of fun. Finally, when you're talking of networks, the network from work is extraordinarily important to me. I think one of the reasons to choose a career is because you so admire the people that are in the field. I pretty much chose public health because when I looked at the people in public health, they were people that I almost uniformly admired and liked. Now they've turned out also to be people to have fun with and to have wonderful adventures with. So if I end up in the Philippines or Indonesia or any other part of the world with them, it's a real delight. I think it's very hard for me now to picture what life would be like if I hadn't had the luck of the career that I've happened into. How you could stand the loneliness of losing somebody like Jim if you didn't have that world to move into is something I just can't imagine.

JF: What do you do with your spare time? Am I going to get the answer, "What spare time?"

LSZ: [laughter] You mean between 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning?

JF: Right, instead of sleeping.

LSZ: Well, as a matter of fact, when you have a career as exciting as this and with as much travel and with as much new experience, you don't really need a hobby.

For my birthday, the daughter in Washington and the friends that I mentioned who do everything with them – they even gift together. They gave me an easel and a set of oil paints in hopes that I'll go back to it. But I haven't lifted a paintbrush since Jim and I used to paint together on all our trips. Somehow it's something that went with him, and I haven't been able to get back to. I guess this was their way of telling me I'd better get back to it. But as you say, I don't know when I would get to it. I have a trip coming up, of course, with another grandchild this June or sometime this summer.

JF: Where are you going?

LSZ: Don't know yet, probably Costa Rica, but not sure. He still hasn't spoken. It's a question of fitting it in. Of course, when I started these trips, I had no idea that I'd be spending so much time in other parts of the world as I am now. Also, wonderful things that Baltimore has to offer – the Baltimore Symphony is a real joy, and I try not to miss any of the series of concerts that I subscribe to. And the same with theater. Center Stage has been a tremendous addition to this city. And it's been going now for almost forty years. So there are a lot of fun things. And there's the garden that needs tending, which is getting increasingly hard to do as the years [laughter] go on and the time gets shorter. And also, I love to cook and entertain a lot, so that very often, I'll get home from work at 6:30 or a quarter of 7:00 and by 7:00 o'clock have guests here for dinner. As you see, a large fireplace, and we all sit around it and dine around it and have fun around it. So that's a lot of fun too. I'd say entertaining, probably, is the biggest fun outside of work.

JF: We were talking a little bit about how things had changed for women, and you mentioned the stresses of combining working parents with raising small children. Do you think that child-rearing practices have changed a lot, say since you were a child or since you had children?

LSZ: I think that there is self-consciousness about child raising today that there wasn't so much in those days. I'm sure that parents, since the beginning of time, have had some concerns about how they're doing it. But I find there's a level of self-consciousness about it today, which I find not terribly healthy for either the parents or the kids. But I guess each generation may see that in another. But as far as the role of women and the two jobs and all the rest, I think that there are people who think that the reason it's so tense and difficult at this point is because it is a time of transition from a different pattern to the pattern there is now. I don't really believe that because I think the women I know – and I think there'll be women just like them for eons into the future – the women one respects are always going to want to be the best nurturers and the best lovers and the best at whatever they do. And I think that is going to make for stress. I don't see how you can possibly survive in each of these worlds and perform at your best without there being stress. So I'd like to think it's only because of transition, but I can't help but believe that we'll always be torn in those ways. I hope it doesn't mean that we give up any of those roles. I'd rather be stressed than give them up.

JF: Well put. Okay. Well, let me just ask what I asked before. Is there anything else that I should ask? Anything else that you would like to talk about?

LSZ: No. I think you're a wonderful interviewer.

JF: Thank you.

LSZ: And you've made it very easy for me.

JF: I had a wonderful subject. You made it very easy for me, so thank you.

LSZ: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]