Rose Pines Cohen Transcript

MARCIE FERRIS: Now, we've got -- now we're doing it. Okay. And today's date is April 24th, 2001, right? And is it Cohen (Cone - phonetic), not Cohen (Co-en - phonetic)?

ROSE COHEN: C-o-h-e-n, yeah, Cohen.

MF: But do you pronounce it --

RC: Cohen (Cone - phonetic).

MF: I'm a Cohen.

RC: You're a Cohen?

MF: Yeah.

RC: Really?

MF: Yeah, that's my maiden -- you know, I married a Ferris, but I'm a Cohen.

RC: You spelled yours with a "K"?

MF: No, C-o-h-e-n.

RC: Is your father a Cohen?

MF: Yeah.

RC: Uh-huh. It's a wonder he doesn't spell it with a "K.".

MF: Yeah. Well, you know, when they came to Ellis Island, it was Kagen (phonetic), and it was changed.

RC: Oh, I see.

MF: So one of those stories.

RC: I think my husband's family also was changed to Cohen.

MF: Right, right.

RC: But he was not a Cohen.

MF: There's a lot of them.

RC: There's a lot of Cohen who were false messiahs.

MF: Right (Laughs).

RC: (Laughs).

MF: Okay. My name is Marcie Cohen Ferris. And I'm conducting an oral history interview with Rose Pines Cohen for the Weaving Women's Words Project of the Jewish Women's Archive. We're in Baltimore, Maryland, at Ms. Cohen's house. Today's date it April 24th, 2001. And we're starting it just after 1:00. So we're ready to go. And it's recording. So what I thought we'd do is, we're just going to have kind of an open-ended conversation about your life, in lots of different points.

RC: A long life (Laughs).

MF: Yeah, and it's still going strong. And I was -- I have your survey that you filled out.

RC: (Inaudible).

MF: Yeah. And that's really helpful. I can just see how involved you've been in the community as an educator and a teacher.

RC: Yeah.

MF: It's incredible.

RC: Well --

MF: I thought we might start --

RC: You want to start with my birthday?

MF: Let's start -- yeah, let's start at the very beginning.

RC: Okay.

MF: When you were born. I know that you didn't live immediately in this country --

RC: Okay.

MF: -- that you lived in Eastern Europe.

RC: Okay. Let's start from the beginning. I was born October the 5th, 1911, in Vilkomir, Lithuania. My father's life and mother's life, I think, was a bit interesting. My father comes from a long rabbinic family. He lived in a small town, Tauregin. It was T-a-u-r-e-g-i-n, also Lithuania. His father was the rabbi of the town. My father came to Vilkomir to go there to the Yeshiva, since his small town didn't have one.

As I heard the story, years ago it was a great honor for many business people to marry into a rabbinic family. So my mother's family were in business, they had shoe stores. Her name -- maiden name was Rebekah Flax, F-l-a-x. And I -- the story is that her father went to Yeshiva, interviewed some young men there, some of the students. I guess my

father was the one that he chose, and they were married.

And my father and mother opened a shoe store. I don't know if they were given a store by the parents, but that's -- they were in business, the shoe business. That had to be, let's see, ninety -- I guess almost a hundred years ago, I guess it would be.

World War I was looming at that time. And many of the young men were being drafted into the Russian Army. So it was decided that my father would go to America, like many other fathers did in those years. And when I say, father, at that time, there were three of us born. My sister Leah, who was born in 1910, I in 1911, and a brother, 1912. So you see, we were all very close.

MF: What's your brother's name?

RC: My brother's name was Milton Pines.

MF: [Did you say 1909?]

RC: [1909]. Why did my father come to Baltimore? My mother's two sisters had already immigrated to Baltimore. So they wrote and said he should come here, see if he can get adjusted, whatever, and then naturally bring the family over, a story that's been repeated in the Jewish history time and time again. The way we look at it, my father must have left [pardon me, did I say my brother was in 1909? No, I'm sorry. He was the youngest. He was in 19--- wrong. I was in 11, she was in 09, and my brother was born---]

MF: 1913.

RC: -- in '13--

MF: Yes.

RC: [because he was born---he was the youngest. I'm sorry.]

MC: Okay. Got it.

RC: So he left three young children with his wife in Vilkomir, tending a business, and he came to Baltimore.

MF: So how old were you when he came to Baltimore?

RC: How old was --

MF: How old were you?

RC: Was I?

MF: Yeah.

RC: Well, we figured it out. He must have left in 1913. World War I broke out in 1914. So he must have left right before World War I. Now, I don't know how that figures out with the years, because then, my brother, I know, was a baby.

MF: You must have been three or four.

RC: Well, yeah, I was about three or four.

MF: Right.

RC: My sister was, like, six, I guess. He came to Baltimore. My father was very educated in the Hebrew and all that. But he never mastered the English language. He started working in a clothing factory, like most of the immigrants.

MF: Why do you think he never learned English?

RC: Why what?

MF: Why do you think he never learned to speak English?

RC: You know, we never could figure it out. I can't -- I have no answer. But he was here and lived for a ripe old age, and never learned English. And that was a great handicap to him. He went to work in the clothing factory, and after the first week he found out he had work on Shabbos, so that was the end of his clothing job.

I understand he took odd jobs here and there. And finally, he became the sexton of the shul in South Baltimore, where he settled. Actually, if you want the name of the shul, I still remember that. It's the Rodfei Tzedeck. I don't know if I marked it down there.

MF: Okay (Inaudible).

RC: Yeah.

MF: Yeah. Do you think that that was -- I'm just curious, I'm just going to ask you one more question about the English. Do you think that that was kind of an act of rebellion in any way, of not quite ever wanting to give up --

RC: It probably was, plus the fact he might have had the feeling that maybe it was a, I don't know, a trayfe language, you know, that kind of an attitude. I am really not sure. We often wondered, but that's what we think, maybe it was something like that, which of course, was a great handicap to him.

MF: How did he get around it, that handicap?

RC: Well, being a sexton in the shul, and being in a Jewish environment with Jewish people, he didn't, you know, find it -- a great need for it. Maybe if he were forced to, he would have done it. But that way he was able to overcome the barrier.

MF: And his name was?

RC: Nathan (phonetic) Pines.

MF: Okay.

RC: That -- when he came here, I imagine, was right before the World War I. It was 1914. And when the war broke out, all communications stopped between us and America. And in 1917, or '18 -- I think '18, it was around that time, there was a great epidemic of the flu, and my mother died. So here we were left, three little young orphans. I don't know how we survived, like two years, in between there. And then we went to live with my grandparents in Tauregin. That's my grandfather who was the rabbi of the town.

Now, we were very fortunate in having such wonderful, devoted grandparents, and two aunts who had -- were young and were not married yet. And they gave us a lot of love and attention. So in that respect, we were very fortunate.

MF: What were your grandparents' names?

RC: The names? Oh, my grandfather's name was Eliezer Tzvi Pines, E-l-i-e-z-e-r, Tzvi, T-z-v-i Pines.

MF: And your grandmother?

RC: My grandmother's name was Tzivyah, T-z-i-v-y-a-h, Tzivyah Pines. And she also came from a rabbinic family. You know, in Europe, most of the rabbis' children married into rabbinic families.

MF: Do you have any memories of Vilkomir or Tauregin? I can't say them right. Do you have any memories of those Eastern European villages? You were so little.

RC: When we left Vilkomir, the city of birth, I was too young. The only thing I think I remember of Tauregin, it's interesting, was the town square. The big church was on the left. And I remember -- and the synagogue was like toward the end of the town on the other end. And I do remember that we lived on the top of a hill, and down the bottom of the hill was a river. And you know what I do remember? People carrying water on their shoulders, you know, the vasser tregeer. Do you speak Yiddish at all?

MF: I can pick up a teeny little bit.

RC: Okay. They used to carry -- you know how you see water carriers? I remember that.

MF: How do you spell that?

RC: Vasser tregeer, all right. It's -- put it V-a-s-s-e-r and tregeer, t-r-e-g-e-e-r. And that means "water carriers."

MF: Okay.

RC: It's interesting, that's what I do at the museum all the time, translate the Yiddish and Hebrew.

MF: Do you have any other memories of the village, of holidays or of family life? Because you came for Baltimore in '22, is that right?

RC: I was like ten and a half, almost eleven years old.

MF: Right. What was it like at home with your grandmother and your aunts?

RC: What I remember a little bit of my grandfather's home was -- see in Europe, the rabbi was not only a rabbi, he was a judge. He was counselor, he was everything. And I do remember us being shunned into a little -- into another room whenever my

grandfather had to be in the whatever, I guess it was his study. I don't know exactly what room. And he would also always have hearings of people, divorces. See, they were -- they did everything, the rabbi. That I do remember, you know, always saying that, "Zayde has company." And we had to go into a separate room, so then he could conduct whatever business he had to do.

MF: What's the Yiddish word, or the Hebrew word for that council, for that governing --

RC: A dayan.

MF: Yeah.

RC: A dayan is a judge.

MF: Right. How do you spell that?

RC: Dayan? D-a-y-a-n. Dayan is a judge.

MF: Right.

RC: Can be a counselor, a judge. See, he's a rabbi, he's a dayan, he's everything, the rabbi there. And then I do remember of beautiful holidays that we did have. [It was -- they were very -- we --]

MF: Can you think of one that -- what it was like, like Passover?

RC: I think maybe Passover.

MF: What was it like?

RC: Passover was -- I think we were all anxious to say the feer (phonetic) kashes, you know, we were – [he was] -- we were the only three little ones there, see. My two aunts were not married. And then there was a son they had who was away. So we were the

children. And I remember that each of us kind of vied with -- see who can say the feer (phonetic) kashes better.

MF: Is that the four questions?

RC: The four kashes -- the four questions. I keep saying -- you'll have to excuse me.

MF: How do you spell that in --

RC: Just put it four -- the four questions. Everybody knows what that is for Pesach.

MF: But are you saying it in Yiddish? Or are you -- what language is that?

RC: Now, the feer kashes is in Yiddish.

MF: That's Yiddish.

RC: Yiddish.

MF: How do you spell it?

RC: Four -- you want me to say --

MF: Yeah.

RC: Four, f-o-u-r.

MF: No, in Yiddish.

RC: In Yiddish, it's --

MF: That's how it is?

RC: The same word, feer kashes. K-a-s-h-e-s. And I'll tell you what, if you put a dash in after, put down, in Hebrew it's Ma Nishtana.

MF: Right.

RC: That's what it is in Hebrew.

MF: If you want to write it, I can give you a good transliteration.

MF: Right, okay.

RC: M-a, next word, N-i-s-h-t-a-n-a. That's what it is.

MF: Great, okay.

MF: Ma Nishtana means, why is this [my(?)] different(?), [you know, how (phonetic) light (phonetic) hauzay (phonetic).]

MF: Right.

RC: And so I do remember mostly about Pesach. That's about as much as I can remember. It's --

MF: Do you remember what -- how the house would be prepared for Passover?

RC: I guess I remember [a little bit] about helping a little bit to prepare. But exactly what we did, I don't remember. I remember being involved a little bit in it. But I know there was a lot of, you know, doing before Pesach. That it --

MF: What about foods, special foods that were connected with holidays, Jewish holidays?

RC: (Inaudible).

MF: Do you remember anything special in Eastern Europe as opposed to what you then had here?

RC: Bread -- you mean, the food as opposed to the -- not really. The only thing I do know is, when we came to this country, I had never seen a banana. And I remember distinctly when I got one, I started eating it with the, you know --

MF: Peel?

RC: -- peelings and everything, because I had never -- I don't remember ever seeing a banana there. As far as individual foods, I really can't -- do not know that much. But you know, there's something interesting. Somebody asked me, how come after all I was already -- had been about eleven years old, maybe I'm talking from a psychiatrist's point of view. It's funny, I'm laughing, my son is a psychiatrist.

I think maybe a lot of unpleasant memories we tend to push away. And while we were grateful that what we had in Europe, with the protection and love of my grandparents and my two aunts, it was a very traumatic life for us. You know, imagine being so young and being left without anybody – [you know,] and during the war, it was, you know. So all in all, maybe I just either tend to, or have forgotten a lot of things that I might normally, [I would] have recollected.

MF: Yeah.

RC: But as I said, we were very thankful, the love and care that we were able to get under those circumstances.

MF: How did the war affect your daily life there? Any memories of that?

RC: I think -- only thing I do remember is that I think food was not that plentiful, [if I remember.] That I do remember. And I think particularly bread, if I remember, that we

used to kind of get maybe a slice or two, and you know, that was it. That I do remember.

And I'll tell you what else I do remember, it's interesting. See my grandfather and grandmother were up in years, and they could not eat the crust of the bread. And I remember as a child, I don't know if we did something that pleased them or whatever, we used to get extra pieces of that crust of bread. That I do remember, now that you call my attention to it.

MF: Yeah.

RC: And if I remember, it tasted mighty good (Laughs). But as a whole, food was not plentiful. And we did manage, but this is how it was.

MF: Right. And then so 1922 --

RC: And in 1922, right after the Armistice was signed, the first people eligible to come to this country were mates and children, you know, to unite families. And my father was, [you know,] one of the early ones to get the visas for us to come here. And of course, we arrived on Ellis Island.

And I don't know why we spent two or three days in Ellis Island before my father came to New York to get us, why I don't know. But it's something else that struck me. A few years ago, we went back to visit Ellis Island. And you know what I remember? Have you been to Ellis Island? I'm sure you have.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Well, I have to tell you something funny. [Excuse me.] Did you see those long, brown benches that they have there? I said, before I went there, I said, I wonder if they still have those benches -- those benches. As children, we used to get on one end of the bench and slide back and forth. We used to have so much fun sliding on those benches.

And the first thing I saw were those benches when I went. And it brought back a lot of memories.

MF: Wow.

RC: And of course, I always remember seeing my reaction to the Statue of Liberty. We saw that, it was like late at night and it was all lit up. It was a very impressive scene. And while I didn't know too much about it, but I heard people were talking about it, that's the entrance to the Promise Land.

MF: Wow.

RC: So that was the Statue of Liberty.

MF: How long did it --

RC: Pardon me. May I just get some --

MF: Yeah. Let's go get some water.

[INTERRUPTION IN RECORDING]

RC: Okay.

MF: Okay. I was wondering, do you remember how long the journey was?

RC: Yeah. I think it was like ten days, I think.

MF: Do you have any memories of the travel, of the trip?

RC: All I remember of the trip was the, like, bunk beds that we slept it. And that's about it.

MF: Where did you leave from?

RC: We left from -- I have it all marked down for you. Port Libau, it's L-i-b-a-u, Posen, P-o-s-e-n, Prussia.

MF: And that was in 1922?

RC: '22. And we arrived in New York September the 12th, 1922. Now --

MF: And then no one picked you up? You stayed at Ellis Island for about three days?

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: Two to three days?

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: Do you think you were being retained, maybe for --

RC: Well, it's interesting you should ask. What I also remember in Ellis Island is, everybody had to be examined before you were admitted, of course. And one of the greatest handicaps was, many of them had trachoma.

MF: Right. How do you spell trachoma?

RC: T-r-a-c-h-o-m-a.

MF: Right. It's the eye --

RC: Eye, eye disease. And it's a very catching disease. And this country was very wary of it. And I remember one thing [I do remember] which was so tragic. One child in a family had trachoma, and that child had to go back. I think it was to Hungary. And a father and mother were -- I heard them deliberating which one of them shall go back with that child and which should go on with the others. Now --

MF: And did you stay right at Ellis Island in a dorm or a dormitory or something for a couple of days?

RC: Yeah, it was like a dormitory. But you know, it was interesting, if I remember, we were with all adults, I don't remember with children. And we -- the three of us passed with flying colors, as far as the health was concerned, [which was] -- we were very thankful.

MF: Was your brother kind of -- who was kind of leading the three of you?

RC: My sister.

MF: Your sister.

RC: My sister actually acted like a mother. She was the oldest. And she once told us this story, which I think she bore all her life. She said, when my mother was taken to the hospital -- and I don't remember that at all -- she started to cry. And my mother said, "Don't cry, I'll be back, but just take care of your brother and sister." And I think she felt that responsibility all her life.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Yeah.

MF: It's so hard.

RC: Yeah.

MF: And such a young person.

RC: It was hard. It was hard.

MF: Yeah.

RC: It was horrible.

MF: Yeah.

RC: And imagine my mother thinking that here she was leaving three little ones and she was going to the hospital. But she never came back. I hardly remember my mother. I -- I don't know just what it is, that the early years kind of was obliterated in my mind --

MF: Yeah.

RC: -- in that particular period. But as I said, I do remember a little bit about being with the grandparents. Well, I was already older.

MF: Right.

RC: So it's understandable.

MF: Right. Did your grandmother work or did she take care of the home?

RC: No. She was the rebbitzin, she took care of the home, yeah, no.

MF: She was the rebbitzin.

RC: None of them worked. Two daughters didn't work either, I remember.

MF: The -- your aunts?

RC: Uh-huh. I think in those years, the women, I don't know, I don't think they --

MF: Well, being a rabbi's family, were they rather taken care of by the community?

RC: Yes [I also] -- this I do remember, that it was a very clannish community, that I do remember. And do you know that we only were allowed to play with children of certain families. That I do remember.

MF: Were all your acquaintances Jewish?

RC: Yeah.

MF: Yeah. So it was a completely Jewish world?

RC: There was very little mingling of the gentile and Jewish community in Europe towns, the small towns, hardly any.

MF: But do you remember any antisemitism at that time there? Probably not.

RC: No.

MF: So let's talk about when you first -- your first memories of getting back together with your father. What was that like?

RC: When you are ready to be dismissed in Ellis Island, they bring you out in this big hall. And you're sitting down. I don't know if they had benches or chairs at that time. And the people who come to claim the immigrants come in. And my sister said that she recognized my father. I can't believe it, but she said they did.

MF: Wow.

RC: Wasn't that something?

MF: Yes.

RC: And of course, with me and my brother, who were still younger, you know, it was a reunion, but we really did not remember him.

MF: Right.

RC: And then when he picked us up, it was late at night. I don't know why. And we took, let's see, the ferry, I guess, to get to New York. And we took a train, and arrived in Baltimore something like 5:00, 6:00 in the morning. Now, where did we go? My father was living in a one-room, at a friend's house. But there again, we had luck. My mother's younger sister, Gertrude Lipsitz--

MF: How do you spell Lipsitz?

RC: L-i-p-s-i-t-z. She lived in Baltimore and was married with children. And we -- in a nice house, they had a wholesale dry goods, all this in South Baltimore. And they lived upstairs. And we came to stay with her for the first three months, until my father was able to find a house. And we all moved in, on Hill Street. And --

MF: So the first house was on Hill Street.

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: And that's South Baltimore too?

RC: Pardon me?

MF: Is that South Baltimore also?

RC: All South Baltimore. I was raised in South Baltimore until I got married. Lived there until I got married.

MF: Now, and Gertrude was your mother's sister?

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: Do you have any early memories of after you arrived and you were living with them?

RC: Oh, yeah.

MF: What was it like?

RC: Oh, yeah. Let's see. First, adjusting to a new country, to a new language. Learning the language is where we had the benefit, because we had the cousins, the Lipsitzes. There were four young children there, a little older than us, but still young enough, teenagers. And I think they undertook to teach us English. It was a challenge to them.

Now, I and my sister started [start -- we all started] school, School Number Four. That was on Lee (?) and Hanover Street. (My brother started a few years later.) It's no longer there. And I must say, I had wonderful teachers, really, very interested, kind teachers, who took us under their wing. And in no time did -- we picked up the language, really.

MF: Were they Jewish teachers?

RC: No.

MF: Gentiles.

RC: I don't remember any Jewish teachers. But they were really very considerate. I remember one thing. She told me -- oh, to go turn on the light in the class. Now, I understood what she said. And she said to me, what did I do? And I said, I light on the light. And the class all began to laugh. And I remember how she talked to the class. I didn't understand everything she said to the class. But then afterwards, the children all became more understanding, too. You know, it's natural with children.

And I don't know how I felt, I don't remember whether I was embarrassed or whatever, but that was one of the things -- a mistake that I made in learning the language. But I do know that we did not have too much difficulty learning the language.

MF: Do you remember many other immigrant children in your classroom?

RC: There weren't any others. It was very interesting. There was none others but us. We were the novelty there, in the school.

MF: Do you think it's because you were on that far end of immigration in 1922?

RC: Uh-huh. See we were among the earliest who came to this country after World War I.

MF: Right.

RC: And then the influx started, a couple months later, and later, and the next year, and the following year, then a number came in.

MF: And then at -- by '24, you had --

RC: (Inaudible).

MF: -- immigration restrictions.

RC: For -- well, actually, it was restricted between '22 and '24 also. As I said, it was just those who had the preference of uniting families.

MF: Oh, okay.

RC: It was not an open door, so to speak.

MF: I see.

RC: No, I remember that.

MF: Right.

RC: Now, I think -- see, we had a nice Hebrew education back home with my grandparents. We were very young, but they all -- they taught us a lot of things. We

learned how to read, how to write, you know, this is all Hebrew, to how to read and write Hebrew. And we went to some kind of a school there also.

And [of] -- we were very good in math, both my sister and I. So when we came here to Baltimore and started in -- I think they put us in the second grade when we first came here. Now, if I was almost ten, almost eleven years old, I certainly was too old for the second grade. But in a few months they changed us to the next grade. And in no time, we skipped three or four grades, because we knew our math, and we picked up the language. So we did pretty well in that area.

And when I finished School Number Four, we went to Southern Junior High, also in South Baltimore, Southern Junior High on Warren Avenue, it was.

MF: So your grandfather -- it was not a problem teaching girls Hebrew. Tell me about that a little. I'd always heard that boys learned, you know, got the formal Jewish education, and often girls were kind of disallowed.

RC: That's interesting. That's a very interesting question you asked. You're right. Most Jewish girls, especially in my generation, were not educated at all. But I told you, my father's family were very cultured kind of people. And they insisted that the girls -- my aunts too, were educated, that the girls learned also. They didn't go to Yeshiva like the boys went, but they -- we all -- they all got an education. So we benefited by it.

MF: Why do you think they thought it was important that you have that Hebrew education?

RC: Well, because education, basically, was important to them. Today -- even today, Jewish people, as you well know, if you look at the immigrants today, I was saying, every family, their greatest ambition was to have a doctor or a lawyer or an accountant in the -- a professional person in the family. And I personally, I have a number of friends, and you know what? I can't think of one hardly who doesn't have a professional in his or her

family.

So education has really been very important to most people, but particularly my family just felt the importance of the girls getting an education as well as the boys. So we all knew how to read well. We knew our Hebrew. We knew how to write. We knew Yiddish. I mean, up to this day, [I do -- you know,] I know all that.

MF: How did you learn, you know, what to do right in a Jewish home, as a young woman?

RC: Well, that's my next development.

MF: Okay.

RC: When we came here, we were youngsters. I was eleven, not quite eleven. My sister was, you know, not -- was twelve -- something. We really knew from nothing. But we called her Tante Gertie, Aunt Gertie. She taught us how to cook and how to keep house. We moved around the corner from her. And she really kept an eye on us for several years. She was a wonderful, wonderful person.

MF: So your father didn't hire anyone?

RC: Huh-uh.

MF: It was just -- your sister must have been around thirteen, fourteen?

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: That is incredible.

RC: And she was remarkable. She used to -- she knew how to make lockshen. You know what lockshen are? She used to make that.

MF: L-o-k--

RC: L-o-k-s-h-e-n. She would --

MF: That's --

RC: S-h-e-n. That's lockshen.

MF: Noodles?

RC: Noodles.

MF: Right.

RC: That's what it is. She made gefilte fish. She made all those Jewish dishes, but my aunt taught us both. The only thing was this: We both, all three, were also enrolled in Hebrew school here. Now, we went to Hebrew -- the Hebrew school was at 518 South Hanover Street. And it was called the South Baltimore Talmud Torah. I told you I have a long story to tell you (Laughs).

MF: Okay.

RC: When we started Hebrew school, my sister and I, frankly, we practically knew everything that they -- because we came back with a good background. Not my brother, he was too young, so he was just learning.

The Hebrew school system in those years, that's also a big story that I could tell you, because I was in it. There was no such thing as graduation, so to speak or, I don't know, you went to Hebrew school, and if you got to the highest grade, you just seemed to stay there. So my sister and I were both in the highest grade in this school. And we used to go every day from 6:00 to 8:00, [you went to Hebrew school.]

MF: In the evening?

RC: In the evening. That was the highest grade. The lower grade used to go from 4:00 to 6:00. This is after public school, you know. Toward the end, my sister dropped out of the highest grade of Hebrew school, because she felt the responsibility of the home. So we continued in public school, but I went on to continue with Hebrew school.

In those years, the pay for teachers was so, I don't know how to describe it, so pitiful, and there was never a contract. So teachers would come and go every other month or whatever. Our Hebrew school was supervised by a gentleman named Mr. Ellison, E-l-l-i-s-o-n, a very austere kind of a person. I remember I used to be scared to death of him. And when he would come in class, Tzu farheren the class. Tzu farheren means to listen how well we read.

MF: How do you say that -- how do you spell that?

RC: Farheren, f-a-r-h-e-r-e-n. Farheren. Literally, it means just to listen how children read. And he came in one day Tzu farheren the class. And we all read, you know, what portion he designated. And he said to me, "You stay after school," after I finished reading. And I couldn't imagine why, and I was a little bit of a thing in those years, and he really had frightened me. But anyhow, I stayed after school.

Then he said to me, "I'll tell you what I want you to do. Our first grade teacher quit yesterday. And we don't have a teacher. And you read very well. We want you to take the class until we get a teacher." Now I was, I don't know, either fifteen or sixteen years old at that time, no experience in teaching. But I was a good reader, and I knew my Hebrew. P.S., I started Hebrew teaching.

I really must have liked it. I didn't have -- I can't remember having too big of a problem. But the other thing was, this is interesting, he said he's going to pay me, I think it was five dollars a month. But I did say to him, I can't give you an answer. I'll talk it over with my father, because I went to public school, I had the responsibility at home. And then I had

lessons, you know, whatever there was to do.

We talked it over at home. And my sister said that if I wanted to take it, she was willing to do more, you know, at home, her responsibility. And my father said, you know, if I felt like it, it was okay. And I did take the job.

MF: So --

RC: From then on, I ended up being a Hebrew teacher. But I have to tell you the circumstances.

MF: Okay.

RC: This was my schedule: Went to public school -- I was in junior high school then -- came home at 3:00 -- I think at that time we were dismissed at 3:00 -- came home quickly and took a quick bite. From 4:00 to 6:00, I taught Hebrew school. From 6:00 to 8:00, I remained to attend [go in] my class, [to continue my -- 8:00, or 8:00] -- Whenever I finished, I would get home. Fortunately, it was like three blocks from the house. Came home, had my dinner, did my home work, prepared the teaching lesson for the following day. We taught five days a week, [now], not three days a week like now. And this went on for a couple years, until 1930. 1930, there came to Baltimore a Dr. Louis Kaplan. I don't know if you ever heard of him.

MF: Uh-huh.

RC: Sure you have. Quite a personality, and has become -- was a dear, dear friend of mine. He came to Baltimore as head of the Talmud Torahs, of all the Hebrew schools, and the Hebrew College. Today it's known as the Hebrew University, at that time it was known as the Baltimore Hebrew College.

About a week prior to that, the principal of my school quit. So I thought that we're getting a new principal. And one day, who should come in, but this young red-headed fellow. And he comes in my class. And he takes a seat in the back. I don't know if you ever taught. Did you do some teaching?

MF: Yeah.

Well, you know, how supervisors come in to observe the class. And I thought that he was our new principal. After class, he says – [he comes over to me and he says to me -- no, so he came in. First] he looks at me and he says, "Ayeh hamorah?" Where is the teacher? So I said, "Anney hamorah." So I can just still see his look. He was tall, and he looked down at me. And I was, you know, short. And he said, "You're the teacher?" I said, yeah. He said, ["I'll see you after class] "We have to talk."

MF: How -- do you know how to spell that out that Hebrew, in English?

RC: Oh, sure. Ayeh hamorah?

MF: Yeah.

RC: The transliteration, a-y-e-h, ayeh; the next word, hamorah, h-a-m-o-r-a-h.

MF: H-a-m-o-r-a-h.

RC: That's it. Ayeh hamorah, where is the teacher.

MF: Okay.

RC: And I said, "Anney hamorah," I am the teacher. Well, the gist of it was, he said to me, "Are you planning to make Hebrew teaching your career?" I said, "No." I was very good in math. And I went on to Western High School, and graduated in Western in 1930. When I graduated, I got a year's scholarship to Hopkins Evening School, business

school. And that's where I was headed to take -- to go on for accountancy, because I -- that's what my -- that's where my hopes were.

MF: What did your father think about that for you as a career? Did he have special --

RC: Preference?

MF: Preference, or what were his dreams for the daughters, versus your brother, Milton?

RC: I don't think -- I don't think he was -- no, I don't think that he had his special dreams for us.

MF: But anything about --

RC: Careers, you mean?

MF: -- you working? Was that a problem --

RC: No.

MF: -- or that was encouraged?

RC: No, he didn't mind. But I don't think -- I guess his hopes were we'd get married, and you know, the old-fashioned kind of an approach to family, to the daughters. No, he never really expressed any preference to me or to either one of us about what we should do or what --

MF: And we kind of skipped over there this. What was he doing for work, your father?

RC: He was a sexton --

MF: Right.

RC: -- of the synagogue.

MF: Right. Okay.

RC: Now, I went to Hopkins for one year-- so when I called Dr. Kaplan that, he says to me, “Well, I’ll tell you what, Rose,” [he said] “good luck. But if you decide to be a Hebrew teacher, you’ll have to enroll at the Hebrew College and get your diploma.” Which was good advice, and you know, he was being honest, because the teachers in those years, half of them was pitiful, inexperienced, you know. If you can imagine if I became a teacher with my background, you know, knowing so little about teaching.

Anyhow, I went to Hopkins for one year and did well. And the signs of the times, we had ninety-three people in our class, ten of whom were women. And if any of us did not get a passing mark in one of the tests, I’ll never forget Dr. Bryant, he was our teacher. He said, “What in the world are you women doing in this class? You should be home in the kitchen. You’re only taking up the place of a man who needs that position.” I’ll never forget it.

Anyhow, after the first year at Hopkins, that summer, I decided to try to get a job as -- bookkeeping or some kind of experience, you know, in my line. Now, in those years, you know, you had to work five and a half days a week. That was before your time. No matter where I applied for a job, I had to go in Saturday a half a day. And of course, I wasn’t going to work on Saturday. And I never did.

As a matter of fact, I said to one Jewish boss, I would be willing to work an hour every day extra, which would make it four hours instead of two and a half hours [that you -- I said, to make up for that, I said,] because I can’t work on Saturday. So he says to me, “I can’t do that, because if I let you do that, other people in the office would want that privilege. “ He says, “You go home and talk it over with your parents, and I bet they’re going to let you come.” I said, “No.” I said, “I can tell you right now, I’m not taking the job.”

Right then and there, I said to myself, what good is it my continuing my education -- I had three more years of accountancy to go. I said, what does is it of me continuing in that field when I can't work in that field? [I said] -- so I called Dr. Kaplan. I said, "Dr. Kaplan, I'm enrolling into Hebrew College, and I'm going to continue with my teaching career." Thus, I became a Hebrew teacher.

MF: And so you felt like that teaching Hebrew or being involved in a Jewish world allowed you better to express your -- to follow your religious pattern?

RC: I want to tell you, I was devastated. I cannot tell you I was happy about that. I really had hopes of doing accountancy. And I really -- I was really devastated. But this was my next choice. And I had no other choice. I wasn't prepared for anything else. Although I took the business course at school, I knew short hand and typing, I guess I could have gone in to be a secretary or...

MF: But you knew -- it sounds like you knew that there would always be things that would interfere with Orthodox observance, if you wanted to do -- if you wanted to follow your religion the way you did, that you were going to have to take a --

RC: The only problem I faced was the Saturday part.

MF: The Saturday --

RC: Yeah. Aside from --

MF: That was pretty big, wasn't it?

RC: That was the thing.

MF: That was the --

RC: The other things didn't interfere with me.

MF: It was just that schedule.

RC: Just that thing. Because I'll tell you, later on, I changed careers, and I did work --

MF: Yeah.

RC: But I'll -- and then --

MF: How did the other girls and you that were in the program, in accountancy, how did you deal with that kind of -- that -- you know, when he would say, you need to be at home? How did you deal with that kind of prejudice?

RC: We were a little bit apprehensive, because he was very strict. And we thought that he could even be stricter with us, marking us and pushing us out. If you failed, I don't think two or three tests, you had -- you were out.

MF: Right.

RC: It was a difficult course. He was head of the Accounting -- CPA Board, this teacher. I remember him distinctly. And we were worried when we used to -- we worked hard. That shows you the times, how things were with the attitude toward women, what we went through.

MF: So to cope with that, what did you do, just worked hard?

RC: We worked harder. We worked harder and tried harder, and we try to stick together, support each other.

MF: And not cause any problem.

RC: As a matter of fact, one of the girls that I became friends there, she wrote me a little note in class that time, and she said, "I'm Jewish. I can't make out if you're Jewish, but if you are, I would like to become friends with you." And we did, we became dear friends.

MF: What was -- do you remember her name?

RC: Oh, sure. Frieda Teitelbaum.

MF: How do you spell Teitelbaum?

RC: She's -- T-e-i-t-e-l-b-a-u-m. She recently passed away, a very lovely bright woman. It's funny, afterwards, she didn't end up in accountancy either. She ended up being a Spanish major, and got a job at McCormick's that time. And she was one of the first Jewish girls they ever hired at McCormick's. [But I] -- she worked on Shabbos, you see, so it wasn't so bad for her.

Little did I know that a few years later, maybe more than a few years, the law -- there was a law passed that there had to be a five-day-a-week work week, you see.

MF: Right.

RC: But of course, I had no way of knowing it. And once I quit the course, I just didn't go back.

MF: Yeah.

RC: So I went on to Hebrew College.

MF: What year was that?

RC: In Hebrew College, I started in about 1929, I think it was. In 1929.

MF: And were there women involved in that program?

RC: In Hebrew College, yeah. At Hebrew College, there were a number of young ladies. And I loved it. I made dear friends there that I had friends through my life with them. And it was a beautiful, beautiful experience. The Hebrew College at that time was

at 1201 Eutaw Place. And Dr. Kaplan was the Dean. And he was wonderful. And we had wonderful teachers, very fine teachers, really, excellent teachers. And I really learned a great deal. I have my diploma. I don't know if you want to see it. I brought it up here.

MF: I'd love to see it.

RC: (Inaudible) it's right -- it's right over -- I'll go get it for you.

MF: Okay.

RC: Wait. It got a little bit caught in a flood in the other house, a little bit. But here is my diploma from Hebrew College.

MF: Wow. Can you read what it says?

RC: Sure. This is a College Evree Ubase Medrash Shel Morim Baltimore, Hebrew College and Teacher's Training in Baltimore. And this diploma was given to Shoshana (phonetic) Pines (phonetic), see, Shoshana is my Hebrew name, to testify that she finished all the required studies satisfactorily, and she is awarded this -- to be a Morah B'Yisrael, a teacher in Israel. And it's over here. It's signed by Silverman. [And then they] -- it's a Hebrew date, but the date is 1933.

MF: Ah, that's wonderful.

RC: And I also graduated there with honors. And this is a certificate designating me as a permanent licensed teacher. See, you had to teach for a number of years. You know, as you well know, it's the same kind of setup.

MF: This is also from the --

RC: It's Hebrew --

MF: It's from the Board of Jewish Education.

RC: Yeah, that's from the Board of Jewish Education. That you have to get from the Board.

MF: And that was given in 1961.

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: Oh, that's great. So your name in Yiddish is Pines.

RC: Pines (phonetic), yeah. It's -- the Pines family of Europe was a very famous family. They really were, because I hear people, you know, have told us about that.

MF: But here in Baltimore, they always called you --

RC: Well, if, put it P-i-n-e-s, they all call it Pines.

MF: Pines, right. So besides -- now, you're doing all this work, and you're going to school, but you're having a social life too, a little.

RC: My social life was really -- I had very little social life. I'll tell you how my social life was. We used to all gather at my aunt's house, because they had the young children, and they had loads of friends. And we were always there. And as I told you, they -- we were their challenge. [We would always] -- they would correct us and teach us. And we learned a lot from that association.

I can't -- I don't remember going to parties or anything at that point in my life. But every evening we used to gather there in front of the house, and that was the social life for all of them. Really, that was their social life.

MF: Did you -- what about holidays and family events? Did you celebrate those together with Gertie's family?

RC: No, no, we really didn't. We were home and they were home.

MF: So would -- how do you say your sister's name, Leah?

RC: Leah.

MF: Leah. Would she plan the holiday with you and --

RC: We -- we planned it? Well, I helped. I didn't, you know, absolve all my -- but we planned the holidays at home. We had everything at home.

MF: Did you always do Shabbat?

RC: Yeah, always.

MF: What was that like?

RC: Very nice. We always had a very nice Shabbat. If I'm not mistaken, she even used to bake the challah, if I'm not mistaken.

MF: What would have been a typical Shabbat meal?

RC: It would always consist of gefilte fish and soup, chicken soup with lockshen. And I know we always had the chicken, of course, and potatoes. And I think we always had a vegetable. But you know, I think we had a lot of carrots, if I remember correctly.

MF: Would you have a sweet, or wait until after services?

RC: You mean like cakes or things?

MF: Yeah, on Friday night.

RC: You know, I really don't remember having cake.

MF: But did you -- what was the schedule like on Shabbat? Did you make -- have your Shabbat meal, and then attend services Friday night, or were you at home?

RC: Friday night we didn't go to services.

MF: Right.

RC: Well, the girls, you know, didn't -- my father was in shul, and my brother went. But my sister and I -- but Saturday we went to shul. We came home and had our Shabbos lunch. Sometimes we had cholent. Do you know what cholent is?

MF: Uh-huh.

RC: We had the cholent sometimes.

MF: Describe what was that like.

RC: A cholent is usually made out of beans and potatoes and meat. And I think they used to put kishka, you know what the kishka is, like the derma (phonetic)?

MF: Uh-huh.

RC: And so we had cholent, and always had hot tea, I remember.

MF: Where -- would your sister and you bake the cholent in the oven?

RC: Yeah.

MF: Just put -- leave it on?

RC: Yeah, we put it in the oven and --

MF: Turn it off and --

RC: Yeah, that's where it had to be, the oven.

MF: You'd cook it before the Shabbat begins, and then leave it in the oven to stay warm, right?

RC: Well, it could be, but I'm not sure.

MF: Something like that.

RC: Something like that.

MF: Right.

RC: But it does stay overnight, you know.

MF: Right, right.

RC: And then one thing I do know is that Saturday was lonely days for us, because we were the only ones in the area who kept Shabbos. So we really didn't do much except read on Saturday.

MF: Why were you the only ones?

RC: Because all the other people didn't keep Shabbos. See, the people in South Baltimore were mainly business people. A lot of these ma and pa stores. And they lived upstairs from there, you know, what I mean? But they didn't keep Shabbos. The stores were open on Shabbos, and everything else.

Now, I knew practically every Jewish family there. You know why? I taught all their children. See, all the children came to Hebrew school. And I was in -- I taught them all. To this day, I meet so many of my pupils that I -- I had just to laugh. I even taught the boys later on, the brochos for their Haftorah. You know, how the boys start out with, brochos, you know, that you have to -- certain notes. So I --

MF: How do you spell that, the brocha?

RC: The brocha, it is a blessing.

MF: Yeah.

RC: The blessings for the Torah.

MF: How do you spell it?

RC: Brocha is b-r-o-c-h-a, brocha. And it's a blessing.

MF: Now, were there things that female teachers could teach boys, and then things they couldn't teach? Were you separated from male students?

RC: Well, it depended on what class you taught. If I started out with the first grade, then I ended up teaching the third grade. You know what I mean? Then they needed somebody to help the boys with their Haftorah, so I taught them blessings for that.

MF: How do you spell that?

RC: Haftorah, H-a-f-t-o-r-a-h. So whatever -- you filled in. You know what I mean? It was not an organized kind of system in those years at the -- in this Hebrew school.

MF: But I couldn't remember if female Hebrew teachers were restricted, though, from teaching certain topics. Could -- is that --

RC: I don't think so.

MF: No, okay.

RC: No. I know I taught laws and customs. I taught history. And I taught the reading and the Hebrew stories. I don't think it was.

MF: Right. Did you ever feel any discrimination or --

RC: No.

MF: -- as a woman in that profession?

RC: Well, I wasn't the only one there in the city. I was the only one in my school. But in the city, there were several girls, you know, who have started the same way I did, I guess, in the school system. See, once Dr. Kaplan came in, it was more requirements to be a teacher. And even then, they didn't have too many qualified teachers. So he had to compromise and take what he could. But as the years went on, you know, now we have a very well organized system.

MF: So after you graduated from Baltimore Hebrew College, then what happened?

RC: Let's see. I continued teaching.

MF: And where were you teaching at this point?

RC: I was still at South Baltimore Hebrew School.

MF: Okay.

RC: Until 1937, when I got married. Now, I will say it was interesting that through my teaching, I met my husband. And how I met him was this way --

MF: And his name --

RC: His name was Moses J. Cohen.

MF: What did the "J" stand for?

RC: Joseph. In Hebrew College, we formed a nice little nucleus. And we decided that we would only speak Hebrew to perfect our language, you know, our speaking. And in Hebrew College, once I started Hebrew College, I forgot to tell you, that in addition to my daily schedule, Sunday morning I would teach from 9:00 to 11:00, run home, take a bite. And at 1:00, I had to be at the Hebrew College from 1:00 to 5:00, every Sunday.

MF: Unbelievable.

RC: I did that for three and a half years. You only do that when you're young.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Then we made up that once a month we would form this Hebrew speaking group, and meet at each other's home. And it was mostly girls from East Baltimore. You know, most of the Jewish community in Baltimore was in East Baltimore.

So we used to hike down from Eutaw Place, now, to East Baltimore, and have these meetings. And we would sit and talk for, I don't know, a couple hours, and socialize, whatever. There were a few boys in the class, but it was mostly girls.

And lo and behold, in comes this young man one time. And how he got there was, he used to advise some of these girls in a Zionist group, the same girls that I met with. And he learned that we have a Hebrew speaking class -- group. My husband was practically self-taught in his Hebrew education.

He had a thirst for knowledge for Hebrew. He was a lawyer. But he had very little Jewish education. He taught himself how to read Yiddish. He taught himself how to read and understand -- well, we went to -- he became bar mitzvahed, but that's all. So when we heard that we had a Hebrew speaking group, he asked if he could join the group.

MF: And where was he from?

RC: Baltimore. He was born right here in Baltimore.

MF: Born in Baltimore?

RC: Yeah, born in Baltimore.

MF: And his family, where were they from?

RC: The mother -- the father came from Lithuania as a young, young boy, and the mother came -- I think she said she was a teenager, from Russia.

So what he did, he joined the group. And I looked at him, and he recognized me. And how he recognized me was, he shared -- he was already lawyer. And he shared an office with a fellow named Charlie Solomon. And I happened to be friends with Charlie Solomon's niece. And one time the niece said to me that they're having a birthday party for one of the Solomon's, [I don't know,] sisters or somebody, and why don't we go? She asked if I wanted to go. I and my sister and she, we all went to the party.

And Mo was there at the party, see. I guess I noticed him, he noticed me. It's funny, he danced with my sister. He didn't ask me to dance. It was so funny. And I forgot -- he forgot about me, and I forgot about him. When he came to this Hebrew speaking group, after it was over, he says to me, "Don't you remember me?" And I said, "Slightly, I guess." And then he reminded me that he was at the same party that I was at a couple weeks ago.

So he asked if he could walk me home, I want you to know. Not take me, but walk me home. He didn't have a car, and in those days, you walked. Anyhow, he walked me home, and that really started our romance. We dated for five years, I want you to know. First of all, he had just graduated law school, and I had just --

MF: Where did he go to school?

RC: University of Baltimore.

MF: Law School?

RC: Law School. And I had just graduated from Western. So anyhow, it was five years before we were engaged.

MF: So what kind of social things did you do when you were courting? What kind of --

RC: We went to the baseball game. He was a baseball -- we went to ice hockey. We went to a lot of sports, because he loved it and I loved it. You know, I learned to love it. I didn't know about it before, frankly.

MF: What were the baseball games like?

RC: They were exciting, you know --

MF: Yeah.

RC: -- just like they are today. And it was in -- where was it? On 29th Street. I forgot where that first -- I really forgot where that was. On 29th Street there was a -- that was the first baseball game there. And we went to a lot of these, you know, sport events.

And my first real date with him, aside from him walking me home every time we went to these things -- and then he would call me, you know, and I would talk to him. But then he called me one day, and he said he would like to take me to hear Franklin Roosevelt speak at the Armory. Now, I think it was at the Democratic Convention, maybe it was at that time. And he was running for president.

He picked me up, and of course, he didn't have a car. We went on the streetcar to get to the Fifth Regiment Armory that time. And P.S., we got there pretty late. So as we were walking up to the Fifth Regiment Armory, first of all, you get -- we got around to the side, I

don't know why, to the side entrance. And there drives up this long stretch limousine. And we stopped, and who should come out --

[CD NUMBER ONE/THREE ENDS

CD NUMBER TWO/THREE BEGINS]

MF: Okay. So -- oh, let me just start again. This is the second tape on April 24th, 2001, with Rose Pines Cohen. And I'm Marcie Cohen Ferris.

RC: Out stepped, as I said, Franklin Roosevelt, with the help of his son, James Roosevelt. And there were a few other people there. And one lady called out, "Hail to the new president!" I remember that distinctly. And he turned around, and he said, "Thank you, madame." Very impressive gentleman. But of course, he couldn't walk, as you know. And he was helped. He had the crutches, and he was helped by James. And we saw him go into the building, and then we went in and we heard him speak. And that was really a memorable evening.

MF: What did he speak about? Can you remember any of the lecture, of the talk?

RC: I think it was mainly -- you know, at that time, the country was going through the -- right after the big Depression. And that's the time he spoke about what he's going to do to correct it and to -- and now I don't know -- of course, he's attributed to saying, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself," I don't think he said it at that time. I think that he said it in his inauguration speech.

But I remember that he encouraged the people to have hope, and that he would -- you know, if he was elected, what he would do to set the country straight, and help the unemployed and all that, that element, you know, that story. I remember that's what he spoke about.

MF: Wow. So how did you know that you really liked Mo? What was it about him?

RC: I'll tell you what impressed me most was his intelligence. He was a very bright, intelligent young man, with a thirst for knowledge. And I had the same interest, more or less. And he was so interested in Jewish history, and Jewish background, and a fervent Zionist. And they were all similar to my way of thinking. And I think that's why I was attracted to him.

MF: So how did he ask you to marry him?

RC: Well, as I said, we were really going around for five years. I think the family was already questioning, what's going on, and what's what? And one day he said to me, would you -- you know, he said to me, would you like to marry me? And by that time, we were really, you know, in love with each other. We did so many interesting things, and we went to so many lectures. We were both active -- he was -- he organized the Hapoel Hamizrachi.

MF: What's that?

RC: The Hapoel Hamizrachi, it was a young religious Zionist group in Baltimore.

MF: Can you spell that out for me?

RC: H-a-p-o-e-l, next word, Hamizrachi, H-a-m-i-z-r-a-c-h-i. Hapoel Hamizrachi, Zionist group, Orthodox Zionist group.

MF: Tell me about that, about your feel -- you know, your Zionist interests and --

RC: My what?

MF: Zionism.

RC: He was a fervent Zionist. And I -- I think I have to give him credit for my interest in it also. I was interested, but really not enough. But he really involved me with that movement. I became president there of that group in 19 -- what was that year? I think I marked it down. In 1931? Let me see, where did I mark that down? 1932.

And we really worked day and night. We went to meetings. We planned meetings. We organized a national convention here in Baltimore. It really kept us busy. That was my really -- our social life, almost, to tell you the truth.

MF: What were your hopes, you know, for the Zionist movement?

RC: That we would one day have our land, and we did. This is what we worked for. See, then it was known as Palestine. And this is what we hoped for, that one day we would get our country back.

MF: Did either of you ever have any interest in going there, being there, being more involved or...

RC: The only way that we would have -- we visited Israel. And the only way we would have moved, we both said, is if our whole family would move. We're a very close family. We have -- I have three wonderful children. And they're wonderful, and I'm proud of them. And I would not leave them. And they were -- had no way -- they were not planning to go. And I would not move there. So we visited there. And we had planned to go again at the time. We didn't make it. He got sick, and we didn't go.

MF: Yeah.

RC: But our love for Israel continued, mine and his always all his life. Now, my husband passed away four years ago.

MF: What was that first trip to Israel like together?

RC: We went with our daughter and son-in-law, the younger one. And it was wonderful. It was --

MF: When was that?

RC: Pardon?

MF: When was that?

RC: You know what, I think it was eighteen years ago. As a matter of fact I wrote up a whole -- we had forty people on the trip. And while I was traveling, I kept all kinds of notes. Oh, I have it upstairs. I'll show it to you. And I wrote up a whole pamphlet of our whole trip, first a little bit about the history of the country. Then I wrote up the -- all the information, where we went, all the history of each one.

MF: So the early '80s.

RC: [Yeah.] It was in May, 1976.

MF: [Early 1980s.] That must have been exciting.

RC: It was thrilling beyond words. It was a dream fulfilled, for my husband especially, and especially for me. And incidentally, that was my first air flight, would you believe? I was -- I used to be afraid to get on the plane, and I wouldn't -- we wouldn't go a lot of places because I was afraid. But I was so anxious to get to Israel, that I did take that air flight.

MF: Good. So you married in 1937.

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: So tell me about those early years of marriage. What was that like, and establishing a home and --

RC: Well --

MF: -- and also, I'm curious, you know, during -- as things were building up -- we can maybe go into this too -- as things were building up towards World War II, what was the situation?

RC: Well, I'll tell you what it was. When I first married, because of the way we were -- and I must say, one thing I have -- must include is, that our greatest fortune was to have had a father like we had. He was the most devoted, kindest, selfless individual there ever was. To the point that everybody -- don't forget, he was a young man -- and everybody said, how come he never got married? And you know why he said he wouldn't marry, because he was afraid a woman wouldn't treat his children right. So he sacrificed his whole life for us. And he was absolutely a most unusual person. And the way we turned out is thanks to him. And of course, we have to give our thanks to Aunt Gertie, who helped us get started, you know, to do the things that we did. She was also a wonderful, wonderful aunt.

MF: What about Aunt Gertie's husband?

RC: Lovely.

MF: What was his name?

RC: David.

MF: Did you call him Uncle David?

RC: Uncle David, sure. They were lovely people, both of them.

MF: That's Lipsitz.

RC: Uh-huh. And we were very close with their children, all the time, really were.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Yeah, we were very -- so --

MF: What was your marriage like? What was your wedding like?

RC: Now, the marriage is -- this is interesting --

MF: What about your wedding too?

RC: Well, we had a very lovely wedding. My father said that a wedding is something you remember all your life. And he wanted us to have -- each of us to have a wedding, and we did. I was married in the Alcazar Blue Room in Baltimore here.

MF: A-l --

RC: -c-a-z-a-r.

MF: What was that?

RC: What was it?

MF: Uh-huh. Was it like a club or a restaurant or...

RC: No, no. It's a -- what kind of a --

MF: Was it like a hall that you rent?

RC: It's a hall. It was a hall, but I forgot, there's a part of a -- was a hall in a very nice building. It was a very nice place. I even have our wedding picture upstairs. And it was lovely. And I still -- I'll tell you what I have, a cousin of mine was a great preserver. When we were married, she saved the glass that was broken, the rice that was thrown, a corsage that was thrown. I have my whole -- downstairs, a whole book of all this kind of

memorabilia from my wedding. [I have to] -- I handle it with care, but it really -- all the telegrams I got, the caterer's bill, everything.

MF: Wow. Who catered it, do you remember?

RC: Sure. Berlin, the caterer.

MF: Berlin?

RC: Yeah. He was the only kosher caterer in town.

MF: So tell me, what was it like? What time of day and --

RC: And the rabbi, if you want to mention the rabbi, was Rabbi Kahn, K-a-h-n. And he was the rabbi of the shul at that time. It was an afternoon, and it was a very lovely day. It really was. I remember the weather was nice. And our honeymoon, we went to New York, to Hotel Taft.

MF: Wow. And what happened after the ceremony? Did you have a dinner?

RC: Oh, yeah. Berlin catered a complete meal.

MF: Do you remember it?

RC: I have the menu downstairs.

MF: Oh, I'd love to see it later.

RC: Yeah.

MF: What did you have? Can you remember?

RC: You know, I don't remember --

MF: It's a long time.

RC: But it was -- I have everything down there.

MF: And was there a cake? How did they do that?

RC: I don't know. I guess I must have had a cake. You know, I don't remember the cake.

MF: But they can make a pareve cake?

RC: Oh, sure, they made a pareve cake. Sure, they can do that.

MF: It's so neat.

RC: Yeah. And I have to tell you something about our honeymoon. We took the train to New York. (Laughs). And we got in a cab to go to the Taft. And then my husband turns to me, or I turn to him, and said, "Es Tzvah taller genoog?" Meaning, we were thinking of how much to give him for a tip. And I – [we] said in Yiddish, "Is two dollars enough?" And the cab driver turns around and says, "Es is nisht genoog," it's not enough (Laughs). He was Jewish, and he understood what we said (Laughs).

MF: That's great.

RC: Well, I never forgot that (Laughs).

MF: That's great.

RC: But that I remember.

MF: I love that. Okay.

RC: Now, after we were married, I lived home for about a year. One of the reasons, I wouldn't say the main reason, is -- I think -- of course, the main reason was that we could accumulate some money so we were able to get out on our own. And number two, I had a hard time breaking away from the family.

MF: So you were at home, you meant with --

RC: My father and my sister and my brother.

MF: Well, was Moses -- was Mo living with you all – with you, too?

RC: That's when we were first married.

MF: Yeah, so the first year of your marriage, you and Moses were living with your father and -- okay.

RC: Then we moved to -- in South Baltimore there was one -- in that area, there was one apartment building, which was previously a convent they converted into apartments. And we took one of those apartments. It was at 513 South Hanover Street. You notice I'm keeping everything in the area.

MF: Yeah.

RC: I didn't -- I wasn't going to move away too far. Now, we lived there, I don't know, for a year or two. And I became pregnant. And I was still teaching Hebrew school across the street at 518 South Hanover Street. And one day we come home, and I find a notice under the door: You have a thirty-day notice. We do not permit children in this apartment building. Those days they could -- they could give you thirty days notice to get you out. Could you believe that?

MF: Wow. Incredible.

RC: Boy, things have changed. So we started looking for another place to live. And where did I look? In South Baltimore. I wasn't going to leave South Baltimore. Now, I don't know if you're familiar with South Baltimore now, but South Baltimore is that whole area around the harbor, with homes selling for $300,000 or $400,000. Well, this is where I came from.

I had -- when I married Mo, Mo was one of four children. He had two brothers and a sister. But he was put on such a pedestal by his family, that sometimes I even had a problem dealing with it. But consequently, I was put on that pedestal too, with him. [So] my mother-in-law was the most wonderful person, she was like a mother to me.

MF: What was her name?

RC: Nettie Moss, her name was. But it was Nettie Cohen, of course, Nettie Moss Cohen.

MF: M --

RC: M-o-s-s.

MF: Okay. What was she like?

RC: She was not an educated woman, but a lot of native good common sense. I guess she was -- she had a hard life. She helped run a -- they had a soda fountain, ice cream place, you know that kind of a store, and worked hard all her life.

And Mo and I could do no wrong, is all I can tell you, in that family, to the point where I think at sometimes during the time, the other children could have resented us, and rightly so. I really, I once said to her, I almost feel like I married Jesus Christ (Laughs). But he was -- he was really -- and he was a great son, and a very -- he just had a mind that was unusual. We used to call him a walking encyclopedia. There wasn't anything that you

wanted to know about history, Jewish Baltimore, or Baltimore itself that he didn't know. And as a matter of fact, the Jewish Museum would call on him all the time to verify all kinds of information. And as I said, he did serve as their president for a couple years. I have a plaque and all that for him.

So we started -- I diverted -- so we started looking for a house. And my mother-in-law was the one that suggested -- she says, how long are you going to rent? She says, buy a house. We didn't have much money at the time. He was just getting started in the legal profession and I wasn't making much money teaching. And but she figured out that -- I don't know, she said, if you only pay so much a month, I'll never forget it, that it's going to cost you a little bit more than rent, and you'll be having -- you'll have something, some principal. So she convinced us.

So I said, well, if we buy a house, I want to live in South Baltimore near my family. Now, in -- don't forget, South Baltimore is an old neighborhood. And we went around looking at the houses. And my mother-in-law went with us. Now, she was a bright woman. She told me afterwards, every house we looked at needed so much repair, with the old-fashioned kitchens, and the old bathrooms and everything else. And finally, I decided it wouldn't make sense to invest money in something like that.

So we started looking around in other areas, and P.S., we ended up buying a house at 4009 Oakford Avenue, O-a-k-f-o-r-d. And we lived there happily and beautifully raised all three children -- all the children were born there -- for twenty-five years.

MF: And what part of town is that?

RC: That's Forest Park Northwest. That's where all the Jewish community was.

MF: So what was that like for you to make that move?

RC: It took me a little time to get adjusted, because I was so attached to the family that it was hard. It really was hard for me. But Mo was very understanding. Every night we called home. Every night we called my parents and his -- my parents, my father, you know, and his mother and father. I never showed any partiality. I always wanted to make sure that you know, they each got their due respect.

And they were wonderful, because as soon as I moved in there, a month -- not even a month, like two weeks before, my daughter Rachel was born. And that was the first grandchild. And they used to come all the time on the streetcar. I'll never forget. The 32 Streetcar would take them from South Baltimore to Forest Park, oh, at least twice a week, and maybe even more.

MF: How long did it take?

RC: About forty-five minutes.

MF: So what was the biggest differences about living in Northwest?

RC: In South Baltimore it was mainly business people. Northwest it was more, you know, families, this. And I moved into a very lovely neighborhood where everybody there was with young children. So the children really -- they had -- it was great. They all had playmates, each one of them. And they -- you know, and so --

MF: Rose, was it still all Jewish families?

RC: All Jewish. And the shul was two blocks away, Beth Yehuda. And of course, that was what I -- the criteria, that we be near a shul, because we didn't ride on Shabbos. And we became active in there. And when -- by the time Rachel was born, [Beth] -- South Baltimore Talmud Torah closed up. And I took about a twelve-year hiatus, or maybe even longer, twelve to fifteen years, to raise the children.

MF: And why did you do that?

RC: I always felt that when I had a family that I would stay home and give them all the attention that they needed, maybe because I didn't have that. I remember growing up without a mother. And when I had friends, when I, you know, was growing up in South Baltimore, I'm not an envious person, but I used to envy my friends who had a mother and a father.

MF: Right.

RC: I always remember how I used to, you know, envy them. So I always said that when I have a family, I'm going to stay home and raise them, all three. And I did.

MF: Okay.

RC: Now, after that (Laughs) --

MF: Let's see, Rachel was born --

RC: Rachel was born in '41.

MF: Okay.

RC: Sylvia in '45 and Louis in '49. I was on a four-year plan. You know, Kruschev (phonetic) was on a five-year plan, I used to laugh and I'd say, I'm on a four-year plan.

MF: Wow.

RC: And --

MF: Where did you have the babies?

RC: Rachel was born at the old Sinai Hospital on Monument Street, and the other two at the new Sinai.

MF: Did you have good birth experiences? Any --

RC: Yeah. I was very fortunate. I never -- did not have any problems.

MF: What about pregnancy?

RC: Well, maybe the early couple months, but otherwise, I managed very well.

MF: How did you learn, you know, about how to do what you needed to do? Did Gertie help you kind of learn? Who helped you?

RC: We had gone away from Aunt Gertie already. And Aunt Gertie had moved away from there with her daughter.

MF: So how did you learn how to be a new mama and how to start?

RC: I want to tell you, it wasn't easy. I often say it's a miracle that Rachel turned out the way she did. I knew from nothing, to the point that when I was in the hospital and they brought the baby -- do you have any children?

MF: Uh-huh, not my own, though, she's my step-daughter.

RC: Okay. Well, they brought the baby to me. [And she, they] -- in bed, to feed her. I nursed her. Then she slipped down. I was panicky. So I called the nurse and I said, "The baby slipped down." She says to me, "What's the matter with your arms? Can't you pick her up?" So I said, "I'm afraid to move her." She says, "Babies don't break." I was scared to death.

The only thing is, when I brought her home, I had a nurse for two weeks. It was very hard, I must tell you, for me to learn. And I really had nobody to teach me, I'll be frank

with you, at that point. So being a new mother was really hard on me the first time. But you know, you manage and you survive.

MF: You mean emotionally, too?

RC: I don't know about emotionally so much, as I was so fearful of every little thing.

MF: Yeah, yeah.

RC: (Inaudible) they call it a tzitterika mother, you know, I feared every little movement and I --

MF: And what's that word?

RC: -- that consequently she was so attached to me that she wouldn't --

MF: Yeah.

RC: -- leave me out of her sight. It was hard. It was --

MF: What's that Yiddish word that you used?

RC: Oh, tzitterika? (Laughs).

MF: Yeah.

RC: Don't even try to spell it. A very fearful mother.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Uneasy, you know, that kind.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Insecure. That's --

MF: Yeah.

RC: Insecure is really the word more than anything else.

MF: Did Mo help out?

RC: Yes and no. At the beginning, it's funny, my mother-in-law's philosophy, and I'll never forget it, and she was so wonderful to me, but she -- when we were first married she said to me, Rose, remember, a man's job is to make a living. A woman's job is to stay in the kitchen. So I never expected too much from him. And he was always involved in some organization work. So he -- at the first couple years, he really was not that much of a help.

And you know, with babies in those years, you feed them every three or four hours, you know. So there used to be a 12:00 bottle, a 3:00 bottle, a 6:00 bottle. And I used to walk around like a zombie. I never had any sleep.

At that time, [there was] a friend of mine lived a couple blocks away who had a little girl the same time I had Rachel. And we became friends. And every day we would wheel their baby carriages -- those years they used to wheel the baby carriages -- down to Garrison Boulevard and back. And we spent a lot of time together. And she was always so bright and cheerful when I saw her, and I always looked like I was falling off of my -- on my nose.

And she says to me, "What's the matter with you all the time?" I said, "I don't have my sleep and I can't function." And to this day, I need eight hours sleep. And here I was getting -- she said, "What's the matter with you?" She said, "Where is Mo? Why can't he give a 3:00 bottle so that you can sleep from 12:00 to 6:00?"

RC: [I said, you know what] -- she said, “Bernie gets up at this and Bernie gets up at that, and Bernie does this, and Bernie gets that.” I said, “You know, I’m dumb.” When the next baby came -- another thing she taught me, she says, “When the babies start to talk,” she said, “You tell -- teach the baby to say, Da, da, da first, not Ma, ma, ma. She was such a bright woman.”

MF: (Laughs).

RC: [I’ll tell you, I can’t -- she died. Bright.]

MF: What was her name?

RC: Sarah Jacobson. So (Laughs) when my daughter Sylvia was born, boy was he a help. She learned how to say Da, da, da, until this day, Da, da, da was her favorite word. And she is like her daddy and everything else. And [he] -- I learned to ask him, you diaper the baby at 3:00. You get up to give the bottle. And it was a whole different ball game already. [And I was -- I was easy already, and I -- you know], it was much better. But I think it was a miracle that I was able, to like you said, without any guidance, without any help, to raise a child. It was not easy, really. Now that I think about it, it was not easy at all.

MF: Yeah, well, you didn’t -- you had models of women that adored, but you still had not watched your mother.

RC: I didn’t have any models.

MF: Yeah.

RC: I didn’t remember my mother at all.

MF: No.

RC: I really -- I had nobody, no guidance and no models, and nobody even to talk -- to call on. But --

MF: So when you were creating your own Jewish home, so how did you do that? How did you model your home and --

RC: Well, my home, I modeled after Aunt Gertie's. You see, that I had. That I did get. And we had that at home with my father already, see, so that was not a problem. Once we moved, there was no problem with all that. But raising that first child was really a real experience to me. And as I said, she was so attached to me that she wouldn't leave me out of her sight. And it was hard all around. And then I remember when Sylvia was born, [she] Rachel stopped eating for several months, and that was a problem.

MF: Rachel did?

RC: Rachel, yeah. You know, she was -- first of all, she was four years old. It's a long time. I always said, if I had to do it over again, I wouldn't wait four years in between. But anyhow, thank God, another, third one -- Louis came along, and thank God they all turned out beautiful, nice children, devoted. And I'm very proud of them, each and every one of them.

MF: Did you have any help at the house?

RC: Yeah. I used to have -- I did have help.

MF: What kind?

RC: Well, it's funny, when I had the three of them -- oh, actually, it was after Sylvia was born, I had a Black woman. I'll never -- her name was Lassie, from down south.

MF: Do you remember her last name?

RC: No, I -- we just knew Lassie. And the children loved her. And she was with me for several months. You know, I did have help for it, yes, that's true.

MF: And what would she help you with?

RC: Oh, she -- you know, she did the cleaning. She helped with laundry. She took the children out when I was busy. No, she was a big help.

MF: What about with cooking?

RC: No. I did all the cooking myself. But then my daughter Sylvia told me something interesting. And then also when you talk about help, my sister Leah and my father would come over very often and baby-sit for us so that we could get out. They even stayed there for weekends so that -- we went away for a couple times. They were wonderful, really, the whole time, each in turn.

But my daughter Sylvia told me an interesting story about Lassie. I thought that she was so wonderful and the children loved her and she always held them on her lap. One of these southern mammy type of things. (Laughs). She said, "You know, Mommy, many times when you went away, Lassie would tell us such weird stories." She said, "It used to scare the life out of us" (Laughs). And I never knew that until recently. Would you believe that? See, you never know. You trust the children with whoever you trust them with, and this -- she said, "We used to be scared to death," she said, "such weird stories she used to tell us."

MF: Maybe just about, you know, her childhood or something like that.

RC: I don't know what it was, but this is what she told me.

MF: Yeah. And so she didn't cook because you had a kosher --

RC: No.

MF: -- home.

RC: Oh, yeah. Oh, no, she didn't do any cooking whatsoever. And then I might add that my mother-in-law was a big help. Now, my mother-in-law, afterwards, moved near us in Forest Park. And she was a terrific help, I have to say that.

MF: Did you eat out at all?

RC: Very little. There weren't too many kosher restaurants. There was one kosher restaurant.

MF: What was that?

RC: On Ayerdale Avenue, but I don't know -- remember the name. And that didn't last very long. And there was one kosher restaurant on -- that was Silverman's on Park Heights Avenue. Once in a while we would go out to eat. Oh, and wait a minute, there was also one on Baltimore and High Street, that's right. I remember those three restaurants.

MF: But like Nate's and Leon's, that was just like a kosher-style?

RC: That's right. That was just kosher-style, it was not kosher.

MF: Right. So you wouldn't go there?

RC: Huh-uh.

MF: Where did you -- what about for shopping, you know, for food?

RC: Shopping, the butcher shop was on Garrison Boulevard.

MF: Do you remember the name?

RC: Yeah. Surosky, S-u-r-o-s-k-y. And there was also a grocery store. Now that name I don't remember.

MF: Is the Surosky, is that Ruth?

RC: Surosky was the butcher shop.

MF: Is their daughter Ruth, named Ruth?

RC: No.

MF: No. I'm thinking of somebody else.

RC: She -- they have three boys.

MF: Okay.

RC: Well, there's a big Surosky family. They were all related.

MF: Okay.

RC: There -- I'm sure there's a Ruth in that family.

MF: Yeah, because my best friend in Washington is Bonny Wolf (phonetic). She's married to Michael Levy (phonetic). And his mom is a Surosky.

RC: Could be. There are a number of them in Baltimore.

MF: Okay.

RC: And there was a grocery store nearby. And then there was a grocery store on Garrison Boulevard and -- Garrison and Liberty Heights, like a supermarket. And that's where we used to shop.

MF: And those were kosher?

RC: Well, that was like five blocks, six blocks from the home.

MF: And they were kosher stores?

RC: No. That was like supermarket, vegetables and fruits.

MF: Right.

RC: That's where we would get that.

MF: What about --

RC: There was no such thing as a kosher store like you have today. Now, near Washington, you have Katz's.

MF: Right.

RC: In Baltimore we have Gutman's Seven Mile Market. But you didn't have that in those years. So if we got our fish and our meat from the butcher, then the rest of the stuff you just bought -- you know. And they had a bakery nearby, a Jewish bakery.

MF: What was that called?

RC: Gold --

MF: Silver's?

RC: Silver's was one of them we had, and the other one was Holtzman's.

MF: H-o-l --

RC: H-o-l-t-z-m-a-n. There's a lot of Baltimore history.

MF: What about today, where do you shop?

RC: Oh, today is no problem. Most of my shopping is done at Seven Mile Market.

MF: Is that just --

RC: Yeah, it's up there. You probably passed it.

MF: Yeah.

RC: It's about seven, eight blocks further up north.

MF: Okay.

RC: Did you come down Reisterstown Road?

MF: Uh-huh.

RC: Then you passed it.

MF: Do you take a right or a left?

RC: If you're coming from my house --

MF: Yeah.

RC: -- you'll make a right.

MF: Okay.

RC: They have a meat department, a fish department, tops. Great fruits and vegetables. It's practically everything you'll want is there. The only other thing, I do go to the Giant sometimes. I like some of their fruits and vegetables, oh, and some other things. I guess if they have specials sometimes, you'll go there. Otherwise, most of my

shopping is done there at Seven Mile.

And once a week I go there and do -- I have a dear friend, she goes early Sunday morning. She picks me up. Unfortunately, I no longer drive, which is a -- I don't know, mistake or not, I don't know, but I gave up driving. And so she -- and my children are available, they're always ready. They're -- so they take me sometimes. But I used to go with them regularly, but now my friend goes Sunday morning and we shop Sunday morning. Practically -- I get my menu for the whole week. And I know what I need. And then toward the end of the week, I'll go with one of the children to pick up some extra vegetables or fruit for the end of the week.

MF: Right. Did you used to shop at the markets, the open air markets in Baltimore?

RC: Yeah, at the [to] Cross Street Market, oh, yeah. We -- that's where we used to get our fruits and vegetables at the market all the time.

MF: What were those like?

RC: It was mostly by -- owned by Italians. And they had very good fruits and vegetables. It's still there today. And then we had a corner grocery store. Well, you had a grocery store on every corner in South Baltimore.

MF: And what about shopping for clothes and for household goods and things like that?

RC: That was a little problem. And you know, there were -- I'm trying to think, I think there was a store on Cross Street that's -- I don't remember having many dress-up clothes. But I think like -- and then for school we had a uniform. At Western, I had a uniform.

MF: Would you shop in the department stores downtown?

RC: No, I don't remember going to the department store. No that's not true. I'm thinking of the malls -- of course we went to -- Lexington and Howard Street, that's where we shopped, you're right. That's where we went to shop for clothing, to Hochschild's and Hutzler's. And of course, when I was being married, I got my whole trousseau at Hecht Company.

MF: So at Hutzler's and at Hochschild's?

RC: Hochschild's, Hutzler's, May Company. They were the May Company at that time. Oh, sure, that's right. Look, I forgot about that. And that was only like eight blocks from us, so we used to walk up there.

MF: Did anybody help you put together your trousseau and all that kind of thing?

RC: For my trousseau I got involved with a very lovely sales lady in Hecht Company – [the May -- at that time there were] -- no, it's the Hub, it was the Hub. That's where I got most of my trousseau. And she brought me a beautiful going-away suit. I still have it downstairs. And she got me the gown. [After -- it was an after -- see,] it was an afternoon wedding, but I still -- I wore a velvet gown. I don't know why that's what I wore. And she was really my guide. She, [you know,] was very good. I didn't have anybody else, really.

MF: And did you have a maid of honor or bridesmaids?

RC: Matron of Honor was my sister -- no, she was my maid of honor because she married after me, that's right.

MF: Right, right. Okay. Let's see. So we got up to Louis being born. So you had the three kids, and they're about four years apart. So Mo had a very active career, law practice?

RC: Mo, for the last fifteen year -- well, wait a minute, during the war, Mo worked at Martin's Airplane. See, he already had two children, so he wasn't going to be drafted. But he wanted -- he felt he wanted to contribute to the war effort. So he went to work for Martin's.

MF: M-a-r-t-i-n-s?

RC: M-a-r-t-i-n, Martin's Airplane.

MF: Okay.

RC: Yeah.

MF: And what was he doing for them?

RC: He was -- he had some kind of supervisory job in -- I really -- exactly, I don't know. I remember the [they] children all learned the words, like fuselage, etc. He knew all about airplanes.

MF: And then did he work for the state also, was he a --

RC: That's afterwards.

MF: Okay.

RC: He became --

MF: Why don't you take a break and have something to drink.

RC: Would you like --

[INTERRUPTION IN RECORDING]

MF: It's not easy.

RC: I guess -- I guess it's a lot to tell in my lifetime.

MF: It is a lot. You know, one question I was going to ask you about keeping kosher and about cooking, since you did all the cooking for the family, did you ever cook some things that you thought were more Baltimore or more regional? Did those kind of foods ever -- southern, ever come into your food traditions?

RC: No, no. I loved to cook.

MF: What kind of foods -- you know, what would be like a typical--

RC: I make traditional Jewish cooking, I really do. But I (Inaudible) --

MF: What was like a typical dinner for you?

RC: Well --

MF: Supper for kids?

RC: We always liked to start with a salad. And sometimes we start with grapefruit and a salad. And I always had some kind of a meat. In those years we always had meat. Today it's practically fish and chicken. And hamburgers or hot dogs, and I would have a roast. And for Friday night it was always chicken and soup and fish. That was a typical Friday night.

MF: What would you do for your Sabbath luncheon, like lunch on Saturdays?

RC: We ate everything cold, except the soup. I would have a fryer burning all night on the gas, I have it today too, with a little diffuser kind of a cover. And I just put my soup on there, and I heat that. But chicken, we had cold. And the vegetables were cold.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: Nice. Did you like to bake?

RC: Yeah. I used to do a lot of baking, a lot of cooking. I loved it all.

MF: Yeah.

RC: To this day I love it, and I love entertaining.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Where -- how did you learn to cook?

RC: Well, the basic thing I got from my Aunt Gertie. And after that, like somebody said to me, you know, if you can read, you can cook. And it's true. Now, I have -- both of my daughters, one daughter, in particular, is a real gourmet cook. And well, I'm always exchanging recipes with friends and with them. And it's -- I think cooking is easy. I love to cook and I -- no problem.

MF: Did anybody give you a cookbook when you got married?

RC: Oh, yeah. I got a cookbook when I got married. You know, we had a cookbook. And I never really used much of it. I don't know. And --

MF: Were you -- did somebody give you the Settlement Cookbook?

RC: Yeah. I got the -- I have it downstairs, I think, someplace, yeah. You remember that too?

MF: Yeah, yeah.

RC: Right now I have about three boxes of recipes. But through the years and lately, I have found that many – [that first, some] are out dated, and then I don't get involved in many of them. So I recently picked out my most frequently used recipes, and I have that in one box, and that's what I usually refer to.

MF: What kind of things did you bake?

RC: I remember baking sponge cake, and I made chocolate chip cookies. You know, they're basic things for kids -- and mandel bread. Oh, I used to -- I bake that to this day, I make mandel bread.

MF: Where did your recipe come from?

RC: Friends. I -- when the children were little, my neighbors all had small children. [We got into -]- we played Canasta. And these women were all bakers. And we always used to exchange all kinds of recipes. And to this day, I still have two of my friends who are bakers and cookers, and we still exchange recipes.

MF: That's great.

RC: I made -- like, more recently, I made marinated broccoli, which is very good. And I baked -- recently I made a date and nut loaf with cream cheese. I was having company. [I -- whatever,] I love for do these things. I used to bake muffins. But my favorite seems to me, mandel bread. My husband used to love it.

MF: It's so good.

RC: And I make that all the time.

MF: Was it hard to pass up all this shellfish that's in the Baltimore area, all this crab meat and shrimp and all that stuff?

RC: I'll tell you, I never tasted it, and I didn't know what I was missing. And since you don't know what you're missing, you don't miss it. I never -- I did have problems that -- problems when we used to go out to lunch. I always ordered tuna fish sandwich. My children do the same thing.

And I'll tell you something funny. When they were little, we went to New York with the children one time, and went to -- I forgot that famous Jewish restaurant in New York, I -- anyhow, and we sat down to order. And my daughter Sylvia says, "I'll have a tuna fish sandwich." And we said, "Sylvia, here you can order anything you want." She couldn't believe it.

That presented a bit of a problem for me and for the children. They used to go out to lunches, or they're invited out, you know. That presented a problem. But we did the best we could. And it worked out. But I -- as far as missing is concerned, I can't tell you I miss it, because I never had it.

MF: Do they still keep kosher homes today?

RC: Yeah, yes they do.

MF: So the kashrut is really --

RC: Now, they ride on Shabbos, because they belong to the Beth Tfiloh, and the Beth Tfiloh people all ride to Shabbos far away. But I don't.

MF: You belong to Shaarei Zion?

RC: Shaarei Zion. That's about five blocks from here.

MF: So you still -- how do you get to shul?

RC: How do I get there?

MF: Yeah.

RC: I walk.

MF: You still walk.

RC: Well, I'm a walker.

MF: Yeah.

RC: I like to walk.

MF: It's great for you.

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: That's so good.

RC: Yeah.

MF: So all those things are close. And then you can -- not on Shabbat you can get rides --

RC: Oh, yeah.

MF: -- and all that.

RC: Oh, yeah. My children are standing by when I need a ride.

MF: Yeah.

RC: They're always there, you know. And I have friends who drive. And so --

MF: So tell me a little bit about motherhood, once you had the three children, and they were growing up. What were your challenges during those years, as they become teenagers?

RC: Well, I think every child is a challenge, it really is. And every child has a different personality. As I look back now, I might have done some things a little bit different. I think maybe I should have devoted a little bit more time to the one who needed it most. You know, you're torn, and you do the best you can. In retrospect, you feel that you could do some things a little better.

But you know what I say to myself, I know I made mistakes, but I did the best I could, and thank God they turned out the way they did. So I must have done something right. That's the way I look at it.

MF: Did you and Mo have similar ideas about parenting?

RC: Yeah.

MF: Similar styles?

RC: Yeah, we did. There was no conflict in that area.

MF: And fairly -- you had a fairly traditional --

RC: Oh, yeah.

MF: -- division of responsibilities? You did all the --

RC: Well, I'll tell you, he was so involved in shul business. He was either vice president or president of every shul we belonged to.

MF: But you were involved in the organizations, too?

RC: Yes, I was. I have a number -- a list of things that I was into.

MF: Tell me some of those, about your organizational activities.

RC: Well, I think I told you I was the president of the Hapoel Hamizrachi, in the 30's—[I was then.] [When we moved to Forest] -- right before we moved to Forest Park, Anshei Emunah, the shul that we belonged to in South Baltimore needed a president for the Ladies Auxiliary. In those years they called the sisterhood the Ladies Auxiliary. So Mr. Bank (Inaudible) who was the president of the shul --

MF: What was his name?

RC: Bank, B-a-n-k -- came to me, and I want you to know, this is when I had -- I was expecting the baby then, before we moved out – "Do me a favor and take the presidency until the ladies find a president."

Now, the Ladies Auxiliary at that time consisted of women in their fifties and sixties, you know, the elderly, mostly. And I was, I guess maybe thirty by then -- no, I wasn't even thirty. I was only twenty-eight. I said, "You know, I'm going to -- expecting a baby, I don't know how I can do it." "Rose, you can do it. Please do me a favor. And they're having elections in the fall and they'll have a president."

P.S., he talked me into it. I became president of the Ladies Auxiliary for five or six years! And guess what I used to do? When we moved to Forest Park, at night, I would take the 32 bus and go to South Baltimore -- the meetings were held in the evenings -- and come home 11:00 at night on the bus by myself.

MF: Wow. But did you enjoy it?

RC: Those women worshiped me. Maybe because I was young, and maybe because they had no alternative, because nobody wanted to take the presidency. And they -- it

meant a lot to them. See this was a sisterhood. That Ladies Auxiliary was an outlet for these elder women. So to keep it in existence, I saved it for them. They didn't know what to do for me. They really didn't. I have to tell you that. And they made me feel so good, I felt like it was a Mitzvah to do it.

MF: Yeah.

RC: I did it at least for five, six years, maybe longer. Well, then I also want to tell you what happened was, that when Louis was six years old, he was the youngest, Dr. Kaplan came to me one day. And he said, "Rose, you've got to go back to teaching." I said, "I can't," you know, blah, blah, blah, "I've got three children."

And I said, besides, I said, Louis is another one, he also was very attached to me. I guess it was the way I raised them, you know what I mean? Maybe I didn't give them enough independence as they were growing up. I don't know what it -- to protect them, whatever it was. So I said, you know, he's so attached to me that I can't see how I can leave him after he comes home from school. You know, he was going in the first grade.

He said, "You [I] have a problem" -- he said, "I have a solution for you." And Dr. Kaplan could talk you into anything. Beth Yehuda was about two blocks from here-- that's the shul we went to. They had a Hebrew school there. He said, they need a teacher desperately. See at that time, certain periods of time, there was shortages of teachers. He said, "It's in the neighborhood. You'll take a first grade. And Louis will start Hebrew school, will be in your grade in the first year, and he'll be with you. [After school,]You go with him and come home with him." P.S., he talked me into it.

It was my worst year of teaching career. I don't know if you ever know of anybody who had experience of having their own child in class.

MF: Pretty hard.

RC: First of all, he would say -- at home -- in school he would call me, Mommy. At home he forgot, he would call me Mrs. Cohen. He always came home angry. Why? He raised his hand and I never called on him. Well, I couldn't call on him all the time, you know. It was really a hard, hard year. I couldn't wait until I finished that year. But anyhow, I taught there for two or three years, and then they offered me the principalship.

MF: Wow.

RC: There again, I was reluctant, because I didn't know whether I could undertake the responsibility with raising three young children. And there again, I was so fortunate. They had the most cooperative school board I have ever seen. There wasn't a thing that I would request that I didn't get immediately, be it books, be it auxiliary things, be it outings to plan, they were wonderful. So I undertook the principalship. And I was there until it closed up. Let's see, what was that? In fifteen -- 19 -- what? I have it marked down here. Oh, Beth Yehuda-- 1955 to 1958.

MF: Wow.

RC: And I will say, as hard as it was, I really enjoyed it. They really were the most wonderful people to work with.

MF: Was that full-time work?

RC: No, it was not full-time. I would call it like half days work. In other words, I would -- I also taught a class with it, I want you to know. But it was a small school. I think we had, I don't know if we had 200 children at the time. I taught a class, and then I would come in a couple hours during the day while the children were in public school and do whatever I had to do. And it was within walking distance, you know what I mean?

MF: So what time did Hebrew school start?

RC: At 4:00.

MF: And it was over by --

RC: Teachers had to be there at 3:30.

MF: What time was it over by?

RC: 6:00.

MF: And then you'd come home and fix dinner and do all that?

RC: Well, I used to prepare my meals before I left. And the children each had -- each one of them had to take a turn setting the table, so when I came home, the table was set. Of course my daughter Sylvia was something. She would bribe Louis. She'd say -- she would give him her nickel allowance or something, so that he would take her turn to set the table. (Laughs) She was something.

MF: How did Mo feel about you going back to work?

RC: He said if I wanted to, he didn't object. So I did go. And as I said, they were good years, I can't complain. But I can't tell you it was easy. It was hard.

MF: Yeah.

RC: And also at that time, the children were already getting to be teenagers, and required a lot of, you know, my attention. But thank God it worked out. And Mo was -- became president of the Liberty Jewish Center of that time. And I got involved with them a little.

MF: Now, was that another shul or was that an organization?

RC: I'll tell you what that was. Our shul Anshei Emunah in South Baltimore closed up.

MF: Right.

RC: We did -- we had some cash, and we had a big cemetery. [Which] a cemetery is great big income, as you well know, for any shul. We looked for somebody to merge with them. At that time, Rabbi Max started a shul on Liberty Heights, [what they] called The Liberty Jewish Center [Heights Shul.] And we contacted him, or they contacted us, and we merged.

Most of the people from Anshei Emunah were gone. They died, or [and] moved away. Mo was the vice president, so he was like in charge of all these dealings. And I was the president of the Sisterhood at the time. Well, you know what, [I'd give you] -- I think I must have been president of the Sisterhood like ten years, because I ended up being -- when we closed, I was still the last one.

Anyhow, so we dealt with the Liberty Jewish Center group and helped them organize the merger. And Mo became very active there. And I became active there. I remember they wanted me to be president of the Sisterhood. There they called it a Sisterhood -- I said, no way. But Mo became active and [when] he became president there.

Now, it was a new active shul (known as Anshei Emunah Liberty Jewish Center) with a lot of young people. And every night Mo would go to Liberty Jewish Center for some activity or other. At that point, I really resented it, because I still needed help at home, at night especially when he would leave after dinner. But he got so involved and he couldn't get out of it. So there was -- that was also a difficult time.

MF: What did your children do during the summer?

RC: There was no such thing as running to camp for the early years. Later on, my daughter Rachel, when she was a teenager, became active in -- it's a Zionist, what's that name, wait a minute -- Moshava Camp. She went to the Moshava Camp.

MF: How do you spell that?

RC: M-o-s-h-a-v-a. As a matter of fact, it was right near Annapolis for a long time. She went there for a couple years, and she loved it. So every summer she would go away for the summer. Sylvia, one year, went to Camp Louise, and hated it, and never went back (Laughs). Louis never went to camp. [Sylvia -- I mean] Rachel, afterwards, became a counselor at the -- it's the conservative one, the camp. I forgot what that name is. Now, she was there from --

MF: Ramah?

RC: Yeah. And she was their music teacher.

MF: Well, when it would be so tough that, you know, Mo was work -- out every night with the Liberty Heights, and you were taking -- how did you resolve that kind of issue?

RC: I complained. I was angry with him at many times. I really was.

MF: How did you get through that?

RC: I couldn't fight him. He was -- he got himself so involved that he couldn't dig himself out of it. And I just couldn't -- he became president. And as I told you, there was a lot of things going on there. And that was it. And he had to, every night, he would go to shul there. Now, I steered clear of it, because I said to myself, no way am I going to neglect a family.

And I want you to know, see we were -- when we moved to Forest Park, we were active in Beth Yehuda. He was vice president there. But then -- but that wasn't so bad. But then he became president in the Liberty Jewish Center, eighteen blocks from our home. We walked to shul every Shabbos, eighteen blocks.

MF: Unbelievable.

RC: The children, all of us, we walked, eighteen blocks to shul.

MF: No matter the weather or...

RC: Well, if it was impossible, we didn't go. Louis -- I mean, Mo went every Shabbos. I used to come later with the children. Eighteen blocks we walked.

MF: What about, you know, issues of -- any issues of antisemitism that you all -- that you ever had to deal with, or did you find that your world here was so Jewish that you didn't have a lot --

RC: I'll tell you something else about my career. I was really in an insulated world. I lived in a Jewish neighborhood, came from a strictly Jewish home, taught in Hebrew school, mingled with all Jewish people. I really did not have a real feeling or idea what the outside world is like. In 1970 -- well, actually, it was 1960. In 1960 -- are you running out?

MF: No.

RC: In 1960, when Beth Yehuda closed up -- it closed up a little bit before that -- I went to teach at the Beth Israel, out Liberty Road, in Randallstown, [because I was already teaching, so I went there.] And the problem there was transportation. We had one car. So Goldie Gorn who was the principal there --

MF: Is that G-o-r-n?

RC: G-o-r-n, uh-huh. She arranged for me to have a ride, and I taught at Beth Israel. And I liked it there very much. I liked teaching. Once I became a teacher, I, you know, really enjoyed it. And I taught there from 1960 to 1970. I think it was about ten years. At that time -- let's see, [when] we moved to Bancroft Road, [we moved] -- the whole family moved there. But six months later, Rachel got married.

MF: When did you move to Bancroft?

RC: Thirty-five years ago. This is Bancroft. That was, yeah, thirty-five years ago.

MF: This house?

RC: Uh-huh. Let's see, January, February -- it will be thirty-five in January of next year, yeah. So --

MF: 1966 [1976], around there.

RC: Uh-huh. So we moved here. Six months later, Rachel got married. Sylvia went away to college. The only one left was Louis. And a few years later, Louis went away to medical school. Then Sylvia came back home, and she got married a couple years later. Louis [was --] came back here when he had his -- not his residency, his -- what's his first service after they graduate?

MF: Internship?

RC: Internship. Stayed here for a year. And then when he got his residency, he moved out.

MF: Why did you move to Bancroft Road?

RC: The neighborhood changed completely, it became all Black. And all the neighbors just fled out of there. Forest Park became deserted overnight. That area was unbelievable. All beautiful homes, everything, a beautiful area. And in five years that whole area was vacated.

MF: So what was the attraction to this neighborhood?

RC: Not really, we just went looking for a house near a shul, within walking distance--every time we talked about the shul, it was within walking distance of a shul.

We saw it, and I liked it as soon as I walked in here, for some reason. First of all, the woman who kept this house, everything sparkled in this house. But they said she just lived for the house. She was uptight of a person, had one child. I'll tell you, I walked in here, everything was shining bright, and I fell in love with it right away.

And then I found out it was an old Jewish neighborhood. We had wonderful neighbors for many years, all wonderful neighbors. And Louis found a number of young boys for him, for he was in -- he was in City College at the time. And it was very nice.

MF: Where did your children go to college?

RC: [Sylvia -- Rachel graduated --] Rachel, after she graduated high school, spent a year in Israel. Now, when she came back, she ended up at Towson. She had an application at Goucher, and they were considering her for an interview, but she liked Towson, and she stayed at Towson.

MF: Is that college -- Towson --

RC: Towson University.

MF: It's a university now.

MF: It's a university?

RC: Now it's a university, yeah. [And that's a teacher] -- it was a teacher's training school primarily then.

MF: Okay.

RC: And she became a public schoolteacher. And she also went to Hebrew College and graduated from the Hebrew College as a teacher there. She has a good Hebrew education. [We can continue our, you know --] she taught public school for just about two

years after she was married. And she's raised a family and took time out. She has three children. And now, a couple years already, she's an early childhood teacher at Chizuk Amuno. But she also taught Hebrew school too. And she married, he's an ophthalmologist, Alfred Meisels.

MF: How do you spell his last name?

RC: M-e-i-s-e-l-s.

MF: M-e-i-s-e-l --

RC: M-e-i-s-e-l-s.

MF: Okay.

RC: Sylvia graduated from the University of Maryland, journalism major. Now, she worked for a while for the Evening Sun, that's before that closed up, and did some independent articles, you know. She was good at it. But soon thereafter, she met Ed Schechter.

[CD NUMBER TWO/THREE ENDS

CD NUMBER THREE/THREE BEGINS]

MF: Okay. We're going to start on a third disc. It's about 3:40, and my name is Marcie Cohen Ferris. It's April 24th, and I'm interviewing Rose Pines Cohen. So we were up to Sylvia marrying Ed.

RC: Now, Ed -- is it all coming through all right?

MF: Yeah.

RC: Ed was with -- went to work for General Foods, which was a wholesale, you know, food company [place], national. He did very well. And they sent him quite a bit around the country. You know, every time they gave him a promotion, it's to go here, go there. So they were in Portland Oregon, New City, New York; Connecticut. They moved around a bit. But in each case he got a promotion and did well. And about ten years ago, they transferred him back to Baltimore. So now they're living here in Baltimore, for which I'm happy.

MF: Good, that's great.

RC: And he has since retired. He's a young man, but he did well, and he retired, and is enjoying life, which is very good.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Louis, when he graduated City College, he always wanted to be a doctor. But Louis had problems getting into medical school, because when he reached medical school, they introduced this -- what's it called, that law where they had to give minorities preference, you know?

MF: Affirmative Action.

RC: And he was pushed out. So he ended up going to Belgium Medical School for two years, and then applied to the University of Maryland, and he was accepted in his junior year. And that's where he graduated from.

MF: Is he married?

RC: Louis is still a single, eligible bachelor. What can I tell you?

MF: Well, that's great, that's great. And he's a doctor?

RC: He's a doctor, psychiatrist.

MF: Does he live nearby?

RC: Pardon?

MF: Does he live nearby you?

RC: He lives in Columbia. But he's at University Hospital here in Baltimore, connected with the hospital.

MF: And then you have grandchildren?

RC: Three grandchildren.

MF: What are their names?

RC: Their names? Benjamin, Annie, and Richie.

MF: And who do they belong to?

RC: All belong to Rachel. Sylvia, unfortunately does not have children.

MF: So what's your experience of being a grandmother like?

RC: It was thrilling and exciting, and I love it.

MF: Do you?

RC: It was a real, real -- well, the first one, particularly. It's -- you're just elated, to tell you. It's like a double dose of nachas. It's really beautiful.

MF: How do you spell nachas?

RC: N-a-c-h-a-s.

MF: What do you think about the choices that your daughters have made --

RC: In marriage?

MF: Yeah, and in life and their work and their --

RC: I'm very pleased, I'm very proud of them. I really am. Rachel has done very well with her career. She's been mentioned as one of the leading teachers. She gives demonstration lessons. She's very well liked and very well thought of.

Sylvia likes to lead a life of Riley. While she was traveling, she did write for some magazines up in Portland, the Jewish Times, they have up there, something like that. She wrote articles when she was in New City. Since she's back in Baltimore, she has done nothing with it, and she likes her life that way. And now especially, he's retired, and so they're really enjoying their lives.

MF: It sounds like Rachel really modeled her career after yours?

RC: Almost like mine.

MF: Yeah. So similar.

RC: Uh-huh. Rachel has a -- Sylvia also went to Hebrew College. Yeah, they all got -- they each had their Hebrew training. She didn't graduate, because she went away to school. See Rachel was here at Towson, so she was able to attend.

I just want to tell you about my second career.

MF: Yeah.

RC: In 1970, when Louis -- everybody was out of the house, Mo complained that it was kind of -- Sunday was not a -- see, Sunday, I used to get home like 2:00. We taught from 9:00 to 1:00, and by the time I got home from Randallstown. So it was -- the day was shot, and we decided that maybe I should stop teaching by then. And then there was also some problem about transportation, although she -- Goldie said she assured me she would find me somebody else to take me [go.]. But anyhow, I decided to stop teaching.

But what prompted me to stop was, I had a dear friend, Isabel Tucker, a devoted, lovely, lovely lady. She was secretary in the central off of the Baltimore Public School System, there on 25th Street. And she said to me a couple weeks before that, "Why don't you…" -- oh, excuse me --

MF: It's all right.

RC: --"take a test," when she heard I was retiring. And I really wasn't ready to retire, and everybody was out of the house already. It wasn't like I was busy. She says, "Why don't you take a test, and there's an opening in our office." And she says, "You can have the job," because she was the secretary to the head person there.

I knew my shorthand and my typing, because I had that in school. But I really hadn't used it, you know, that -- through the -- I used some of it. Shorthand, I still take. I write myself notes in shorthand. I love my shorthand. And typing, I used to type for myself at home, but to say that I could do it professionally, you know, is something else.

What I did that summer was, I went to summer school at night and took a refresher course in shorthand and typing, and went down -- I found out they're giving the test. And I get there to take the test, and she said the date closed yesterday. And I started to cry, I was so disappointed. And that lady was so nice. She says to me, "You know what, if you promise not to tell anybody, I will put your name on the list, and the test will be given next week," she said. "And you ['ll] be here early."

MF: So nice.

RC: Wasn't that nice?

MF: Yes.

RC: So I went there, and I took the test, and I passed. And I walked into this office. They didn't interview me. All she told me -- my friend was already there. And she says, "Rose, here is your typewriter, and here is your desk, and here is your whatever, whatever." And I had my job.

But that was a culture shock to me. [Three quarters of the] -- this was a central office, so they were all supervisors, you know, and that kind of people to -- but three-quarter of them were Black. And I really never dealt with anybody like that.

Then when you say to me, did I ever experience antisemitism, there was where I experienced it the first time. By who? There was a white woman there named Mrs. Geister. I understand she was a real Jew hater. The first --

MF: That's G-e --

RC: G-e-i-s-t-e-r. Used to dress beautifully. I didn't know. I came in that morning early, and I [put my coat,] hung [hanged] my coat in the -- it was like a cubby hole there, you know. It had hangers. And I took a hanger and hung [hang it up.] up my coat.

About fifteen minutes later she walks in and she says, "Whose coat is this?" So I said, "It's mine." "The help don't hang their coats here. They hang it out someplace else." I was taken back. So I took my coat, you know, (Inaudible). Then I walked over to my friend, and I said, "Where do you put your coat?" So she showed me, it was another area for the coat.

To make a long story short, this Mrs. Geister became my best friend by the time I finished with her. But wow, she was something to handle at the beginning. Then I had a black boss, a Mr. Henry. The finest gentleman you ever want to meet. I want to tell you, I never knew that I could hug them and kiss them like I used to do ever time before holidays and before -- you know, all those things.

And then I came there in September. I want you to know in December, they had a Christmas tree that day. I was chosen on the committee to decorate the Christmas tree, I want you to know (Laughs). I had so many experiences there, but it really opened my eyes to a whole new world. And I must say, I worked there for twelve years after that. I retired in 1982, from all my activities. And I want you to know, I enjoyed every moment of it.

First of all, to me, it was like child's play compared to teaching. At -- you know, I say, anybody -- if anybody asks me to evaluate teaching, you know what I'll say? It's the most demanding and the most rewarding job you can have. This is how I feel about teaching. But this to me was like child's play. And there, too, I met two or three Jewish women, and we are still friends today, would you believe?

MF: What are their names?

RC: Oh, yeah, Libby Goldstein, one of my dearest friends; Edna Hendler.

MF: How do you spell her last name?

RC: H-e-n-d-l-e-r. Beverly Robinson. Let's see. We just -- we used to call it our lunch bunch. We all used to meet and have lunch together, it was just lovely. And up until then, up until 1982, I worked. Now, when I retired, if you want to take a minute I'll tell you what I do. You want me to?

MF: Sure.

RC: Yeah. Let's see. First of all, I met a very interesting woman at the time I was retiring. And we were talking about retirement. And she said -- she had a very nice philosophy about retirement. I wasn't really worried about retiring, I'll tell you the truth. I had worked since I was like fifteen, sixteen years old almost. I almost looked forward to some leisure time.

But she said, you know what's good when you retire? She said, "You do three things." And those three things I try to really follow. She said, "First of all," she said, "do something to keep your mind business and alert. Number two," she said, "do something for your own pleasure what you didn't have time to do when you worked. And number three, give something back to the community."

Now, through my working years, I have been active and have been, you know, in -- doing something, but not as much as I would have liked. The next day that I retired, I always wanted to do calligraphy. I love calligraphy. I enrolled in a class in calligraphy. And when my children -- the grandchildren were bar mitzvahed and bas mitzvahed, I was able to address all the nice envelopes for them.

Then I enrolled in a class -- we took one class at the Hebrew College with my daughter, comparative religion, which was a very interesting course. I enjoyed that. And since then, for the last fifteen, eighteen years, every Tuesday, I go to a lecture class on foreign affairs and current events.

MF: Where's that?

RC: At the J.C.C., with Dr. Donald Schafer as the professor.

MF: And then you've also been really involved in the Jewish Museum, right?

RC: Then -- no, wait a minute. I'm going to tell something else.

MF: Okay.

RC: Then I volunteered -- so then I wanted to do my volunteer work.

MF: Okay.

RC: So as soon as I retired, my husband and I tutored some Russian people to help them get their citizenship papers. Every Monday now for the last two years, I volunteer at Chizuk Amuno. That's where my daughter teaches (Inaudible), in the office, and do whatever, you know, they want me to do there as a volunteer.

Also in 1982 when I first retired, I met a former president of the Jewish Museum, at that time, it was Jewish Historical Society, a very nice gentlemen. And I told him I retired. He says, "What are you going to do?" I says, "Well, I think I'll get some volunteer work at the museum." He said, "Why don't you organize a group of volunteers?"

So that's when I organized a volunteer program at the Jewish Historical Society, which was known then, now the Jewish Museum. And that was like eighteen years ago. And have since continued every Thursday, I and a few groups -- several of the women that I, you know, got together with, you know, to start the program, several of them are still there with me.

Now, most of my work at the museum -- you know, we do archival kind of work, and a good bit of it, mine, is translating from Yiddish to English or from Hebrew to English, and you know, that kind of work, identifying Hebrew books. We have a lot of Yizkor books. I don't know if you're familiar with that. We have 120 of them in our museum now. And I identify those titles, you know. So that's what I do mostly with the volunteer work.

Now, the -- no, some of the things that I also do, I served -- let's see, I told you I served president of Hapoel Hamizrachi, and the Ladies Auxiliary. I told you that. Now, I was appointed on the board of the Jewish Historical Society, [Akipud (phonetic)] because

that's how it was known, from '84 to '88. I served for two terms.

Now, the Blaustein -- I don't know if you're familiar with the Blaustein Jewish Education Foundation. Where is it? Let's see, I served -- and I have here, in 1992 I just received this letter which says, "It gives me great pleasure to invite you to continue serving on the Selection Committee of the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Fund for the Enrichment of Jewish Education, as the Representative of the Orthodox Community." So there I served from 1989 to 1992.

MF: And that's a foundation, right?

RC: Yeah. And then, again appointed from 1992 to 1995.

MF: What's Levindale?

RC: Oh, that's a Jewish aged home.

MF: Do you volunteer there too?

RC: I did that. I didn't include that.

MF: Yeah.

RC: I did -- we did volunteer there.

MF: Yeah.

RC: And especially we used to come there Christmas and New Year's, my husband and I [by] both, to help serve the meals when the help couldn't come in.

MF: It sounds like this kind of work has been -- it's just been really important to you to stay active and really engaged in the world.

RC: I don't -- maybe a good bit of it I should give my husband credit, because he was so -- always ready to get involved, and I was ready to go along with him. You know what I mean? And we enjoyed everything, we loved giving of ourselves, we really did.

MF: Tell me a little bit about, just real quick, about his passing, and when he died.

RC: Yeah. May I just -- I just want to finish this and then I'll tell you --

MF: Okay.

RC: -- if you don't mind.

MF: Good.

RC: And I just want to tell you that I served on the Board of the Shaarei Zion Congregation from 1997 to 1999. Then, when the Shaarei Zion merged with B'nai Jacob, I am now on the board there for a two-year term. And my term is going to expire this year.

MF: Okay.

RC: And I've also served on the Merger Committee and the Renovation Committee (Laughs), and Constitution Committee. I've served on all those committees with (Laughs)... Now, I was --

MF: Great.

RC: -- also honored by the Shaarei Zion, they have -- at a banquet; I, and they had four ladies. I was one of them. And I was honored by the Jewish Museum, as a Volunteer of the Year.

MF: When was that?

RC: Oh, maybe like five, six years ago. Now, what do I do now (Laughs) in my retirement? Well, Mondays I'm at Chizuk Amuno. Tuesdays I'm at class, you know, with Dr. Schafer.

MF: Right.

RC: Wednesday morning, I bowl. Wednesday afternoon, I play bridge. That's another thing I learned after I retired. And Thursday I'm at the Jewish Museum. And Friday I'm in the kitchen (Laughs).

MF: And what do you do for Shabbat these days?

RC: Shabbat, we go to shul. My sister, who lives not far from here and is widowed and has no children, she comes here every weekend and stays with me for Shabbat.

MF: That's nice.

RC: And we go to shul. And then we have some friends who -- not necessarily Shabbos observers, but they come to visit me on Shabbos, which is nice.

MF: Yeah.

RC: When it's nice out, we sit outside and we -- and that -- oh, I read, and that's my reading day, on Shabbos.

MF: Do you go to -- do you have a meal together on Friday night and then you go to shul on Saturday morning, or...

RC: We have -- she's here Friday night. We have a meal. And Saturday, we go to shul and she comes back here. She stays here until Sunday morning.

MF: That's so nice.

RC: And one of the children come and take her home.

MF: Yeah. What a good way to be together.

RC: Oh, yeah. My sister and I get along very well, very close --

MF: Do you?

RC: -- all through the years. And she's just a wonderful sister. She's still protective of me, like I don't know what sometimes -- I have to get away a little bit.

MF: What an incredible relationship that --

RC: Yeah, that we have.

MF: -- when you think of the journey that you've been on together. It's just amazing.

RC: I think that perhaps, made it that way. I don't know, but just really, it's been a very, very -- throughout the years. And I try to have my children be that way, and they are. That's one thing I try to instill in them, that close, close relationship. And what is so nice about it is, that my children are [is] like her children. They are so close to her, and so interested in what Aunt Leah does and everything. And she's been wonderful to them.

MF: Yeah. But your husband passed away in '96, is that right?

RC: Yeah.

MF: And was that from an illness or...

RC: In '96? Oh, my gosh. Wait a minute, you know that --

MF: I think that's what I had written down.

RC: You -- that?

MF: Yeah.

RC: Yeah, okay. I think it was. I have it marked down there.

MF: Yeah, in December.

RC: Well, I'll tell you what happened that was so unfortunate. We really enjoyed good health, kayn aynhoreh, through the years. But the 59th Anniversary, he spent in the emergency room at Sinai. About four months before he died, all of a sudden he said he can't catch his breath. He had all kinds of complaints. P.S., we found out he had cancer of the lung. And in four month's time, he was gone.

MF: So fast.

RC: He was home. We had him -- you know, we gave him all -- he had therapy. We gave him all the care we could.

MF: Yeah.

RC: You know, both my son-in-law and my son are doctors, so they really did everything they could, but we couldn't save him.

MF: Yeah, yeah.

RC: And life has been very different since he died, because we had such a full life together.

MF: Yeah.

RC: It was an interesting life. We were always doing things, involved in things. I still, as I said, as you see, I still try to. I made up my mind that I have to go on. I didn't want to become a burden to the children in any way, although they're always standing by and they're taking me places, because I don't drive. For example, when I go bowling and I

don't have a ride to bowling, one of them will come to pick me up, to take me. They're always, you know, available, which is wonderful.

MF: Did your friends help you during the early days? How do you--

RC: You know, I'll tell you about friendship.

MF: I guess I want to know how you learned to cope.

RC: How you cope with it, yeah. Well, I don't know, I have a philosophy in life, I don't know if it's unrealistic. But I say it, let a smile be your umbrella on a rainy day. And I do look at a glass half full as opposed to half empty. So I have that kind of an attitude, and that does help.

MF: Yeah.

RC: That's number one.

MF: Right.

RC: Number two, the greatest -- what happens under these circumstances is to have support. And of course, the support I got from the family was the greatest. And the next support comes from friends. Now, I have a very different idea about friendship. And it's interesting that my son, who always tries to share some things with me about life and things, brought me a book recently, analyzing friends. And the way it was written in that book is exactly how I analyze friendship and relationships.

And I always said, in your lifetime, if you have two or three intimate, true friends, you're fortunate. Then you have casual friends. Then you have convenient friends, like neighbors that you call. And the other people are really not friends. We all use the word "friend" so loosely. They're acquaintances. You meet a lot of people in your life, but they're not all your friends. You don't say, oh, meet my friend, and this my friend. So I

have been fortunate. I had a good many friends.

I love people, and love to be with people. My husband used to always accuse me that if 2:00 in the morning if I could go meet a friend, he said I would go. I just love to be with people [in] -- I'm a people's person.

Anyhow, I have, I would say, three dear, dear friends. And they have been wonderful. Some friends, when you get widowed, fall by the wayside, which shows that they really weren't -- maybe at the time you thought they were dear friends. You see, in couples, as you well know, this is a world of pairs. And couples, you know, you don't look at it that way. When you're alone, it's a different story.

MF: Who are your three friends that -- now?

RC: My best friends now? I would say is Ruth and Jerome Levin are the dearest friends. Ruth and Harry Glazer, dear friends.

MF: Is that G-l-a --

RC: z-e-r.

MF: And it's Levin, L-e-v-i-n?

RC: Uh-huh. And then I have Libby and Bob Goldstein. And I have three or four I would say, just good -- just friends.

MF: Yeah.

RC: And I have quite a few acquaintances.

MF: Right.

RC: And I have a few neighbors that -- across the street, they're wonderful neighbors, a young couple, but she's always kind of looking out for me. A lady down the street, which is, you know, a convenient kind of a friend.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Down this way, two doors away, somebody moved out. I miss them terribly. They were wonderful, wonderful neighbors.

MF: Yeah.

RC: They moved out. I don't know how long I'll be here. I'm toying with the idea of maybe getting a condo and moving.

MF: Where?

RC: It would be in Park Heights, because I want to be near the shul.

MF: Right.

RC: I want to be near my shul.

MF: Yeah.

RC: See, I've invested a lot in the shul, and we've done a lot in the shul. And I just --

MF: Why would you think about leaving?

RC: When?

MF: Why?

RC: First of all, the neighborhood is changing. Not too bad. We're lucky that a lot of the young Frummies have taken over here. Two young couples just moved in here, I was

surprised to --

MF: Is that F-r-u --

RC: m-i-e-s. That's referred to as the ultra religious groups.

MF: Right.

RC: Now, right next door to me, I have a Jamaican couple, nice neighbors. They don't bother me and I don't bother them. Secondly, a house, after a while, gets to be a responsibility.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Now, we have always maintained this house very well, and I still maintain it in the best fashion that I know how. But after a while, I think I might get a little tired of it.

MF: Yeah. It would be nice to have the support --

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: -- of a condo, that it would be --

RC: Yeah.

MF: -- all that (Inaudible) --

RC: The security and all that.

MF: Yeah, yeah.

RC: So probably that's what I'll do [of that.] If it's not a condo, I'll just get an apartment, either way, in a secure building.

MF: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, that sounds like a really good plan.

RC: Yeah, that's what I'm thinking.

MF: Yeah, yeah.

RC: And I can't tell you, I'm -- I think I've -- considering all I've been through, I'm getting along nicely. I have a nice social life, you know, with the friends that I have.

MF: What do you think is the biggest challenge these days?

RC: It's being alone.

MF: Yeah.

RC: It's -- it's hard.

MF: Yeah.

RC: That is hard.

MF: Yeah, fifty-nine years is a long time.

RC: Yeah.

MF: What do you think made that marriage work so well?

RC: I guess it's a question everybody asks. I think maybe you have to work at it a little bit.

MF: (Laughs) Just a little.

RC: And having things in common, you know, your interests, I think that's a lot. Now, I always tell my grandchildren too, they're all -- they're now -- they're marriageable age, I

tell them, get somebody that's -- have a common interest, you know. They -- how they -- it makes life easier, as I can see it. And I guess you have to attribute it to luck, too. You know, today, if you're married fifty-nine years, that's a long time.

MF: Oh, yeah, yeah.

RC: Really. And I'll tell you one thing, when the children were out of the house, you even grow closer, really.

MF: Did you all travel at all?

RC: Oh, yes we did. We did a good bit of traveling. We went to Israel. We went to London. We went to the Pacific Coast. We went to Hawaii. We went to California. We went to the Northwest, you know, Calgary and all that area. We wanted to do more.

As a matter of fact, at the end there, I think it was my fault. We were ready to go to the Scandinavian countries. He always wanted to go there because [the Jews were so good to the] -- the countries were so good to the Jews --

MF: Right.

RC: -- during the Holocaust.

MF: Right.

RC: Europe -- he didn't want to go anyplace there, except we did go to London, and we had a wonderful time there. But as we got older, I was a little bit apprehensive traveling by ourselves. And somehow, whenever we wanted to go, our friends weren't ready, or this one had been there. You know what I mean?

MF: Yeah.

RC: And I discouraged him from just the two of us going. You know, I always feared if something happens, and you get sick in a strange country. So consequently, we stopped going. And--

MF: But until his death, it didn't sound like he ever went through a depression or...

RC: No, that's what I want to tell you. We enjoyed good health. We really did[n't], both of us. None of us had been in the hospital. And I was in the hospital a year after I was married, and I had my appendix removed. It was so funny. But after that, we enjoyed good health, just you know, sicknesses here and there a little.

MF: What about caring for other family members with illnesses?

RC: Yeah. We had that.

MF: Yeah.

RC: My mother-in-law -- my father-in-law got sick and he died pretty soon there after we were married. My mother-in-law was sick for about two years. And she ended – [we end] -- she ended up in a nursing home. But we had added care for her in the nursing home. And we used to go there all the time. Yeah, see I was very devoted to her --

MF: Yeah.

RC: -- as I said. And she was really wonderful to me. Our greatest challenge was my brother. He suffered the most for not having a mother.

MF: Right.

RC: He was so young. He married. He had no children. He had a happily married life for twenty-five years. Really, she was very good for him and he was good for her. But then she died, and he was devastated. Nobody was here. The children were all out of

the house, so he came to live with us. And he lived with us for ten years. And it was not easy.

MF: No.

RC: At the beginning it seemed to work out great, but as the time went on, I think my husband wanted more privacy. And anyhow, what happened was, the Har Sanai Senior Citizen Building was put up there on Ford's (phonetic) Lane near Park Heights Avenue. It's like an assisted living kind of a thing.

And he himself, my brother himself, said that he would like to move out and go there. And fortunately, he was able to get in, now, which is only three blocks from here. And my sister and -- especially after my sister became widowed, every day she would go there. And I went whenever I could. And he lived there for ten years.

But he had trouble with his eyes, he was hard of hearing. And then he got a pacemaker, and he was just falling apart. So he went into Levindale. And he was there for two years. And every day we went to Levindale, either I or my sister were there every single day for over two years until he passed away.

But his life was sad, as I said, because you know, he really -- see, at least my sister and I had each other, like, you know, two girls.

MF: Right.

RC: You know what I mean? And he -- we tried everything in the world for him, but --

MF: You can't --

RC: No.

MF: You can't repair.

RC: No, you can't, you really can't.

MF: Well, what haven't I asked you?

RC: What other what?

MF: What haven't I asked you? What -- anything else that you can think of?

RC: That I can add?

MF: Anything that you want to add?

RC: I just want to add that I am so thankful and grateful for wonderful children. I was thankful for fifty-nine years of a happy married life. I can't tell you it wasn't struggle, it wasn't, you know, easy, but we managed and saw it through. I don't know if I told you, my husband ended -- he was Assistant State's Attorney. I don't know if I told you.

MF: No.

RC: Oh, I didn't mention that, for the City of Baltimore for about ten or twelve years.

MF: Wow.

RC: Uh-huh.

MF: Assistant State --

RC: Attorney. Assistant State's Attorney. Yeah, I have a plaque upstairs for that too. So what I can say is, in addition to being thankful for the fifty-nine years of happy married life, for a wonderful family that I'm very proud of, and also for dear, good friends. I'm lucky that way.

MF: Yeah.

RC: Now, I just hope that I stay well, to just, you know, enjoy the rest of my life.

MF: I think that we'll close there on that thought, because that's a great thought to close on. And it's 4:15. Today is April 24th, 2001. I'm finishing this part of the interview with Rose Pines Cohen, today. And I'm Marcie Cohen Ferris.

INTERRUPTION IN RECORDING

RC: I'll show you -- wait a minute, I'll show you this picture of the -- my one gang, my two gangs.

MF: I want to see them.

RC: (Inaudible) Now, this is Rachel's family. They're skiers.

MF: Oh, they're so beautiful.

RC: And so -- and then I have that.

MF: Is that Rachel?

RC: That's -- let me see. I have to put my glasses on to see Rachel (Laughs).

MF: What a doll. Right there.

RC: That's Rachel and that's Al. That's their oldest son, their youngest son, and their daughter, Annie.

MF: Beautiful. Where's Annie now?

RC: Annie is an actress. She is in New York. She appeared in several plays, and an aspiring actress.

MF: That's great.

RC: She's adorable, and she's a vivacious youngster, you know, and she always wanted to do that. And she's done very well with herself.

MF: Great. That takes a lot of courage.

RC: Yeah.

MF: Yeah.

RC: She's been -- she's doing very well. Now these, that's me with my three children.

MF: Ah, beautiful.

RC: That's Rachel, Louis, me and Sylvia.

MF: Oh, they're lovely. What a nice picture.

RC: They're just --

MF: Was that at a special event or a birthday or...

RC: Yeah, it was -- where did we take this? It's somebody's birthday (Laughs), not too long ago.

MF: Let's see, you were born 1911, right?

RC: (Inaudible) do we have Annie's picture over here? Whose picture is this? Okay. Oh, there she is. See this is my sister and me, and this is Annie and this is Benji, with the two grandchildren.

MF: Ah, they're beautiful, gorgeous. So this is Leah?

RC: That's Leah.

MF: So do you have a ninetieth birthday coming up this year, is that right? That's so great. Don't trip over my cord.

RC: I hope to be ninety!

MF: I think you will.

RC: I can't -- I can't believe it, but (Laughs).

MF: I don't think there's any problem there.

RC: But --

MF: But you know, I --

[END OF INTERVIEW]