

Louise Azose Transcript

Roz Bornstein: Hi, this is Roz Bornstein, and I am here today with Louise Azose. We are here to gather Louise's oral history. The date is April 18th, 2001. First of all, Louise, I need to know from you if I have your permission to tape you.

Louise Azose: Yes.

RB: Okay. Could you speak up a little for us?

LA: Yeah, you have permission.

RB: Thank you so much.

LA: Yes, you have.

RB: Okay. Well, why don't we start from the beginning?

LA: Yes. The questions before we started.

RB: Okay. We'll start again.

LA: But I have to remember.

RB: Oh, you'll be fine.

LA: I hope so.

RB: You'll be great.

LA: Yeah.

RB: Why don't we start from the beginning? Tell me a little bit about your parents and where they were from.

LA: They were from Bursa, both of them.

RB: Bursa, Turkey?

LA: Turkey, Bursa, yeah. They called it Turkey. I'm going behind again. Me and my sister went, I told you, to see my uncles. You know who was there? Why we were there? Mustafa Kemal. Do you remember him?

RB: Say it –

LA: Mustafa Kemal, the Turk – Ataturk.

RB: Oh, Ataturk, okay.

LA: He was there, and we saw him. He was like that. He was going. We were coming. I waved to him, and he waved back.

RB: So, that's amazing.

LA: To see that guy – he did very nice in Turkey. He took that fez out of everyone, and he put hat – I mean, just beret. They didn't like it, but they had to wear it. He was the one. He fixed streets, beautiful, in Istanbul. He fixed all the streets that were – and he did something else. He put something in the minds that they didn't have before. They shouldn't kill. They shouldn't do anything bad to the people, the Turks. Be peaceful to each other. Be good to each other. Don't fight. Don't have fights. Just be good. They heard him, and they did it. Istanbul was beautiful after he left. The streets – beautiful. He opened up operas. Over there, the thing that they had was big yards [inaudible] – yards, gardens. Over there, they had all the Turkish girls singing and playing the oud.

You know what oud is?

RB: Yes.

LA: I used to play that. I left that in Turkey. I thought Seattle was too good for that oud. We sold it, me and my sister. I used to play the oud. He did a lot of good for Turkey, for whole Turkey – Bursa. All around were little cities, all around Istanbul. He went to everyone, teach us not to be bad, stay good with each other, don't swear, don't do that, don't do that. They heard him. Istanbul was, after him, the best. People were coming from all over the world to Istanbul because he was there. He didn't stay too long. I don't know why.

RB: He was a very powerful, influential –

LA: Ataturk, we used to call him.

RB: Was this before your father and family left Turkey or after they left?

LA: Wait a minute. No, it was after. After.

RB: Okay. So tell us about your childhood and where you were born.

LA: I was born in Bursa. My father was a rabbi. We used to go to each and every little town because they used to call for a rabbi. We used to go together, my whole family, which was eight and two, that's ten. I mean, father and mother, yeah. Ten people.

RB: Tell me, what were your parents' names?

LA: One was Avraham, and my mother was Victoria, Vida Victoria, yeah.

RB: And what was her maiden name?

LA: Franco. Franco. Yes, maiden name. My uncles were Franco.

RB: What do you remember about your parents? Can you describe them to me?

LA: My parents were the best parents in the world, very good with us. We were their – their what? I don't know. Very good parents. The best you could ask for from a parent – they were one. Very good. No shouting, no madness, no nothing. Like everything was okay in the house or outside or anywhere. Everything with us and with them, okay. We never heard a bad word of them, not to us, not to anybody. My brothers came just like my kids, good-hearted kids, all my brothers. They're the best.

RB: Can you tell me the names of your brothers and sisters?

LA: Yeah. First is Bension, and then is Jack, and then is Isaac, and then is Rachel, me – Kadoun, they call me – Kadoun, Fannie, Rachel. And how many brothers did I say?

RB: Did you mention Morris?

LA: No Morris. No, I didn't. Morris. And who's the last one?

RB: The rabbi.

LA: Solomon is the baby.

RB: Okay. The baby.

LA: Isaac and Solomon, the brothers, yeah. Just what you saw over there. Everyone. I can see it to remember. Where did I put it?

RB: Yeah. So, there were eight of you.

LA: Eight.

RB: And you would travel to different towns –

LA: Yeah, because of my –

RB: – as a young child.

LA: – father. As a child, yes. Seven, eight, nine or up some – that we used to go with my father and mother.

RB: What was it like traveling around with your family?

LA: With me, it was beautiful. It was with cows, taking – not horses, cows.

RB: Cows.

LA: And we took – and there was a big like truck, big one. It wasn't a truck, though. It was a big thing in the back. My mother put everything, a whole house, over there. We sat in front with my mom and dad. We traveled because he was invited to every little city in Turkey to be a rabbi. And he did. And then, at the end, he went to Istanbul for a rabbi. We were there for, I don't know, months, I guess. Then, they called him over here, and we finish Istanbul. Yeah.

RB: Did your mom ever talk about what it was like to raise eight children and to travel?

LA: She didn't. Like me, she didn't care at all, because they were good, good kids, no fighting, no bad words, no nothing. Just like me with my kids – same thing. I said to my husband – I used to say to him, "Look, my mother was the same – I'm the same with my kids. You don't do nothing to the kids. I don't do nothing." We parent just like brothers and sisters, not father and mother, beautiful.

RB: Very close.

LA: Very, very close, which I never remember a bad word of my sons or my daughter, never.

RB: In your family?

LA: Never, never. Honest.

RB: Oh, that's lovely.

LA: So we raised that way from the start with my father and mother, and I keep it up with my kids. I didn't know I had five. Honestly, I didn't because they were raising by themselves, without any help from me or their dad. No help. Just raising, that's it. It was a miracle, I don't know how to tell you. Very nice, honestly. We had my father and my mother and me, the same thing. I didn't know I had five kids. I didn't even know. They were so good. Of course, his father with them, too, same thing.

RB: Now tell me –

LA: There were –

RB: I'm sorry to interrupt you.

LA: No, it's okay.

RB: I wondered what was it like for girls and boys. When you were traveling, did you and your brothers and sisters go to school, or how did that work?

LA: We went to Talmud Torah, my brothers and me and my sister.

RB: All of you?

LA: Yeah, yeah. We went all to Talmud Torah. The only thing but it was Alliance [The Alliance Israelite Universelle], which we had all the languages.

RB: Is that right? Tell me about –

LA: Turkish, French – not English. No, I won't say that – and Hebrew, and Español – I mean, Ladino. I was a month in Canada. And I wrote my brother Sam a letter in English. Just a month from Turkey, in Vancouver.

I asked his son, my brother's son, to give it to me because it's mine. He said, "It was my father's. Why should I give it you to? I'll have it all my life." It was my dad's. I mean, my brother, that I wrote him. First in Vancouver. First I wrote my big brother. To me, he was big brother. We used to get along lovely with each and every one – with my sister-in-law, I never had boo with them, with anyone.

RB: You're a very close family.

LA: Yes, we are.

RB: A very close family. So you were telling me about school, going to Alliance.

LA: Yes. I told you –

RB: And was this in Istanbul?

LA: No, in Tekirdag, okay.

LA: In Istanbul, I don't think we went because we were [inaudible]. They wouldn't take us. They wanted small babies in Talmud Torah over there.

RB: I see.

LA: Yeah, not big ones, because they start from seven years, or six years, kids. They don't start like us. I was maybe eighteen when I was in Istanbul, to come over, and my sister was about twenty or twenty-one. So we were of age not to go to school. There was Alliance, I told you, in Turkey.

RB: Yes. Were boys and girls – were they treated differently for schooling?

LA: Same thing.

RB: Same thing. They received the same education –

LA: Yes, same thing.

RB: – in Tekirdag.

LA: Yes, same.

RB: Now, I remember a story about how you would sing to your father each morning. Can you tell me a little bit about that? You were very close to your father.

LA: Very, very. I told you, he worshipped us.

RB: He worshipped you.

LA: Me and my sister – I mean Rachel, the one who died, she was about, I don't know, seven, six, something like that – he wanted me and my sister, Jerry's mother, Fannie, to sing to him. He used to love our Turkish songs. We learned them, learned, because Turk – I mean, Türkiye, and we learned Turkish songs. And we used to – our voices one of the best. I don't want to, but we had beautiful voices, beautiful. I don't know how to tell you, really. And he loved it.

RB: And he loved it.

LA: Yes, he did.

RB: Do you remember –

LA: He wanted more and more, but I didn't want to sing anymore. We used to call him Baba.

RB: Baba.

LA: Like Turks – Baba.

RB: Was your father [inaudible]?

LA: Yes, yes.

RB: And what about your mother? What was her –?

LA: My mother was very busy with eight kids. We were eight. She was cooking all the time, sewing all the time, cleaning all the time because she didn't let us touch. She used to do everything, like me. I took care of my kids until – I don't know – until I was – because I didn't work, never in my life. I just took care of them, and that's it. I was like my mother. She didn't work, ever. She took care of us. I took care of my kids.

RB: Which is a lot of work in the home, you think?

LA: I didn't think.

RB: It didn't seem like work to you.

LA: I thought when I came from Turkey, the only thing is, if you get married, take care of your husband and your kids and your house, and that's it. No more, nothing.

RB: That was what you learned from your mother –

LA: That's it.

RB: – and from –

LA: And we did it. See, my sisters too.

RB: Yeah.

LA: Same thing. Yeah, that's all. I had to take care of the kids and my husband together and the house and cooking, and washing, everything.

RB: It's a lot.

LA: I didn't even think about work because I was so strong, so strong. I wish I was that way now.

RB: Very strong.

LA: You have no idea. Very, very strong.

RB: What beliefs or values did you learn most from your mom and dad?

LA: Just be good to each other, that's it. That's all. No arguments, no nothing. Just be good to each other. That's it. That's all I know.

RB: It's an important lesson.

LA: Nothing else. With my brothers and my famiya, my kids, I thought all the time that they got raised by themselves. I didn't touch. I didn't put my hand – I did, but very slowly, nicely. It was my job to take care of my kids. They were very good. Very, very good. I mean, mothers shouldn't be prejudiced, but I was. Nothing. Very good kids.

RB: Sounds like you did a marvelous job.

LA: I did, yeah, I did. They were good. They're all good. Take from one to the baby. The baby is Michael, the one. He's a rabbi in Chicago. It was a dream. Very good kids, I must say.

RB: Why don't you tell me the names of your children quickly?

LA: Okay. My kids: Isaac, Jack, Bension, Moshe and –

RB: Your daughter is–

LA: Selma.

RB: Your daughter.

LA: My daughter is Selma. I mean, Fannie, Rachel, and me.

RB: Those are your sisters.

LA: Yes.

RB: Okay.

LA: Sisters.

RB: Okay. I'm confusing you. I'm sorry.

LA: That's okay.

RB: I asked about your children.

LA: Oh, yeah.

RB: Yeah. I'm sorry. Well, why don't we actually go back in time a little bit again? And you were telling me that you moved around first, and then you went to Tekirdag, and you went to school a bit in Tekirdag.

LA: Yes.

RB: And then at some point, your father and family, some of them decided to come to the United States.

LA: They sent him a letter.

RB: Who's "they?" Who sent the letter?

LA: The committee here in Seattle, Bikur Holim.

RB: I see. The Sephardic Bikur Holim.

LA: The Sephardic sent him. There wasn't anybody yet, no rabbi, no chazan. My father-in-law was a little bit. He was okay, but he didn't have koach [strength] to read to them or no speeches because he was old. He was getting old. They called him. But if he hurries it up – because he thought my kids were getting – my brothers were getting older.

Bension was maybe fifteen. The other ones were sixteen, or the other one was thirteen. He thought maybe they're going to take them to war, Turkish war. He was afraid. He was very much afraid for my brothers. So, he said, "I'm going, and taking my kids with me."

RB: All of the children?

LA: Yeah, he brought them with him. But me and my sister stayed behind, I told you. The quota was full. We couldn't come, yeah.

RB: So your father and mother–

LA: And kids.

RB: – and brothers.

LA: Brothers and my sister.

RB: – and one sister came over first.

LA: Yes, yes.

RB: What year did they come over?

LA: 1924. We came 1927, me and my sister.

RB: So, two and a half years later?

LA: That's right.

RB: Who did you live with in Tekirdag?

LA: Oh, you didn't get it. There was a friend of my father, a very good friend. He told him that we were coming and my two daughters are staying. "Please, can you take care of them like they're yours, like they're your kids?" That guy took us in. He had a daughter and two boys. Two boys and a sister, they had. So we went. We were together with them.

RB: In Istanbul?

LA: No, in Tekirdag.

RB: It was still in Tekirdag.

LA: Yeah.

RB: How was it when your family decided to leave? Can you tell about that again today?

LA: Yeah, yeah.

RB: Tell us, what was that like?

LA: I told you he was afraid. When he had the letter from over here, Bikur Holim, he talked to my mother first [and] said, “We have to go because of the kids.? I mean, because Turkish soldier never was good. Always just – the Turks, you know how they are. I don’t know if you know. But they’re no good to take care of their soldiers, never. I had an uncle, a soldier, and he came so bad after – I don’t know how many years he was in the service. But he came very bad, and he told my father, “Please don’t send your kids to a Turkish service. Never do that.” My father was afraid. So, that’s why he came.

RB: He listened. And how did he feel to leave you and your sister?

LA: Don’t ask. I told you, he’s — lagrimas [tears]. His tears on the pier when he left us, my sister and I. We start crying like – I don’t know. We thought, “Barmeenan [Heaven forbid], something is going to happen because they’re going, they’re leaving.” For months, me and my sister didn’t sleep, thinking about my famiya. We didn’t sleep. We went in the house. They used to tell me, “Why are you crying? You’re going to see your dad pretty soon, your mom, your dad, your sister, and brothers. You’re going to see them.” But it didn’t [inaudible]. I was sick about it when he left us, me and my sister.

RB: How did your mom take it?

LA: Very bad. Very, very bad. My father wrote us a letter from over there, in Spanish, and we knew how to read it. “Your mother is sick about you kids. Please send your father something so he can see that you’re okay.” We sent letters all the time.

RB: Do you have letters?

LA: In [Spanish]. When we moved from one house to the other, I think my nephew, Bension’s son, the oldest of the family, took everything. I don’t know what he did with it. Yeah.

RB: So, how did you support yourself in Tekirdag? The family, did they pay for you?

LA: He used to send some money.

RB: Your father would send money?

LA: After he got to be a rabbi, they used to give him something. Not much. Everything he took, he sent us, like rent or to eat, things – not things, money, for us to go buy.

RB: And how long were you with this family for?

LA: About two and a half years.

RB: I see. And then what happened?

LA: And then we went to Istanbul, make the passport to come from –

RB: And you went with –? What was the name of the man that helped you do –?

LA: Solomon Altaras.

RB: Solomon Altaras.

LA: The best friend of my father, the best.

RB: Tell me, he took you to Istanbul. Where did you stay in Istanbul, waiting?

LA: A hotel.

RB: A hotel.

LA: All month long. He paid for it, that man, (Solamachi?) Altaras. He has some relatives here. Do you know Becky Altaras? That was his uncle [inaudible]. Sometimes he remembers. He died. Barmeenan. Yeah, Becky Altaras. Have you heard of her? You did? That was his uncle, the one who brought us over to Istanbul.

RB: Do you remember much about that month waiting for your passports?

LA: Oh, we were crying all the time because back and forth to the Consul, Turkish Consul, back and forth, back and forth. They're so dumb in Turkey. They haven't got sense with them. Okay, we're not asking for the world. We're asking [for] just one passport! They made us maybe fifty times go in taxis. He paid. Poor guy, he paid for it. Yeah. We were very sorry, but no other way, that's it.

RB: Now, once you got your passport, then how did you leave Istanbul? Where did you go next, you and your sister?

LA: In the meantime, while we were there, my father started over here how to bring us.

RB: I see.

LA: He started. They told them in Vancouver there is somebody that does that, not legally. But he did it. I have a sister in Vancouver. How come? But he did it.

RB: So, did you leave by boat, by ship, from Istanbul?

LA: Oh, yes.

RB: And where did you go first?

LA: First we took from Istanbul a boat to Cherbourg.

RB: Cherbourg?

LA: It's France. First trip that we went. But I told you that passport, until they give it to us – a whole month back and forth in Turkey. A whole month in a hotel with that man.

We had separate rooms. He was far away from us. We were near the windows in the hotel. The hotel was called Filibe Oteli [Hotel]– that's Turkish. Filibe Oteli. I still remember – very nice hotel. I think they still have that hotel. I didn't go. I went to Israel five times.

RB: Five times, that's wonderful.

LA: Used to travel. We loved to travel. My husband, yeah.

RB: So you made it to France and then to –

LA: To Cherbourg.

RB: – to Cherbourg.

LA: Cherbourg, we got another boat to – I don't remember the place we – not too far away. It took us a night, only one night, to go. But I forgot the place.

RB: Was it Halifax?

LA: Halifax is near.

RB: Near Nova Scotia?

LA: Well, somewhere around there.

RB: Near – okay.

LA: We're in the boat again, eight days and eight nights, to come to Halifax by boat. Halifax to Vancouver, eight days and eight nights. You don't know what we went through.

RB: Tell us what it was like.

LA: Not one word in English. She knew what she knew, and I know everything. We never talked to each other. She was quiet. I was quiet. It was terrible, honest to God. I never want to go through that again, never. Very bad for us, just two girls, not English. The whole trip – English.

RB: Were there other women traveling alone or young girls?

LA: Oh, yeah. Many, many, from Istanbul to America, oh, yes. I have pictures of the girls. We were together on the boat and on the train. So, several left at the same time.

LA: Yes.

RB: I see.

LA: They had sons here that they came first, and they were coming after. A lot of people from Istanbul to America. A lot of people.

RB: At that time.

LA: Yes, yeah.

RB: And so you made it to –

LA: To Vancouver.

RB: – Vancouver. And you stayed with a family friend? Another friend?

LA: We didn't [know] nobody in Vancouver, except my sister Rachel – I don't know if you heard of her. She died. Her relatives – I mean, her husband [who] was husband later, and his mother and his sister lived in Vancouver for a long time, the only Sephardim over there in Vancouver, the only ones. So that lady that was our sister-to-be went there and told them, the mother, the sister, and Joe, the husband of my sister, said, "There is two girls coming from Istanbul, and I want you to take care of them. They don't know a word

of English. Please, Joe, Stella, and her mother.” They were from England, the three of them. They used to just talk such an English – [inaudible]. It was very hard for us, of course. For us Turkish girls, it was very hard to understand. But they knew a little bit of Ladino and helped us. And that’s how that house that we were – the sister – there was an old lady from Bulgaria; she know the Turkish. We knew Turks like Turkish girls. We lived over there ever since we were babies. She was good to us, that lady. But the house was dirty. There was no –the guy that – we were there – he used to not buy, but gather old – what can I say – pieces to make machines, to make –

RB: Scrap metal?

LA: Yes. He was just gathering all that. He didn’t find no place to put it, so he put it in the bathtub. Me and my sister look in, “Louise, where do we take a bath? Where do they take a bath?” Very hard life we had, honest to God. Very hard. I said, “Well, we shavonar [wash] ourselves, and we change every day.” And no washing machine. You wash by hand. We had a hard life, very hard life.

RB: How old were you at this time?

LA: Wait, let me see.

RB: You and your sister?

LA: My sister was nineteen. No, she was twenty, and I was eighteen. Eighteen. We were in Vancouver. Eighteen. We don’t know. I mean, they were Ashkenazim. They were nice people. Honest to God, they were very nice to us. But not like us. Not like us.

RB: Different culture?

LA: Yeah. She had two daughters and a boy. But her husband, the husband of the sister, was (alma de el Dio?) [had the soul of God]. He was very, very, very nice man.

We didn't tell him that we're taking that – fiero [iron], como se dice fiero [how do you say fiero] in English? You don't know what fiero is?

RB: Is it a –?

LA: Like they make machines.

RB: I'm not sure what that is in English.

LA: I told you I forgot. He filled up his house. He didn't find any more place, so he put it all in the bathtub. When we came, start crying, "Where can we take a bath, (Fannie?)?" And she said, "Louise, don't drive me mad. I'm thinking more than you are. Please, honey, don't. We'll see. You just came, honey." Where we going to wash ourselves? We used to take baths every day, not in Turkey, in Istanbul in the houses that we were. In Istanbul, they had baths, but not in Vancouver yet. We went through – I can't tell you, honest to God. Then one day, my sister said – she was two and a half years older – "Louise, come, we take these and put it in the yard. If they're going to get mad, they're going to get mad. What can I do? I want to tell them that we gather them in boxes, and he can sell them." It was just that –

RB: Like junk or scrap metal.

LA: That's it. That's it.

RB: Scrap metal?

LA: Yeah, yeah.

RB: Okay.

LA: We didn't know why – putting everything in the bathtub. He didn't have no room. He did all the yard, it was full. But me and my sister did it, we put it in the yard. And we took

the scrubbing brushes and everything. We did the bathtub. Thank God. They had water, thank God, hot water. And first time we took a bath, oh God, and they just blessed us that we did that.

RB: They were happy?

LA: All their lives, what did they do in that house? That house, for I don't know, thirty years, something like that, what did they do? I don't know. I still don't know. What did they do without baths? They had water. Really hot water too. So we went through very bad times over there in Vancouver. Then, later on, we went shopping. We bought our clothes. We brought some from Istanbul. We had to go shopping and get some clothes. My father used to send –

RB: Your father would send money.

LA: Yes. He didn't have much, not much, but he did. His mind [inaudible] from two daughters. His mind was there. He didn't sleep nights. He didn't sleep days. He wasn't happy because we were –

RB: He was very worried about you.

LA: I told you when he left, he was crying like a baby. He was crying so much. Did you ask me something?

RB: No, I'm listening.

LA: So, he thought, maybe I'll bring my second daughter, and I leave my older over there.

RB: So, he had Fannie stay in Vancouver, and he sent for you?

LA: Louise is going to come.

RB: Why? Do you know how he –?

LA: To that day, I don't know why he did that. No, really, it got me.

RB: Really?

LA: She should have been first. She was two-and-a-half years older than me. She was about twenty-two, maybe. But she should have come first. I said to my mother, “Por qué me trajo a mi y no a Fannie?” [Why did he bring me and not Fannie?] Her name was Fannie. I said, “No te puedo decir, no me demandó.” [I can't tell you, he didn't ask me.] Your dad. Shall I bring you? Shall I bring her? “No me demandó” [He didn't ask me.] He did it himself. He went to the [inaudible] that brought us over from Turkey, and he said, “I want my younger daughter to go to United States. What are we going to do?” And he started – agencies, agencies and agencies, just for us to come to Seattle little bit. They lived on 24 and Yesler, somewhere around there. I didn't go to the house because the second time I came, they bought a nice house – my father. What was the name? Oh, see, things that I should remember, I forgot. What was the name of the street? No, it got away.

RB: That's okay. It will come back.

LA: Yeah.

RB: So, he sent for you, and you were about eighteen at this time?

LA: Something like that.

RB: Something like that.

LA: Maybe nineteen, I don't know.

RB: How did you –?

LA: Because we were almost a year there.

RB: Almost a year in –

LA: Nine months and something.

RB: Oh.

LA: In the meantime, I went back and forth because I had the green card.

RB: Oh, I see.

LA: My sister didn't.

RB: I see. How did you get the green card? Did you work?

LA: He went to Vancouver.

RB: I see.

LA: He told that man, "I want my daughter to come." He didn't say first daughter or second daughter. He didn't. I want one of my daughters to come to America, could stay with us a little bit. So, he said, "Okay, we'll do it." He went to the – what should I say> – immigration and asked for it.

They said, "Yeah, but you're supposed to put something, or they will run away." Me, run away? Five-hundred-dollar deposit we had to put there. My father didn't have that money. He didn't because he used to get very little from Bikur Holim. Everybody wasn't that – they had money. They didn't. They worked, and they had little money, everyone. But later on, mashallah [God has willed it].

RB: [inaudible] came along.

LA: And he said to that guy, "Please do me a favor. Do me a big favor, tell at least the one to come to my house. I want to see her." He made a mistake. Not my sister. Me. I came first.

RB: Do you think that was a mistake?

LA: To that day, I don't know why he did that.

RB: You don't understand it.

LA: Why? I'm his mother's name – my father's name – mother name, her name was Kadoun, her mother, and I was Kadoun, so he thought maybe – Luna is my father's mother – no, my mother's mother.

RB: Did you talk with your sister about it?

LA: Yeah. But she didn't mind.

RB: It was okay with her.

LA: Like I told you, we never –

RB: You were close.

LA: – got mad or got – nothing. Said, "Go, honey, go. My time is going to come. I'm going to follow you." But it took her more than me. She was there almost a year, maybe more. I was there nine months. In between, I went and came back so many times because that five-hundred-dollar deposit, we had to give it back – take back or give it back or something, I don't know. So anyways, it was hard trips.

RB: I'm sure.

LA: And then we were afraid. I told you, every peddler, they used to come in and say to my sister, "Fannie, these are the ones. They're going to send us back because we're not legally in Vancouver. No legal. Just a sister." We're from Maimon and Steinberg. She was Steinberg. Every day of the year, I was afraid they were going to send us back because of that because she was Steinberg. I was Maimon. How come?

RB: So you lived –?

LA: They're going to dig and find out and send us back. This lasted all my life over there, all staying in Vancouver, I had a fear. Now, my sister, took it as it comes. Not me, I was afraid. Peddlers, poor guys, they come – they leave papers. I don't know what they do. I was afraid. I used to tell my sister Fannie, "This is it, this is him now. You watch, he's going to tell us, 'Go back. You don't belong here.'" Nothing. [inaudible] They left a piece of paper, and they left. And then the man of the house put "No Peddlers" because of me – "No Peddlers." They never came, nobody.

RB: You were so afraid and lived each day in fear.

LA: Afraid. Honey, it's not legal –

RB: Yeah, yeah.

LA: – for me to be there.

RB: Right, right.

LA: It's illegal. So I was afraid every minute over there.

RB: Every minute.

LA: Every minute. So my sister too, poor lady, honest to God, she was very much afraid. Someday, they're going to send us back. They're going to find out. They're

going to dig and [inaudible]. What's the matter with Maimon and Steinberg? How come? See? We were afraid all the time there. But thank God, both of us got out safe. Jack, my husband, said, "How come you're there?" He told me. "I don't know. We have to be there all the time, I guess until my father does something. Letters or passports or whatever we need." "Oh," he said, "You don't have to be a citizen to marry you?" I said, "Don't ask me because I don't know anything about these things. I just came." I didn't know. Really, I didn't. What do you do to come back or –? So when he told me that you're for me, he said, "Louise, I'm going to be a citizen right away, so I could go and come easy to Vancouver and see you." I said, "Okay."

RB: It's a wonderful story. I wonder if we can take a step back a little bit.

LA: Yes. Ask me some more.

RB: Thank you. Okay. So you arrived in Vancouver. It sounds like a terrifying time.

LA: Don't ask.

RB: Yeah.

LA: Afraid –

RB: It was terrible.

LA: Afraid all my nine months that there I was, I went to bed, I said to myself, "Maybe just another day they're coming to get me. Maybe two days. Maybe a little more." She wasn't afraid very much like I was. I don't know why. I don't know why.

RB: But during that nine months, you came to visit your family –

LA: Me, first.

RB: – with a green card from Seattle.

LA: The green card.

RB: Your father sent for you.

LA: Yes.

RB: What was it like to reunite with your family here in Seattle?

LA: Don't ask. Honest to God, don't ask. I hugged my brother like taking breath from my mouth. Beautiful. In the meantime, they got older. Two and a half and a year in Vancouver – two years and a half. Everybody got older. I didn't even recognize them. I wanted to hug and kiss them. Bension said, "No, no, don't kiss me." I said, "I'm your sister!" "No, uh-uh." We had a hard life until I got married – very hard life.

RB: Now, when you first came, as you mentioned, it was a hard life for your family.

LA: Very, very.

RB: Tell us about that when you came to visit.

LA: Yeah. I saw that they moved from one house to the other. I've never seen the other one because I was in Vancouver when they moved. I came, and I saw a beautiful house, big one – Alder Street.

RB: Alder.

LA: I just remembered – Alder. It was a big house – great big house – because mashallah, he had famiya, and he had to have a big house, my father. So I came, and I hugged everyone. I said, "Don't bother me. I have to kiss every one of you." They got older. They didn't want to kiss. But I wanted to. I mean, I missed them very much.

RB: Of course.

LA: Every night, I used to go kiss him, kiss the other, kiss the other. I had something in here that was missing. My brothers and sisters were missing. One sister we had here. Yeah, so very hard life, honest to God, very, very hard, until I got married, and everything was okay.

RB: You mentioned to me before that your father, right when you came, wanted you to get married, that girls –

LA: Because before I came, I was in Vancouver, people were saying, “Oh, la hija de Haribi Avram es muy hermoza, es muy hermoza hijica , muy buena hijica, muy – [Avram’s daughter is very pretty, she’s a very pretty girl, a very good girl, very.]

RB: Can you tell us –? Now, I understand what you’re saying, but can you tell – for people that don’t speak Ladino?

LA: Oh, yeah.

RB: Tell us what you were –

LA: In Ladino?

RB: In English.

LA: No, in English.

RB: Tell us.

LA: See, well, when we came, I mean, the first – first, when I came, people knew that we were girls – I mean, my father was the rabbi, and we were a girl in Vancouver. And when I came, it spread all over Seattle that la hija de Haribi Avraham came, that, you know, a girl from Haribi Avraham, a daughter of Haribi Avraham came from Vancouver. It was all over Seattle. And each and every one wanted to get me married already. I didn’t want it,

so help me God. I didn't want to get – I wanted to be with my famiya – my kid brother, my sister. I wanted to be with them. They used to come, ask for my father, "Can your daughter have my son?" Every day, they have people like that. Wait, see me first. How am I? Maybe I'm an old, old girl.

RB: How did that make you feel?

LA: No, I didn't like it. I wanted to see my father and mother and the kids. I wanted to be with them. I didn't think about these things, I never did, really. It didn't enter my mind. So it was hard.

RB: Now, there was one man that wanted to marry you? Can you tell us a little bit about that one suitor?

LA: About the guy that lost in the stock market eighty thousand dollars?

RB: There was a man – can you tell us the story?

LA: Yeah. He was from Chicago. His father was in Seattle. His mother and father, his sisters, Dona Benoun – they were in Seattle. They heard Haribi Avraham's daughter is in Seattle. They heard that, and everybody started coming to ask for me. "A dio, leave me alone," I said to myself. "For God's sake, I just got here, I want to see my – I don't want to get married. I don't ever want to be engaged. I don't want nothing." I just wanted to see my father and mother and the kids, my brother and sisters.

But they didn't understand that. They wanted to dig, see how I am, how old I am, to see if I'm okay, nice looking, or something like that. It got me. I didn't feel – I didn't feel right. I mean, I was with my dad and mom and everybody, but these people are coming. Why are they coming? Why? Every day we had somebody. "Gee, I wish your daughter gets my boy. He's very nice. He has money and everything."

RB: This one family told your father, again, “This is my son from Chicago.”

LA: Again and again.

RB: Okay.

LA: Oh, de Chicago –

RB: Yeah.

LA: – this is my fiancé.

RB: So what did your father –?

LA: He didn't even touch me. My father knew him from Turkey, I told you. So did I. But I didn't think about marrying him or nothing. So he's here. Okay, that's fine. No, my father said, “We, both fathers said that you going to get you Yudah.” But my father didn't know anything about losing that money. He didn't know that he was a little bit off.

RB: So, he had lost –?

LA: He had his mother and father and sister and brothers [inaudible].

RB: And when he lost his money, he became very emotionally upset.

LA: He came to his father and mother to tell them, “I lost the money. I'm sorry. I'm not right with God. But if you want to be patient with me, I'll be okay.” I heard. I don't know. He didn't tell me.

RB: Yeah. So your father, not knowing all this had happened, agreed to the marriage.

LA: Yes. Father and father got together and said –

RB: Was that common for marriages?

LA: Years ago, they did that, but it's foolish.

RB: So, what happened?

LA: They did that.

RB: Yeah.

LA: So, I said okay, because I wasn't afraid of my father, but he was such a good man that to say no, it's very hard. "But, Pop, I don't want that," No, not argument. Not argument." I said, "Okay, but let me see how he is first. Then, let's see." As soon as I saw him, I didn't like him. He was good-looking and everything but didn't bother me because I didn't want to get married. First of all, I had to go back to Vancouver. In another month, I had to go back. And I did. I went back. And they're still saying that "Yudah es para Louise."

RB: Say the name again. I'm sorry, I don't –

LA: Yudah is for Louise.

RB: I see.

LA: They start calling me Louise already.

RB: Okay.

LA: No Kadoun.

RB: So you told your father, okay, but then you weren't happy with it. You didn't want to marry him.

LA: No, no.

RB: And what happened?

LA: My father used to see me crying every night because – he didn't say a word. He took me to a movie, *Les Misérables*. I don't know if you heard of that movie. What a movie, oh, God. I started crying and crying over there. And I didn't sit with him. I didn't want to. I sat way out. He sat near the, you know, going out – I said, "What kind of fiancé is that?" For God's sake, he didn't come say hello to me, nada, nothing. He wasn't himself, honest.

RB: So, what did you do?

LA: I used to come crying every night. I told my father that that's not for me. I'm going to get [inaudible]. "No, hija del padre [daughter of your father], no, no. Don't do that to me. No, you're a good girl. Don't do that." I said, "Well, I don't like the way he's toward me, that he doesn't like me." Okay, if he doesn't like me, he could say, "I don't like you." But he didn't. He went on and on like that. Cuckoo. He wasn't himself. And then he went to the doctor. The doctors find out that this is the cause. He gave him pills, and he got a little bit better. But that man that – he told my father, "Can your girl come to my house? You know us, that we're good famiya. I want your girl to get out of these things."

RB: So a family friend approached your father –?

LA: Yes.

RB: A dear friend.

LA: Yes.

RB: And what was his name?

LA: Sabetai Baruch. He was good. My father said, "Yes, I want you to because she's crying every day. She doesn't want that boy."

RB: So your father allowed you to stay with them?

LA: Yes. And I stayed with them about a month, almost a month. And they took care of me, honest to God, very good care. His wife and – do you know Sema Calvo? He used to come every day, every night, to eat together with everybody, with Dona. And then he was esta – what's her name? Sema Calvo, and [Sebetai's wife] was Dona Baruch. She was nice. And there was Fortuna Calvo, your relatives.

RB: So the women got together to support you?

LA: No.

RB: No. They come to visit you?

LA: Yeah. They came to visit Sabetai Baruch.

RB: I see, I see.

LA: They came to see him every night. They said, "You're a nice girl, and you'll find another one, don't worry. He's going to go back to Chicago, and you're not going to have nothing to do with him." Sabetai Baruch called him that night and said, "Let's go in that room. I want to talk to you." "Okay." He went to a room and said, "Listen, that girl doesn't like you. You have to say no to her right away, that you don't like her either. And you're going to Chicago, and you leave tonight. Don't do that to that girl." So, he did. He said, "No, I don't want to get married. I want to go back to Chicago, and maybe I'll get my money back, or whatever" – whatever he thought. So, that guy said, "Okay, say goodbye to her, that you're not going to bother her anymore." Okay, he went, and he took the boat over – I don't know – and he went to Chicago. I never saw him again.

RB: So, the engagement was broken off. How did you feel at that point?

LA: I felt bad for him, that he's sick, but I didn't care. In the meantime, Jack was coming in and out.

RB: This is your husband?

LA: My husband.

RB: You met your husband.

LA: Yes.

RB: It would be wonderful to hear about your courtship with Jack.

LA: Boy.

RB: Can you tell us how you met?

LA: I told you he used to come see my brothers.

RB: So, when you first came to Seattle, he came to visit.

LA: He start coming. He start come –

RB: Yeah. Tell us from the beginning again. I'm sorry.

LA: Yeah. When I came, I didn't know him, I told you. But still, he came and go. Still, I didn't know who he was. But it was Jack. All the time, Jack. He used to fool my brothers that he's going to go get chewing gum or something. He'd see me, "Louise." I didn't like it, really. But I didn't want these things to go on. So, one night, he said to my brother, Jack [inaudible], and he said, "Jack, can you come with –?" He bought a new truck, Jack. He said, "Can I take your sister for a drive?" And Jack said, "My father won't let her. It's impossible." He said, "What if you come with us" – to my brother. "Maybe. I don't know. I'll go ask my father. If he's okay, he'll let you come with me, okay." So, he

went to my father. My brother said, "He wants to take Louise for a drive." "No." He said, "No." A girl with a boy, it's impossible – not like now. So, he went in, and he said, "Dad, I'll be with her. I'll be next to her. Don't worry." So if it's the case, go. Go. But he didn't know Jack yet. He used to come in – he never pay attention. And in between, he had Hahamim [learned men] come and learn with him. The house was full all the time. Scharhon and Behar – every day, they came to learn with my father.

RB: All the men in the community would come –

LA: That's right.

RB: – to study with your father.

LA: Yes, yeah. There were people there, and he asked permission, and he said, "Okay." So, when I went in, he said, "Jack, sit over here." I said, "Uh-uh. I'm going to sit next to my brother, not you. No monkey business." So I said, "Okay, Jack, you come with me. Sit next to me and let him alone. He's going to drive." I said. Okay. He said, "Okay." So my brothers were very reserved, like my father. So, we came back, and my father was at the door. He said, "Where did you go?" I said, "With that guy." That guy. He said, "What does he want?" "Nothing," I said. "He bought a new truck. He wants to show off, that's it." Really, that's what I thought. So, he went home, and we went home. All of a sudden, his father came and said, "Haribi Avraham, how about mi hijo la kere mucho a tu hija. He's crazy about your daughter. I don't know what to do. What can we do, Haribi Avraham?" He said, "I don't know yet, but I have to ask my daughter if she's okay with him."

RB: Oh, so this time around, your father wanted to know how you felt.

LA: Yes.

RB: I see.

LA: He wanted to know.

RB: Could we stop here for just a minute? I think I need to put a new tape in. Okay?

LA: Yes, honey, yes.

RB: Okay. Thank you very much.

LA: I'm sorry I'm bothering you.

RB: No, it's wonderful. Hold on. [RECORDING PAUSED] This is Roz Bornstein, and we're back. I have the honor of interviewing Louise Azose, and this is on our second disc. It's still April 18th. Louise, do I have your permission to continue taping?

LA: Yes, you do.

RB: Okay. Thank you very much. So you were telling me about when you met Jack, your husband and how after he met you, he fell in love with you.

LA: Me too, honey.

RB: And you with him. And your father –

LA: But I didn't tell my father.

RB: What happened?

LA: We were ashamed, honey. To do that to my father, say, I love that guy? Uh-uh.

RB: Women didn't do that? Women couldn't –?

LA: Women here did, but me – I'm from Turkey, honey.

RB: I see.

LA: Cabeza. We had big heads.

RB: So the women from Turkey—

LA: They don't. It comes a time. They get together. We didn't, really.

RB: So, how did you get together? Did his parents come over to see —?

LA: Yes.

RB: What happened?

LA: His father, mother, and sister, Susie Azose. I don't know. Susie Angel, you know her. She's your relative too. They came one night. They said, "We came because my son loves your daughter very much. So Haribi Avraham, what do you say?" He said, "It's not up to me, it's up to my daughter. If she wants, okay." So, he came. "Kadoun, what do you say? You like Jack?" I said, "Yes." I'm ashamed to my father — not ashamed, but respect. Respect que tenemos del padre [respect that we had for our father]. I said, "Yes," but very slowly. "Oh." He said, "Oh. Did you meet him before?" I said, "Yes. Do you remember in the truck that I went for — this what he said. He said to me that he loved me. He likes to marry me." I told my father. He said, "Oh, why didn't you say so?" I said, "I'm just saying so." Then his father and mother and sister and brother came over. My father said, "Okay, you told me you love him, that's enough for me. If you told me, that's enough for me. Go right ahead. But don't be with him yet. Not yet. Wait." I said, "I'm going to wait, Dad. I'm not going with him yet."

RB: Was there any specific custom for an engagement? Was it that night that you became engaged?

LA: Engaged, but not together. We couldn't be together yet, no.

RB: When you say you couldn't be together, what do you mean?

LA: What's the reason? Well, it didn't go all right like it should. All of a sudden, I say yes, and he was shocked. So, he wanted to wait. How am I going to feel after with him? So, I said – and then you know, I said, "Dad, yeah, I love him. He's a good man." "Well, I have to ask about him. Do you mind?" I said, "No. Go ahead. Ask anybody that know Jack, and they're going to tell you he's a good boy, or he isn't, whatever." So, he asked a few from the committee, "How is Jack Azose?" And they told him, "He's a good boy. We never heard no word unless good word about him. He works hard, and he's a nice boy. His father, his mother –very nice. His father is a haham, and everything is okay." So, he relaxed a little. They told him he's okay. Yeah. Then I had to go back.

RB: To Vancouver?

LA: I had to go back to Vancouver. He wants to come with me. My father said, "Uh-uh. You stay home. You stay here. Let her go. She's not going to stay too long." He said, "I'm going to see that she come early, and then you can do whatever." So, I went back that night, and he said goodbye. I went to the house with the bathtub – no, we had fixed the bathtub then, honest to God. That I'll never forget in my life. A house without a bathtub and full of junk. Anyway, I went back. Ten minutes later that I arrive and I told them I'm engaged to Jack – they saw him once more. He came to see me in Vancouver. So five, ten minutes later, a phone call. He said, "Louise, somebody wants to talk to you." Honest to God, I didn't think it was Jack. I just left him. Just left him.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

RB: So, he called you, and when –

LA: Oh, yeah. He called me. I said, "No, it's impossible, I left him in Seattle." How come? He took a plane, and he came.

RB: He took a plane right away?

LA: Right away, to come and see me. He said, "Louise, I can't stand it. I have to go see you." I said, "Who's going to go pick you up from the train?" He said, "Train was near that house." I said, "Jack, go back home, honey. Don't bother me now. I just came, and I want to relax." He said, "No, I want to see you. I want to see you." I said, "Okay, come, but take a taxi because over here, his father has a car, and his sister has a car. I don't know where she went." I said, "Just wait. Somebody is going to go pick you up. I don't know who." I didn't want to see him yet, really. A dio, we just got together. Anyways, he came. And the mother, you know, the lady of the house, said in Turkish – we talk in Turkish – said, "Very good, Jack. You got a good girl. You got a very nice girl. But don't do nothing to her. Be good to her." The old lady and the daughters said the same. "Jack, please, she's a wonderful girl. There is no other girl like Louise. Please take care of her." In the meantime, I've been with them for eight months or something like that. They knew me. So, he said, "No, I love her. I won't do a thing. I just love her." Okay. He came, and they served coffee or whatever, then took the plane, and he went back. My God.

RB: He just had to see you. That's very romantic.

LA: Oh, he was crazy about me, really.

RB: Can you tell us the circumstances of your wedding up in Canada?

LA: Oh, oh. He came over.

RB: He came a second time?

LA: Yes.

RB: Okay.

LA: A second time, he came to Vancouver. And we had to get license from the consul – marriage license. We went there, and we got the license. We thought that's it, you don't need nothing because we're not going to get married, really. It's just to get out of there, to get out of Vancouver. So anyway, we went to our consul, and he gave us the license. I'm so happy, I'm going home. No home, I mean to the lady's house. They said, "No, that's not enough for Vancouver. You have to go to a church and get real married." Adios santo [Holy God]. Oh, my God. "Oh, no," I said. "No, we can't." I said, "We're Jewish. We can't get married any place except with rabbanim in Seattle."

RB: And there was no synagogue in Vancouver for you?

LA: I couldn't get married. He didn't have no money to get married.

RB: In Vancouver?

LA: Yeah. No money in Seattle, either. So, we went and got the – oh, the counsul said, "Go to a church and get the license, and then you can go back to –

RB: To Seattle?

LA: – can go back to Seattle." We said, "Okay, what can you do, honey?" We have to do it. I went to the church. I told you, honest, it's the biggest church. I know the name – Wesley Church in Vancouver. So, we went there. I'm shaky, shaky, shaky, to see the cross right in front of me, and the reverend or whatever his name, and his wife. "Oh, God," I said, "Jack, what are we doing? Do you know what we're doing? Getting married." He said, "No, honey, they just give me the paper and you go to your mom's. I'm going to my mother's. That's it." So, he said, "Okay, honey, don't worry. Don't worry. We're not going to get married. This is it to go to Seattle." So, we got the license. We paid five dollars, I think, something like that, and out of there. I said, "Jack, I'm sick. I'm very sick." "Oh, honey, now, don't – don't, please." I said, "I'm sick, Jack, so you better go to Seattle, and I'm going to stay a little bit more here until I become like a ben

adam [human being].” He said, “Okay, I’ll go. I’m waiting for you. Don’t fool me.” “No, as soon as they give me the card, I’ll be there.” So it took – I don’t know – months to go back there. And he started coming back.

RB: So after you had your church marriage –

LA: The license.

RB: – just for the paperwork, then you had to stay in Vancouver separated.

LA: No, we came to Seattle. He went to his house, and I went to mine. We couldn’t get together for nine months.

RB: His father was a rabbi.

LA: Yes.

RB: And your father was a rabbi.

LA: Yes.

RB: Both very beloved.

LA: Yes.

RB: And very active in the community.

LA: Very.

RB: How did your families feel that you went through this process in Vancouver, getting married in a church? What did they say?

LA: They didn’t believe it. My father didn’t believe me – me to get married in a church. He said, “Ijika mia de que izites esto? Why did you do that?” “Dad,” I said, “We couldn’t

come. Otherwise, I have to stay all my life in Vancouver. Do you want that?" He said, "No." I had to get married. And nothing that – the priest said a few words. And the ring, he went across the street and got from ten-cent store just to have something, and that's all. Nothing else. And I came to you, and he went to his house. He said, "Is that all?" "That's it." I said, "Yeah." But we were engaged. He used to come over. Yeah.

RB: What was that time like for you before you married?

LA: I wasn't happy, to tell you the truth. I loved him, yes, but I wasn't happy because these things got me.

RB: What things? What exactly –?

LA: The church and the consul, this and that, too much in my head. I just came from Turkey, I wanted to relax with my dad and mother and everybody. And this thing, go back, come again, go again, come again, go again, to Vancouver and Seattle. And my sister was there, poor lady.

RB: So, much happened to you in such a short time.

LA: Oh, I told you. Then I got married, and we bought a house right away – no, rent a house. Excuse me. Rent a house. We lived with my mother-in-law for a year, one year, and then I went out to look for a house. I found one. I said, "Jack, I found this house." "You have money?" he said. "No, I haven't got money. You have money," I said. "You pay for it." Yeah. It was twenty-five dollars a month, then. I'm talking about seventy-five years, seventy-seven years ago. He said, "Okay. I'll pay you twenty-five. Go say to that lady that you're going to get that house." So, I did – first house.

RB: It must have been very exciting. Now, I heard–

LA: In the meantime, I got pregnant of Isaac right away.

RB: I see.

LA: I got married in the synagogue way down the 12th of – I forgot.

RB: 12th and Fir?

LA: Fir.

RB: 12th and Washington?

LA: Yeah, Washington. It was just a little kehilla. They didn't have yet – my father started at the big one. I said I didn't have a good life then until I put my [inaudible] with me. I said, "My God, what is that?" Go, come, go, come, go come. In Istanbul and Seattle.

RB: Do you remember much about your wedding or honeymoon?

LA: Yeah, we went honeymoon. But I made a mistake in the period. Look what happened. And then my mother – my father told my – no, no. My mother told my father that I'm with a period. He wouldn't let me go with Jack. So his sister got up and said, "I'll go with them. I'll sleep in between." My father didn't want me to sleep yet with Jack.

RB: He wasn't quite ready for you to be married.

LA: No, no. Unless I come and take tevilah [ritual bath]. I come back. We're married by rabbinim. But unless I come back from Portland – we went to Portland. He had a car; he took us there. He had a car, and we went to Portland. There, they received me like a queen. Whoever is going to say, "We want Louise tonight. We want Louise tonight." We had a week – honeymoon. And these guys, they received me.

RB: Sephardic community.

LA: Sephardic in Portland. It was beautiful over there. I loved it.

RB: What's the name of the congregation?

LA: Over there?

RB: Do you remember what it was?

LA: No, I don't remember. There was a big congregation because all the Sephardim – it's in that kehilla.

RB: From Turkey or from [inaudible]?

LA: No, no, from Seattle.

RB: Oh, I see.

LA: The honeymoon.

RB: I see.

LA: Went to honeymoon, but my sister-in-law came with me. My father wouldn't let me alone. And over there, she slept over there, and Jack slept over there, and I slept over there. We didn't sleep together. I told you, I went through too many – yeah. But later, it was good. And then I was pregnant the first night, and I had Isaac in a year – not a year. Nine months, I think, I had Isaac. And then I moved to that house, I told you. Twenty-five dollars a month. I had a shock. He said, "What are you telling me? Twenty-five dollars?" "Yes. I live here very long." I said, "It's twenty-five dollars, that's all." "So, Jack," I said, "Give me some money." No, he first said, "You have money?" "No, you have money," I said, "Not me. I'm not [inaudible] any money." He said, "You're not going to go to work." He was kind of jealous.

RB: Jack didn't want you to go to work?

LA: And I didn't, all my life, all the ninety-six, ninety-seven, I didn't [inaudible]

RB: Outside of the house?

LA: Never, never.

RB: And so he was the worker out of the home, he earned the money out of the home?

LA: Yes.

RB: And you took care of the house and the children?

LA: I moved from my mother-in-law. I said, "Jack, I can't take it. We better get out of here." He said, "You're right." He said, "If you find something, I'll give you the money, go and get the house." So this way, it happened. I got the house, and I rent quick. My brother got mad because I took Isaac away.

RB: You took Isaac – I'm not sure what you mean.

LA: I took Isaac with me.

RB: Oh, so you had had the baby.

LA: I had the baby over there, in that house.

RB: I see. And they wanted –

LA: And I did to that house – I made it like a dollhouse. I knew how to work. That's all I knew. Yeah, so I move quick because the brother – he didn't do a thing, but always on top of the stove doing chops and hamburgers. Because I did in that house, what never – anybody else would – I made it. It was junk. I made it a house.

RB: You made it a home and a house.

LA: There was across the street friends or relatives of my mother-in-law and my father-in-law. They used to come, and they'd see that house very bad. They never came again. So, when I moved, they wanted to see the baby and everything. They came. "Louise," they said, "what did you do to that house? What did you –? How did you do it?" They were shocked, honest. They were shocked.

RB: How did that make you feel?

LA: Very good.

RB: I bet.

LA: I did that.

RB: Yes. It must have made you very proud.

LA: You should have seen that house. It was just to throw away. And it was Susie and her sister coming every day. But I didn't care. My job is my job. The cleaning is mine. So, I cleaned the house good. And then, a year and a half, I took him out of there, and I went to the house. I had paradise, I thought. I had a paradise in my house. Very nice.

RB: It was your home.

LA: My house. Nobody to bother me.

RB: Yes.

LA: It was two sisters and a boy, another boy – another big boy. And they had arguments, which I never see in my house, in my father's. Never. I told you, we never argued, never. Even with this one, never. Honest.

RB: How long did you live in that house for?

LA: In the house that I rented?

RB: Yes.

LA: About a year. And then I walk – we had a buggy. I walked him a little bit. I saw a house for rent. It's on the ground, not stairs. I went there. The Cordovas were the [owners] of the houses. I don't know the name of that street. He rented – the whole block, it was his. I saw one house – no stairs, no nothing, but the buggy, I used to bring it down every day, take fresh air, Isaac. So I went, and I asked. They said, "Twenty-five dollars a month. Oh, my God." What a beautiful house. So, I moved there. No big furniture. Just the beds – the baby and my bed, and a table, a few chairs. That was it. That's all. I didn't have nothing else. But later on, I got a big house, and I furnished beautiful. Beautiful.

RB: Tell me about your neighborhood. Was it a Jewish neighborhood?

LA: Jewish, all Jewish. Every time I moved, plenty of Jewish people. Sephardim. Nobody else. Sephardim.

RB: So, a Sephardic neighborhood in Seattle?

LA: That's right, yes, yes.

RB: Do you know the streets? Can you tell me about the –?

LA: Fir or Spruce.

RB: Fir and Spruce. What are the boundaries of that neighborhood, do you remember?

LA: They're all Jewish, all Sephardim. Very nice.

RB: Not Ashkenazic?

LA: No, no, because their boss of the houses were Sephardim. Laura Cordova. I don't know if you remember her.

RB: I know the Cordova family.

LA: Yes. He was the owner of all houses. He was a rich guy. So I asked, can I have the house? He said, "Yes, it's yours." I asked about the rent. He said, "Twenty-five dollars." [laughter] I went crazy. I said, "That's my house. Oh, boy." From there, I walked a little bit more. I saw an apartment on Yesler – Monmouth apartment. I don't know if you remember. It was a beautiful apartment, beautiful, honest to God. But all Sephardim in that apartment too. So, I said, "How much are you paying to the lady there?" He said, "Forty dollars." And Jack was working, thank God. I told Jack. "Are you going to look for a house again? Look at the nice house here." And they used to plant – they had a yard. He used to plant every day. He used to plant vegetables. They used to go up to the [inaudible] He had a good hand. Then, I bought another house, all by myself. He wasn't home. He was working. I bought it myself – three thousand dollars.

RB: In the same neighborhood?

LA: A little farther.

RB: Farther south or east? Do you remember?

LA: Where did I go? Wait. I went to the first house on Alder – terribly big house. I went and bought it myself. I didn't ask Jack. He came home. I said, "I bought a house, Jack" "What are you talking to me, Louise? Please, don't make me crazy." "No, you're not going to go crazy. You're going to love it." So, he came to the apartment, and he loved it. We stayed there a year. And then, walking, walking, I saw a beautiful house, honest

to God – forty-five dollars, the rent. I left the apartment. I went to the house. I stayed there for years. I had Selma there. I had, I think, David. I had David, yeah, and Selma in that house.

RB: That's wonderful. Now, they were all near the synagogue, is that right?

LA: Yeah, the synagogue you could see from my house.

RB: You could always see it.

LA: And same street.

RB: Did you interact with non-Jewish people or Ashkenazi Jews?

LA: The last house I had, it was Americana, gentile lady, but good, very good. So, she said, "We're going to get along, Ms. Azose. I'm a nice lady. I'm the boss." They lived downstairs – she lived downstairs. "We're going to get along. I know you. I heard about you," she said. "We're going to get along fine." I did, honest to God. She was American, but I got along with her.

RB: Were most people that you interacted with Sephardic?

LA: Yes.

RB: For how long? How many years was it really strictly Sephardic?

LA: I had Isaac, Albert, the two boys. Albert was born later with Isaac, together. I was pregnant with Selma. I had in this house. The Americana – I had Selma too, the three. And then I went to another beautiful house, very nice house, which I bought myself. I used to have the bank [account]. I used to have the bank [account]. So, I went to take the money – four thousand. "Oh, boy," he said, "very nice." The moving – what got me, the moving. In the meantime, we bought furniture all over.

RB: Of course.

LA: So I bought two, three houses, myself.

RB: All on your own.

LA: Myself.

RB: And so you and Jack had that arrangement. It was okay for you to do to the –

LA: He didn't say a word. He didn't say a word because he liked the houses, what I bought. And then I was on Yesler, 25th and Yesler, for twenty-five years after I bought this one. Now it's forty years here. I bought this house.

RB: It's wonderful. When you say the neighborhood was Sephardic, were there Jews from Turkey and Greece, or just Turkey, or how did that work?

LA: Turkey, Turkey. Most people were from Turkey.

RB: And where did the Jews from Rhodes live? from Rhodes? Did they live –?

LA: They lived far away from us, I think.

RB: I see.

LA: They were very picky. They were nice, honest to God.

RB: Less contact?

LA: Ezra Bessaroth, it was nice.

RB: The other synagogue, Ezra Bessaroth.

LA: Yeah. I told you my son was thirty-seven years there – cantor.

RB: Yes. You and your family were really at the center of synagogue life in Seattle, your beloved family.

LA: Everybody rabbis.

RB: Everybody?

LA: My brother, my father.

RB: Jack's father.

LA: Jack's father. They all rabbanim.

RB: And then your children?

LA: And my children.

RB: You have one son who's a rabbi.

LA: A rabbi in Chicago.

RB: And then your son, Isaac?

LA: And Isaac, a cantor, like a rabbi too.

RB: Yes.

LA: He [inaudible] like a rabbi over there, thirty-seven years. So I had a good life after that, a very nice life, in this house too.

RB: What would you say were the rewards of being in the synagogue life? What are the rewards?

LA: Beautiful, honest to God.

RB: How so?

LA: I used to go every Shabbat and everything that some – they had things to do. I used to go. And they saw that I work hard. They kept me there fourteen years in Bikur Holim. They saw that I loved to work. I just used to love it.

RB: You volunteered.

LA: Like now, I didn't do a thing. She's not here – boom.

RB: But for many years, you volunteered at the synagogue.

LA: Yes, fourteen years.

RB: What did you do at the synagogue?

LA: You know, not every day. It happened, that came Simchat Torah. You know what it is, over there. I used to be in the kitchen, cut celeries, make fish, you know, fry fish, make fish, everything. And I told you that the lady used to help me.

RB: It was Eda?

LA: Eda Mezistrano. And the ladies came to help me Tambien [also], open, celeries and saladas [salads] – everything. Used to put on the table.

RB: What did you cook for?

LA: Not cook.

RB: What did you bake for?

LA: Bake fish. My brother-in-law, I told you, he used to go fishing. And he brought me a big salmon like that, and I'd cut it. I'd make half fried, half baked. I baked it. She helped

me, that Eda. Oh, she helped me a lot. I wasn't alone, to tell you the truth.

RB: Was it for fundraisers?

LA: For Simchat Torah.

RB: For Simchat Torah, I'm sorry.

LA: Yes, yeah. Beautiful.

RB: For all the holidays?

LA: All the holidays, I was right there in the kitchen. There was a window taken – the girls and the boys, small kids to put on the table. Beautiful. I used to be very happy, honest to God.

RB: I bet it made you happy.

LA: Very.

RB: I bet it made others happy too.

LA: Oh, yes.

RB: Tell me, was there specific Sephardic food that you made for a certain holiday?
Were there certain recipes?

LA: Yeah.

RB: Tell me what they were.

LA: I made stuffing.

RB: Stuffing.

LA: Like tomatoes.

RB: You stuffed tomatoes.

LA: Like zucchinis.

RB: Vegetables.

LA: Peppers. I did that. I made some. Peppers, tomatoes, onions, a big plate like that. It's here, you can see.

RB: What do you stuff –?

LA: See, everything goes away. The hamburger. You have hamburger. First, I make the onion, very small ones, I put it in. And then a little bit of either parsley or celery, if I have. And then I put one egg with an onion. I mix it, and I start stuffing. Oh, you open one pepper in [inaudible]. I take the inside one, and I get the pepper, and I fill it up, you know, that way. I fry it with flour and egg, fried in and out like that, put them in a big pot and put it in the oven to cook.

RB: Do you cover it with sauce?

LA: Cover.

RB: With what?

LA: No, no sauce.

RB: No sauce.

LA: A little bit of sugar because the tomato is agro [sour], whatever you call it. So, little bit of sugar and a little bit of water. I used to leave it in the oven for an hour. It's cooked. Take it out. I have that.

RB: Delicious.

LA: Yeah, delicious is right.

RB: Are there any other –?

LA: She makes good –

RB: Does she cook well?

LA: She cooks very, very savroso [tasty], honest to God.

RB: Wonderful.

LA: Very, very delicious.

RB: Are there any other favorite recipes you have? Anything else you love to make or used to make?

LA: I made calabaza conchas [cooked squash] – zucchinis. I cut an onion and wash the calabacitas, make four quartos [quarters] like that. I put it in the pot.

RB: Squash.

LA: No squash. Zucchini.

RB: Zucchini, I'm sorry.

LA: I cut them, and I put it in the pot to cook. I put little bit of onion, little bit of lemon, not to black – the thing – the zucchinis. They stay white. And (ava grande?) – I don't know. Horse beans? Do you know what it is?

RB: Oh, sure. White beans? Fava beans? White beans?

LA: No. They have a shell.

RB: Like a navy bean?

LA: That you take that from the – (ava grande?), they call it.

RB: (Ava grande?), okay. From large beans.

LA: You take the bean, and you cook it. You put sugar and lemon, not to get black while they're cooking. They come delicious. Sabrosa [tasty].

RB: Sounds delicious.

LA: Yeah. And then I make rice myself.

RB: What do you put in rice?

LA: Rice, I sauté the onion. The onion is sauteed. I put water. It's by measurement. One cup of water – no, one cup of rice, a cup and a half of water. You stir it, and the rice comes delicious. She makes it, too. I make it too.

RB: Do you add anything else to the rice, or is it just plain?

LA: That's it, yeah. You do the spoon, go mix it like that all the time until it comes to a – where it's cooked. And that's all. You close the lumbre [stove], and they're cooked. Delicious.

RB: Sounds delicious. You were telling me about a custom where there's a beautiful silver tray, and you put glasses –

LA: Oh, that's in Turkey. No, they did that here too, in Seattle, when I came. I meant – seventy-seven years.

RB: Tell me, what is the tray for, and what do you put on it?

LA: They used to do that in Turkey because they didn't have much to offer. They offered just jarabe [syrup]. They made jarabe with sugar and lemon.

RB: Jarabe is –? I don't know –

LA: It's white –

RB: Quince?

LA: No, nothing. Just sugar –

RB: Oh, egg whites.

LA: – and egg whites. Yeah. You mix it, and it comes to a nice jarabe, and that's all you eat from that – not eat, but you know –

RB: It sweetens.

LA: Yeah, sweet. And then you put it up – then, when I came, not anymore, you put it on the big tray, and you put glasses of water – not juice, water. And you put spoons. You have the spoon holders you put in there. When people used to come, you used to serve that. They used a piece, and they used to bless you, or whatever. That's it. Years ago, they used to do that.

RB: It's beautiful.

LA: Now, it's tables, you have to set tables.

RB: Now, tell me, was this custom used for engagements, for holidays –

LA: For everything.

RB: For special occasions?

LA: Yes, yeah.

RB: Okay. Not just for –

LA: For beracha de berit [Brit Milah] – to everything.

RB: For Brit Milah.

LA: Yes, yeah.

RB: Okay. For any life cycle event, any special event?

LA: Special event, then you have to set tables.

RB: Yeah.

LA: Now, and before too.

RB: That reminds me of one other custom I wanted to ask you about.

LA: Yeah, honey.

RB: Okay?

LA: Yeah.

RB: And if you're getting tired, I understand.

LA: No, it's okay. Yeah. The other one is getting tired. [Editor's Note: Ms. Azose is referring to the housekeeper].

RB: Okay. Just one more ritual. I remember you telling me when you were engaged that your trousseau was hung up on the wall.

LA: I hung it.

RB: Can you tell us that story?

LA: Near getting married, you have to show the people what you give to your husband.

RB: It was a custom, okay.

LA: A custom, yeah. So I went with my mother went downtown and bought everything, just black dress for when you go out, white dress for a wedding, and little pajamas, beautiful pajamas, little housecoats.

RB: You put it on the wall, is that right?

LA: Yeah. We hang it with nails. Now, like over here, you go around and hang it.

RB: And you put it up on the wall for display.

LA: I don't know if she [the housekeeper] has a – Cuando casan las hijas, (kerem trousseau, tenej esto kale ke lez dez coza?). [When children marry you must give them something). Cuelgas la ropa para que la vean la madre y el padre de la novia? (Do you hang the clothes for the mother and father of the bride to see?)

Unknown: (Se estire en la mesa?). [They are laid out on the table].

LA: Oh, you put it on the table. Yeah, we put on the table – the underwear on the table.

RB: But the clothes were up on the wall?

LA: Yes, yes.

RB: And then what did –?

LA: For myself, I did that. My mother said, “Help me, honey. It’s too much for me.” So I helped her hang my clothes.

RB: Did people come to visit to see it?

LA: Yes, they come see it. It’s a party.

RB: A party. Is there singing? Is there anything? Or just to visit?

LA: No, visit, and they sang some wedding songs because it’s for getting married.

RB: Was it men and women or just women?

LA: No, men and women.

RB: They would come.

LA: We never had that separate ladies and – my brother did that, Solomon. We never had that. Never. Always together. Why did he do that? I don’t know.

RB: So your brother started having the men and women separate for this type of custom.

LA: No, not then. Recently.

RB: More recently.

LA: Sure. Then we sat the men and women together. Vosotros, no? Sat together, con los hombres [with the men]. Yeah. Aqui no, separó a mi hermano, rabbi. Mi hermano

separo. [He separated us, my brother, the rabbi.] No estivamos [we were not) together.

RB: So all the women would do this before they married, with the trousseau.

LA: Yes, everybody used to do that. Everybody. Not anymore. They cut it out. No more.

RB: No more. How do you feel about that?

LA: Well, I thought that was the custom of the city, so I did it. My mother got tired, poor lady, honest to God. I said, "Mom, you sit down. I'll do it." I put a step there, and I went to hang everything of mine. The table was all the underwear.

RB: I see.

LA: The full table. They used to come and see under – what more – the ladies.

RB: The ladies would come and see.

LA: Curious. They liked to see what am I giving my husband. You have to. You're not going to take a husband just with nothing. You have to show off. It was seventy-seven years ago. Not now. They left it long time ago that. A long time. I suppose about – I don't know – eighty years ago, they left that. They don't do it anymore.

RB: They don't do it anymore. Well, there are so many customs I would love to talk about, but I think we need to stop for today.

LA: Yes, honey.

RB: We need to stop.

LA: You have to come back.

RB: Thank you. Can I come back another time? Not tomorrow.

LA: If you didn't finish.

RB: Not tomorrow, another time.

LA: Yeah, next week.

RB: Next week. Thank you so much.

LA: Because I'm hungry. I'm getting hungry. She's getting hungry.

RB: Okay, let's stop.

LA: Thank you, sweetheart.

RB: Okay. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW SESSION]

RB: We're back today and it is April 28th, 2001. This is Roz Bornstein, and I'm here at Louise Azose's home. We're meeting today for the Weaving Women's Words Project to continue our interview. Louise, do I have your permission today?

LA: Yes, sweetheart, anytime.

RB: Thank you so much.

LA: You're very welcome.

RB: Well, I thought one thing that we could talk about today was being a mother. If you could tell us the names of your children and when they were born.

LA: Yeah. Isaac was born – he's going to be seventy-one in July. What does it mean –? I mean, what year he was born? I got married '29, and '30, he was born.

RB: In 1930.

LA: Yeah. He was my pride and joy. My father, the only one he saw, the only grandchild he saw – my father. He was so with him. He never let him go for a second.

RB: Is that right?

LA: He used to go to my father-in-law and take him and say, "Can I take him to my house?" To my father-in-law. He said, "Sure, Rabbi, take him." Yeah, we used to put him in a buggy and take him to my mother and father's house. It was a great big house. We used to take him there. My father was in seventh heaven with his grandchild. It was the only one he saw, Isaac, that's it, and he died.

RB: Oh, really? How old was Isaac when your father died?

LA: Oh, about six months old. Six months old. Very young.

RB: I see. He wasn't very old when he died, your father, is that right?

LA: No.

RB: He was in his late fifties?

LA: Late fifties. He died fifty-nine years old.

RB: I see.

LA: Yeah.

RB: And how was that for you to –?

LA: Very bad.

RB: How so?

LA: Oh, my God. I took it so hard. I didn't want to see anybody. I wanted to be home with my kids alone, no people coming, no telling me – because we sat Shiva seven days over my mom. People used to come, shake hands, and I said to one of them, one of the people that were, doing things, I said, "Please, tell them not to shake hands with me. I don't feel like lifting up my hand all the time that they come in." [inaudible] sitting down. It was terrible [when] my father died. I never thought he was going to die that young – fifty-nine.

RB: So, it was very sudden.

LA: Very sudden, yes. Because I told you, me and my sister stayed in Turkey because the quota was full. We couldn't get here. Somebody made passports for us to come to Canada. And we stayed – I was there nine months. My sister was [there a] year and a half. It was nice over there in Canada. It was beautiful. I told you about the bathtub. I told you.

RB: Oh, you did. It was a great story. But it sounds like it was time away from your family, and so when your father passed away –

LA: No, I was in my house.

RB: You were in your house here, of course. But it was sudden.

LA: Yeah, very sudden. Nobody believed it because he had Avraham Seev for my sister. [Editor's Note: See addendum for additional information on the Avraham Seev.] Avraham Seev means the week after they get married, they make – in synagogue, they make something – I mean, they're singing and they're beautiful.

RB: And what's the word that you used again, I'm sorry?

LA: I just told you. Oh, my God. I hope it doesn't go like that.

RB: It's okay, you're doing fine.

LA: Seven days after they get married, they call it when you come – when the bride comes to kahal [assembly]. But she couldn't come because he was dead already – my sister. She couldn't come. Yeah, the seventh day, a bride – she couldn't come to kahal. He was dead already. My father was dead.

RB: I see. Oh, what a time it must have been for you and your family.

LA: Terrible, terrible, terrible. We stayed at my mother's for seven days, sitting down.

RB: At your mother's house.

LA: At my mother's house. It was terrible. People, people, coming in and out, in and out, in and out. I didn't want to see anybody. But that's the day they come. The only day, the first day that he died. Oy.

RB: So this happened –?

LA: What an honor he got. What an honor!

RB: What an honor? Tell me about that.

LA: My father.

RB: Yeah.

LA: My father, to see him dead, there were – the whole community was sad. They couldn't even say boo to anybody. They were very, very sorry about my father because

he was one of the best rabbis that Seattle had. He died young, that's it. Because when we stayed in Turkey, in Istanbul, I saw him – he was crying at the dock. He was crying so much, he made us – me and my sister cry and cry and cry. That, he took it with him all his life.

RB: Leaving you and your sister –

LA: That's right.

RB: – he felt –?

LA: He felt very bad. Very, very bad. He said to himself, he told us later, “Am I going to see them again? Am I going to get them married? Am I going to get them engaged with new husbands?” All in his head.

RB: Yes.

LA: When my sister got married. Oh, God. Avraham Seev, they call it, the seventh day.

RB: The seventh day is called Avraham Seev?

LA: Avraham Seev, they call it. Yeah. That's the seventh day of the bride.

RB: Can you describe that custom for people that have never seen it or experienced it?

LA: Yeah. It's very nice because people are invited to synagogue. They all come. It's big doings in synagogue – big doings. They make so much because a lot of people come. Avraham Seev. And then, my father was yet alive, and they were like – I don't know. With my father, like he was a Mashiach, that big.

RB: He was that beloved and –

LA: Beloved.

RB: – had that much influence.

LA: Oh, when he died, they lost something very precious – very, very precious. They couldn't find one like him again. Nobody.

RB: Yeah. So what happened – it sounds like your sister was married the week before he died.

LA: Yeah.

RB: And then they had the –

LA: Avraham Seev.

RB: On Shabbat?

LA: The day he died.

RB: The day he died.

LA: Yeah.

RB: So the Avraham Seev is on the Shabbat?

LA: The seventh day, on Shabbat.

RB: Okay.

LA: Yeah. She got married Sunday, on the Shabbat.

RB: The following.

LA: Yes.

RB: And so the bride comes to synagogue.

LA: Yes, yes. And there's a big doings.

RB: But he died on a –? A big doing.

LA: A big doing. But we couldn't have it, he was dead.

RB: Yeah. Oh.

LA: We couldn't do it. My sister felt very bad, and her husband too, honest to God. Jerry's [Adatto] father. Oh, he felt bad, poor guy. But there is nothing we can do for that. That's it. He was gone.

RB: Right.

LA: And I never – I'd go to him, pray, "Dad, I hope somebody – they find somebody like you. But that's impossible, just impossible."

RB: It's hard to replace his leadership.

LA: No, nobody. I don't think so.

RB: How did your mom take it?

LA: Very hard, poor lady.

RB: How so?

LA: Honest to God. And she was taking care of us, too, the girls and the boys. We were eight, four boys and three girls, excuse me. Eight, we were eight altogether.

RB: Now, which sister was married the week before?

LA: Jerry's mother.

RB: And what was her name, remind me?

LA: Fannie.

RB: And so Fannie was the sister you were with in Vancouver.

LA: They were good friends with Rosie, with everybody.

RB: Of course.

LA: With your famiya.

RB: Of course. So your father lived to see her come from Vancouver—

LA: Yeah.

RB: — and to see her married.

LA: And that's all.

RB: And that's all.

LA: See, the day, Avraham Seev, I told you, the seventh day, he died.

RB: Yeah. That's when he died.

LA: Yeah. The whole Seattle was sad.

RB: I'm sure.

LA: The whole Seattle was very sad that day.

RB: And as a young mother, how was it to see the baby, your son Isaac, with your father before he died? What was that like for you?

LA: It was terrible. It was that child he saw, my father, just Isaac, nobody else. Because I had Albert later. After five years, I had Albert.

RB: So Isaac was in 1930 –

LA: Yeah.

RB: – he was born. And then your second child was Albert?

LA: Albert. Now, five years later.

RB: Okay. In 1935.

LA: Yeah. He was born – Albert. He's in Vegas now.

RB: He lives in Las Vegas?

LA: Yeah.

RB: Okay. And tell us who your other children are and when they were born.

LA: Yeah. That's Albert, the next, but he's five years older – I mean younger than Isaac.

RB: Yes.

LA: He was born 19 – what does it mean?

RB: 1935.

LA: Five years later. 1935.

RB: '35.

LA: Yeah. He was some baby.

RB: Was he some baby?

LA: Big.

RB: How so?

LA: Just like that baby, nine pounds and ten ounce.

RB: So he was a bigger baby.

LA: A big baby, big baby.

RB: Oh, what was childbirth like?

LA: Very nice.

RB: It was okay for you.

LA: Yes, yes. I didn't mind at all. Big baby but didn't bother me at all. He came beautiful.

RB: Wow.

LA: Easy, nice. I didn't feel it, really. But everybody came to the hospital to see the baby, that baby. Like this one, exactly like this one, my great-grand. I don't know. I have about fourteen now.

RB: Grandchildren?

LA: Great-grand.

RB: Great-grandchildren. Fourteen of them.

LA: I have another one coming.

RB: And one on the way.

LA: And one on the way.

RB: That's great. So you had Isaac, and then –

LA: Albert.

RB: And who was next?

LA: Selma, my daughter, was the third, and then was–

RB: When was she was born?

LA: She's sixty-four. When is that? I can't figure the figures.

RB: Yeah. So she was born, let's see, in 19 – she's sixty-four?

LA: Yes.

RB: So she was born about 1937?

LA: Maybe.

RB: Something like that.

LA: Yeah, I guess.

RB: Okay. And then, who came next?

LA: David.

RB: David. Okay.

LA: Yeah.

RB: And David is how many years younger than Selma?

LA: I think it's three years. The first one, the three years, I had them two years each, apart. It was the third – third – I mean, three years later, I had David. And then, I had Michael.

RB: And Michael. Okay.

LA: Michael, he's fifty-six, something like that. He's young, very young. But he's become a rabbi. He went to Yeshiva for eight years. He got away from me at fourteen. They took him to Yeshiva, a rabbi, yeah. And he was the only one at home; everybody was gone to war, the service. One was in London – Isaac was in London. David was in Germany. Albert was in Hawaii, and David was in Germany. Yeah. And Michael, they couldn't take him because he was a rabbi already. They couldn't take him to service.

RB: What was that like having three sons in the war? Can you remember about –? Tell us about that.

LA: When he was in Germany, David, I thought every night they were going to kill him. Well, you know Germany with the Holocaust and this thing.

RB: Yes.

LA: My mind was with him all the time.

RB: Is that right?

LA: And he was writing – poor kid – but who believes? I thought the Germans were around him. But he wasn't in – he was in Germany, but he was around American soldiers – not one German. How did I know? I didn't know. I thought the Germans are going to kill him. This was in my mind all the time, all the time, crying and crying. "David, please come, honey. That's enough in Germany, that's enough." "Mom, I can't. It has to be the time. I can't go, Mom, I can't." The letters that he wrote me – used to write very often because he knows how I am – how I was then. I am the same thing now, anyways, very worried about everybody. Yeah. So and then, after my Michael, they took him fourteen years to Yeshiva. Eight years later, he became a rabbi in Chicago. He didn't want to move, and then he met his wife, Bonnie. She was a nice girl. She still is a nice girl. And they have three children. The one you saw with me over there, we call her Kadoun. My name was Kadoun.

RB: Wonderful.

LA: Yes. I had Michael, and that's all. I had him. I was almost forty. I didn't believe I was going to have any more.

RB: Really?

LA: Honest. Almost forty, I'm telling you. [inaudible] [Thirty-seven]. I didn't know I was going to have another one.

RB: Is that right?

LA: All of a sudden, I was pregnant. I said, "I'm so old. I'm so old." But I was so good-looking then.

RB: Now, when did women have children? What were the ages that women had children back then?

LA: In my time?

RB: Yes.

LA: They waited three years, where I didn't – do every two. But just Michael and David were three years apart.

RB: Why did women wait, do you know? To take care of the baby?

LA: I guess so.

RB: That was the belief?

LA: No, they took care [of the] baby.

RB: Yes.

LA: But I didn't know how. I came from Turkey. The head was Turkey. I didn't know how. They used to tell me when I had Ike, and I had Albert, they said, "You took care, didn't you?" [meaning she used contraceptives] I said, "Sure, I'm taking care of myself. Why? Who's going to take care?" I had to take care of myself. But they meant if I knew something. You know, when you come from Turkey, you don't know anything. In Istanbul, they don't know these things – taking care. Never.

RB: I see.

LA: And they thought I did it with Albert because it took four years more, Albert and Isaac.

RB: Just a moment. I'm sorry to bother. Hold on, just a second.

LA: That's okay. If it's going to make noise, I know. They got cars going by.

RB: Okay. So you were telling me that in Turkey – who took care of babies in Turkey – in Istanbul?

LA: The mother-in-laws.

RB: The mother-in-laws? I see.

LA: It was a big part in Istanbul. You only see mother-in-laws taking care of the kids, no babysitters. Mother-in-laws. They didn't believe in babysitters. They didn't even know it was – they were around, yeah, babysitters. They didn't believe in that.

RB: What did the mothers do to take care of their children? Did they–

LA: No work, I don't think so. In Turkey, they didn't work. They had the kids and that was it. Take care of the kids. Like me. Yeah.

RB: When you came here and had children, did your mother-in-law help raise your children with you or your mother?

LA: I did it myself.

RB: You did it by yourself?

LA: All by myself. Nobody helped me. Nobody.

RB: Now, you raised four wonderful successful –

LA: Boys.

RB: And your daughter as well?

LA: Yes. Five. I had four boys and a girl.

RB: What did you do to help teach them, to educate them?

LA: They educated by themselves, I swear.

RB: But where did you send them—

LA: I didn't say — school, there was Alliance in Turkey.

RB: But here, though.

LA: Oh, over here, they went to school right away.

RB: Your children?

LA: My children, my children. All of them.

RB: You sent them to public school?

LA: Yes.

RB: And to religious school?

LA: Yes. That they have to do. There was Talmud Torah on East Cherry. They went there.

RB: I see, on East Cherry. Okay.

LA: Yes, yes. Even Michael, if it wasn't that he went for a rabbi, he went to Talmud Torah for just a year. He couldn't do it anymore because the rabbi came and got him to Yeshiva.

RB: How did that happen? Who is the rabbi that came to take him to the Yeshiva?

LA: I don't know if you heard – Rabbi Wohlgernter? Did you hear? Wohlgernter?

RB: Oh, sure.

LA: His brother was here, [inaudible]. He came first, and he said, "Mrs. Azose, there is no place for Michael here in Seattle. We have to take him. We have to send him either Chicago or New York or any place."

RB: Why is that? He was more advanced?

LA: Over here – yes, yes. That's the trouble, he was very advanced. They couldn't keep him here anymore. There wasn't anything he could do anymore from what he knew.

RB: Oh, I see.

LA: Very smart, very open mind.

RB: I see.

LA: So the rabbi came and told me, "There's no place for Michael here. Mrs. Azose, I know it's bad for you because he's the only one at home." Everybody, I told you, there was one in England, one Germany, the other Hawaii, the other one in another place. I was alone. There was nobody but me. Yeah, I was alone.

RB: What was that like for you when Michael went?

LA: Terrible. I told the rabbi, "Please, Rabbi. I only have him. Just leave me alone. In another two or three years, you could come and get him to be a rabbi, or to be a lawyer or doctor, or whatever you want him to be." He said, "No, Mrs. Azose, right now is the time. If you don't do it now, Mrs. Azose, don't let him take him, there won't be any more time. This is it, right now." They took him away, and I started crying and crying. The only one at home. Everybody was, I told you, one in Hawaii, one in Germany, one in London. And the other one, I don't know where he was.

RB: What did you do to take care of yourself at that time?

LA: Myself?

RB: Yeah. What did you do to feel better when your sons were away?

LA: I felt sad in the meantime. Very.

RB: Yes.

LA: With Michael, I took it very, very hard. The only one who was home. Everybody was soldiers. Albert in Hawaii took it like he was in heaven.

RB: In paradise, yeah.

LA: Yeah.

RB: The location helped knowing he was in Hawaii, of course.

LA: Yeah. They sent him there. They didn't want to, but they sent him there, and he had a good time every day. But he never ate tref. Never trefa. He never. While they were serving, they came with a big tray to him, and there was nothing for him to eat. There was meats, everything, but he didn't touch. He went with my husband – my husband told him not to ever [inaudible].

RB: So say the word again for people that don't know.

LA: Trefa.

RB: Trefa. And what is –

LA: Tref.

RB: Okay. So that's the Ladino phrase for tref.

LA: Yeah, yeah. Tref.

RB: So you kept kosher in your home.

LA: Oh, boy, did I.

RB: Did you, yeah. And you taught your children –

LA: The same.

RB: – the same.

LA: And Albert went to Hawaii. They used to bring a big tray like that, all meats, potatoes, meats, potatoes. He didn't touch. He wouldn't touch. So, what did he do? He wrote a letter to his commander. He said, "Please do me a favor. I can't eat otherwise. I'm going to starve. Do something. Either send me some money or do something while I'm here. Something else, not eat what they give me. I can't eat because I'm a kosher boy." He told them, his commander. He sent him thirty-five dollars a month because, in Hawaii, there was a little corner – kosher. He went there every day. His sergeant was Jewish. They took the kitchen for themselves, and they cooked, both of them. He was Jewish, and he kept kosher. And they went by for – it was two years. He didn't eat trefa, never. And then David. He went to Germany. There's no kosher over there. They don't know the word kosher. So, he heard about that, and he did the same. He wrote a letter.

“Because I’m a Jewish boy, and I never eat tref, so I want you to do something. Anything you do, it would be okay with me.” Send them money, David. Never ate trefa, to this day. Never. I don’t know. I won’t say nothing because he’s not with me. He’s apart from me.

RB: Your children were very faithful.

LA: Very.

RB: Very faithful people.

LA: Very.

RB: What did you do to make them faithful?

LA: Because they saw that in my house. That’s all they saw. They didn’t eat out, like they go and have something. They never did. Never. So they did that, both of them.

RB: Both of them. They learned by your example.

LA: Isaac was in London. There was kosher restaurants. It was good. It was good for them. And Albert did that. Isaac – I mean, David did the same. Michael became a rabbi. So I didn’t have no trouble with that. Each and every one was kosher – still kosher. So, whatever he can, he does. Pesach. You should see that guy work for Pesach – David.

RB: Really?

LA: A week ahead, he takes his hand. His kitchen was supposed to be paschal, which we mean kosher for Pesach, kosher l’pesach. He takes a week from work, and he does it. He does all the Pesach, honest to God. He taught his wife to be one. “On Pesach, if you do something, wherever you are, it’s okay, you’re okay, but not in my house,” he said to her. She learned, honest to God. I was there, and I saw a real kosher house.

RB: Wonderful. How was that for you? How did that make you feel?

LA: Very nice. I was very happy when I went to David, honest to God, very happy. I thought it was going to be just mish-mash. She learned. She works at university. You know her, don't you? Ellen? She worked for kids – I mean, growing up kids.

RB: That's wonderful.

LA: Yeah. She tells them, "Don't do that, don't do that." And mixed marriage, she doesn't let that. Ellen does that at the university. [inaudible] She works with kids, yeah.

RB: What did you say or do to your children to help them be religious when you were –?

LA: I told you, I didn't say – I didn't tell Albert, "Go tell your commander to give you money, not to eat trefa." I didn't tell him. I didn't tell David. Themselves, I told you what they saw at home.

RB: What they saw at home. How did you and your husband, Jack, celebrate holidays? What was it like?

LA: Very beautiful. I told you, he was a real Jew, Jack – he became. He wasn't, to tell you the truth. But looking at me, looking at my father and mother and the kids, he became one.

RB: Really?

LA: Yes, Jack, yeah.

RB: Can you describe a typical Shabbat at your house when you were married?

LA: Don't ask. Beautiful, honest to God. Very, very nice. They used to come from kehilla – I mean, synagogue. And we used to have the breakfast. You're through?

RB: Excuse me, I want to check the tape here, okay?

LA: Yes.

RB: I'll be with you in one moment.

LA: Okay, honey.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

RB: Okay. We're back with Louise Azose. This is Roz Bornstein. It is still April 28th, 2001. I'm here with Louise at her home for the Weaving Women's Words Project.

Louise, do I have your permission to tape you again?

LA: Anytime, sweetheart, anytime.

RB: Great. Thank you. We were talking about Shabbat and how your family celebrated Shabbat. Can you describe a typical Shabbat?

LA: Yes. They used to go to kehilla first. Coming back, everything was ready. I used to leave the oven on, to tell you the truth. I wasn't supposed to. But bulemas, bourekas – when would you heat them? So I used to leave the oven very low – very, very low. I used to put the bulemas and bourekas and buns in the oven, very, very, low. Used to come from kahal. They used to sit at the table. Everybody was ready. I used to set table – a beautiful table on Shabbat. They used to come from synagogue. They used to sit. Pizmonim first. They used to sing pizmonim.

RB: What's pizmonim? I'm sorry.

LA: That's the singing in the book that my son made – pizmonim. Beautiful. My father used to love that too. Me and my sister used to sit next to him. "Hijicas mias, canta [my daughters, sing]. Canta [sing]. Sing a little bit. Sing for me." My father. And then I did to

my kids the same.

RB: Singing was important in your family?

LA: Yes, yes.

RB: Do you remember any –?

LA: They're all good voice.

RB: Yes.

LA: Everyone. You should see Albert. He should sing Frank Sinatra, you won't see the difference.

RB: Really?

LA: Honest. You won't hear the difference, same thing. They all came – David hasn't got that big voice. But if he starts singing, it comes out.

RB: And he has a good voice, too.

LA: He did beautiful Pesach. Haggadah, he read the whole thing, yeah. Because he never did – I used to go to Isaac all the time, to my oldest son, and he used to be with me all the time. He used to come over there. He never read the Haggadah, but when he was alone, he did it. He read the whole thing. And my granddaughter, Leslie. She's going with a boy, but I don't know. The Jassens. Do you know the Jassens? A boy from – yeah. She goes around, but I don't know. He has to go to school five years in New York. She said, "Nonna, I couldn't wait that long, so I'll do something." I said, "Okay."

RB: So, do you remember any of the songs that you would sing on Shabbat when you first would come home?

LA: Yeah, but I can't sing because my throat is no good today.

RB: Okay.

LA: Yeah.

RB: So you would set the table and put food in the oven.

LA: Yes, I prepare for them.

RB: And would you go to synagogue too?

LA: I used to go to when they got older, not babies. I never used to take them when they were babies because I knew what it was over there, and the kehilla with little babies, crying and crying. The chazan or the rabbi is singing something, and he couldn't sing what he was singing with the kids. I didn't take them. I waited for six years, and I took them myself.

RB: Wonderful.

LA: Yeah.

RB: So you would have everything ready for lunch.

LA: Everything. The table set for them.

RB: Yeah.

LA: When they came from synagogue, I took everything out of the oven. I put trays and dishes and forks – a nice table. And they used to sit and say berakhah [blessing] first, Hamotzi.

RB: Yes, the blessings.

LA: I used to have two breads at each table. They used to sit down, say Hamotzi first, and then another berakhah for starting. They used to eat and singing in the meantime.

RB: That's beautiful.

LA: Jack had a voice.

RB: I heard it on tape.

LA: I wish he'd sing – I mean, they'd sing to "La Vie en Rose." French. He knows the French like a French boy. He didn't forget. I did. I was in Alliance over there, and I learned it, Turkish, just like that. I left that, and I wanted English. I didn't want any other. I wanted just English, and I left all the Turks over there, all the French in another part. I forgot.

RB: So you would sing for Shabbat mornings?

LA: Yeah. Hamotzi and berakhah.

RB: The blessings.

LA: They ate, and that next berakhah is for the food we ate. They used to do that.

RB: The Birkat?

LA: Yes, the Birkat Hamazon. Then, they used to sing a little bit, with Jack together – the boys. Yeah.

RB: Wonderful.

LA: It was good. Good life, honest to God.

RB: Now, when would you sing? I remember reading, just to give you an example, a beautiful story about when your son Isaac went away to school or to the Army that you missed him so much that you would sing a song because you missed him.

LA: Oh, yeah. What was that song?

RB: Las Montanyas.

LA: [singing] Esta Montanyas d'en frente se ensienden y van quemando. Aya deshi al mi amor yorando y sospirando. [Those mountains from across the way light up and keep on burning. It is there that I left my love crying and sighing.] I'd start crying because he was in England. And I saw [being a] soldier it was no good for them, for my kids, because they were home all the time. They never got out of my sight. They went to school, yes, they finish high school, and the – what do you call it, what you did?

RB: College?

LA: College. All of them were in college. All of them. Of course, Rabbi, was in Chicago. He had a nice life. He has still nice life in Chicago.

RB: That was at –?

LA: You should hear that house, honest to God. The Jewish people come in with him, and they had the table set. They don't take it off. People come in and go, they eat and go, they eat and go, they eat. It's okay. Come. Come in. The table is set over there in Chicago. Not in my house – just my kids.

RB: He's very welcoming, very welcoming.

LA: Yes, oh, yes. My son does that, he still does that.

RB: Louise, that was a beautiful song you sang.

LA: Oh, yeah.

RB: The tune is so beautiful.

LA: Yeah. And then I used to sing with Selma in the car, going someplace in the car in Los Angeles. She loved it. "Mom, sing some more. Please, Mom." The voice, I haven't got it enough.

RB: It was beautiful a minute ago. Do you remember Selma's favorite song that you would sing to her?

LA: Yeah, I know – Hijica mia [my little girl]. She's where today? She was in – she went to – it goes away – not Detroit – Toronto.

RB: Toronto.

LA: My son-in-law has a nephew in Toronto, which he had bar mitzvah. My daughter was invited, so she went with her husband. And they had a lovely time because they're really Jewish.

RB: In Toronto.

LA: Nobody else. Everyone is Orthodox. Beautiful. She said, "Mom, you should see. I wish you were here to see Jewish people all by themselves. Jewish people, nobody else, just everybody Orthodox there in Toronto." Which I thought Canada – "It's beautiful," she said. Why was I saying that? Oh, the song to Selma? I don't know what I sang for her. She used to love for me to sing. She has a beautiful voice, Selma.

RB: All of your children?

LA: Yeah.

RB: They're blessed.

LA: David sings Haggadah. He sang it beautiful. People that were around him – he had a lot of people on Pesach – they used to love it. “Sing some more, David. Sing some more.” “I don’t know. I don’t [inaudible] no voice.” “Please, David, sing some more,” even though he hasn’t got voice. But he sang very good.

RB: So, your children learned to sing because you and your husband, Jack, sang to them and with them.

LA: Yes, yes. They all had voices, good voice. They all did. Except David, I told you, but he’s learning now with the Haggadah. It was beautiful.

RB: Beautiful.

LA: Everybody loved that.

RB: Do you have a favorite song that you used to sing with to yourself or with your children? What’s your favorite?

LA: A lot of them. I have a big thing like that – paper. It’s from my husband, too. He put all the songs, the old ones.

RB: Really? You collected –

LA: He sang them all. What a voice, what a voice, honest to God. I used to love it because I was his wife. I used to love for him to sing. Especially “La Vie en Rose.” I used to be an actress, I told you, in JCC.

RB: So, part of your social life involved being in a play at the JCC. Were you and your husband in many plays?

LA: Many.

RB: Many plays together.

LA: I told you. Fiddler on the Roof, I was one of the girls, one of the daughters. What's Jack was with the sailor? I have the picture with sailor. What was it?

RB: Was it South Pacific?

LA: South Pacific. I was one of the girls that walked by. Did you see that movie?

RB: South Pacific, sure.

LA: One of the girls, I was going back and forth. What was her name, that girl that sang beautiful? She sang South Pacific – beautiful voice. Yeah, the girl who got married to that Italian boy in South Pacific. Yeah.

RB: South Pacific. So what other activities were you involved in?

LA: I told you I was in synagogue, working for –

RB: In synagogue. What did you do at synagogue?

LA: I prepare everything. We had everything in the kitchen, but it should be prepared. I prepared it and gave it to them through a window. They had a window in Bikur Holim. They haven't got it now because different synagogue now. They had a window. I prepared them, and I gave it through the window. And that Mrs. –

RB: Mezistrano?

LA: – Mezistrano, she helped a lot.

RB: So you worked in –

LA: We worked together fourteen years in the kitchen, I didn't move. They used to like it. They never let me go. "No, Louise." That's enough. I mean, it was so long, leave me alone now. "No, no, no, no. You stay there, you stay there." That was work.

RB: You were a hard worker. So you baked for holidays.

LA: Yes.

RB: But did you bake for other things like fundraisers or bazaars? What did you –?

LA: I did that with Lily together.

RB: You and Lily? Lily is your daughter-in-law?

LA: Daughter-in-law. The one that lives in New York.

RB: Okay.

LA: With the cancer. Poor girl, I don't know if [inaudible]. God knows. Only God. Yeah, I used to bake for her. She had a store on – wait a minute. Where? You know PCC? Near there.

RB: So on Wilson Avenue South.

LA: On Wilson.

RB: In Seward Park.

LA: Lily had a store. She made all these things, and boom, they went! Bulemas, bourekas.

RB: Bulemas –

LA: She used to have a little place special, with a table. They used to come in – oh.

RB: For people that don't know Sephardic food, what is a bulema and what is a boureka?

LA: Boureka is – you want to do first the dough. Just take a cup of oil and three-quarters of water. Put there, and put some salt – not much, very little. Water three quarters, with one cup of oil. Put it together and make a dough, the bourekas dough. Make the bourekas and leave it aside. Then cut some potatoes and put them – to cook. They're all soft. Mash them with a spoon. The cheese is ready, ground already. Put it there, mix it again. And then put little salt because the potato hasn't got no salt at all. Mix it with a spoon and make gomo [filling]. We call it gomo, the inside of the boureka. Then bourekas – the dough is ready. Then, take it in your hand, make a bun. Put it there, and take – what do you call that?

RB: The rolling pin?

LA: Rolling pin, and open it just like that, this here. Then take a spoon, put some of the potato –

RB: Oh, the filling.

LA: –filling. Take it in your hand, make like that, and put it in the tefsin [baking pan] to bake.

RB: A tefsin is–

LA: Very easy. Tefsin is pot.

RB: A pot or a baking dish.

LA: Baking pot, yeah.

RB: So that's a boureka. What's a bulema?

LA: Bulema, you have to do with yeast. Take some yeast in your hand and put it in a pan. Take hot water – it depends how much you want. Put it in the same pan that

levadura [yeast] that the yeast is there. Put a little bit of water and little bit of oil because it has to open. It has to open. The dough has to open. And leave it to raise. Buns, make buns, and leave it in the – do it with oil, put oil on the bottom. And put the buns – put it there. And then wait to raise. And then open them with that – como se dice?

RB: Rolling pin?

LA: Rolling pin. Open it, and then the spinach is ready with the cheese and everything, open it, and put some like that. If you want to, more cheese on the bottom so it's delicious. And then turn it around like that, and do like that, put it in the oven – put it in the pot.

RB: And this was a –

LA: Delicious.

RB: Delicious.

LA: Honest to God. I used to make them all the – I used to bake so much, two freezers I have used to be full.

RB: Really? So you'd use it for Shabbat?

LA: Shabbat, too, yes. I told you, put it to the oven, low fire, low oven. I used to put it there. And your mom makes it, I guess. Sure, she makes it. And your grandmother, she bakes delicious, your mother – your grandmother, delicious.

RB: Thank you.

LA: I taste it. Yeah, her bourekas – mmm. Yeah, I used to make that all the time. I used to just – nothing to do. I used to take the buns. I'd make some challahs. I used to make three, four – put it in the containers. I still have the containers – and put them in

the freezer. Any time you want a challah, take one or two out. You have to have two for Hamotzi, yeah.

RB: Now, you worked fourteen years in the kitchen at this Sephardic Bikur Holim. Did other women do that too, or what did other women do for the synagogue?

LA: Yeah. The other women helped a lot too. They were baking on the other side. We were serving, and they were baking on the other side of where the oven was – baking, baking beautiful. All the girls in Bikur Holim, or Ezzy Bezzy [Ezra Bessaroth] baked delicious, honest to God, all of them, really. They know, yeah.

RB: Beautiful. And this was for holidays and some –

LA: And every day. If somebody comes, take them out and serve them. They love it. They love it.

RB: For meetings or for –

LA: For anything, sure. I used to have a Saturday Night Group.

RB: What is Saturday Night Group? Can you describe it?

LA: Yeah. I had eight couples. And then some went, and six couples there were. I used to put that table over there.

RB: In your living room you put a table?

LA: Yes, because over here is couch and couch, and wasn't room. I used to put it over there. You open this one – bigger. I used to put it over there and open up the door over there. But I used to put a big plastic under, and mantel [tablecloth], and plastic on top,

and just open it over there. The ladies did that over there in kahal. They opened challahs and bulemas, everything kehilla needed because they come, and they need things. Kehilla, they need things, yeah. Now they do that. Now, right now, they do that – Bikur Holim.

RB: They set up tables –

LA: Yes, yes, yeah.

RB: – for food.

LA: Seudah shlishit [third meal] → they put everything there. Now, I wouldn't say bulema because it's hard to make. Borekitas – they do. Borekitas – very easy. Delicious, honest to God.

RB: What's a borekita for some that don't know?

LA: Oh, bourekas is – the dough is like –

RB: Oh, yeah.

LA: I told you. And then you turn it around, make it do that to not open. They don't open.

RB: So it's a small boureka.

LA: A small boureka. If you want to make them big, go ahead. It's up to you.

RB: So, when you had the couples over here, what did you do for fun?

LA: I had from night and the dancing, dancing – singing, dancing. We had such a good time. Eighteen years they were with me. I left only Hanukkah for me. New Year's, for me. My Selma used to decorate the house – whichever holiday. She used to put it in the

window. She used to put it over here. Oh, my Selma used to do that. “Mom, I’ll do the house for you.” Although married, she used to come and do it over here. Yeah. And then the tables. And then we had the phonograph. I still have it. Where is it? Where is it? Right there.

RB: Okay, yeah.

LA: This phonograph to put records, Turkish records.

RB: Turkish music.

LA: And everybody was dancing a la Turka. Beautiful singing, sit down and sing, they used to tell me. I wish I had that voice, honest to God.

RB: It still is beautiful, Louise.

LA: No, barmeenan, no.

RB: Maybe it’s different now, but the melody that comes out is so beautiful.

LA: Oh, melodies. Yeah, melody. That song is for Isaac. I keep it for him all the time.

RB: Is that right?

LA: Now, I sing it now to him because he’s away from me for forever, I think.

RB: You think?

LA: Lily won’t come. I don’t think so. She’ll never be here. But she called me up one-night last week. She said, “Mom, I was in a rabbi’s house. My niece had a rabbi for dinner. So she called me, and I went.” She said, “That rabbi got to me. He said, Mrs. Azose, have you got any wish that you want – want to tell me, the rabbi.” She said, “Yes, I have a wish.” “What’s your wish, Mrs. Azose? Tell me.” She said, “I want to go to

Seattle and have my mother-in-law with me over there.” I started crying. She cried. I cried. Honest to God, that’s what she said. “I want to have my mother-in-law in my house with me.” I said, “Lily, please, don’t make me cry some more. Honey, I’m crying so much.” “I’m crying, too, Mom, but that’s what I want. For you, that’s what I want. I want to be in Seattle with you together.” She was a good girl, Lily, honest to God.

RB: Lily is Isaac’s wife?

LA: Yes.

RB: And she’s in New York now.

LA: Yeah, taking the chemo.

RB: And she’s been sick with cancer. I’m so sorry.

LA: Yeah, poor girl. I don’t know if she – she had it bad, very bad. But a doctor in New York – the kids were in Seattle here in their house. She has a beautiful house, really beautiful. They were there. Downstairs they had a big computer, half the table, big computer. Both of them knew that their mother was going through the cancer. And they went all the Internet, all the whatever, all the computer they had. And they came – in New York, “There’s a doctor that’s going to cure my mom” – both sons, Solomon and Jack. There’s pictures over there – Solomon and Jack. So, she makes me cry [inaudible] I remember. She said, “Mom, that’s my wish. I’d like to take you to my house in Seattle and have you with me.” She cried. I cried. I said, “Dear Lily, don’t tell me anymore!” “Honest, Mom, that’s my desire to come to Seattle and have you with me.”

RB: So you’re very close – very close to Lily.

LA: Very. She was a good girl to me, honest to God, she was nice, yeah. They said daughter-in-law and me, don’t go together. But we did. We might had some words, one

in a million years.

RB: Of course.

LA: But we're humans, after all, you know.

RB: Of course, it's human.

LA: But not the bad ones. Boy.

RB: Right. So it's been hard for you. Her illness has been very hard.

LA: Ah, boy, Honest to God.

RB: Yes, on your family.

LA: I cry.

RB: Yes.

LA: Cried and cried.

RB: Can I get you some tissue?

LA: I think they're in the –

RB: Let me get them.

LA: I have some in here, I think.

RB: [inaudible] Is that okay, or do you want some tissue?

LA: No. This is like a tissue. I prepare. I'm prepared.

RB: Yes.

LA: Yeah, poor Lily, honest to God. She said that, and I cried all night that night. “That’s my desire. That’s my wish,” she told the rabbi. He said, “Can you do it, Lily? Can you just wish it for good? I mean, can you take your mother with you?” I can’t,” she said, “My doctor won’t let me.”

Yeah, it’s the truth. The doctor said, “I have to finish with you, and then you go wherever you want.” The chemo. They won’t let her go. Those two kids found that doctor.

RB: How does that make you feel as a grandmother? How do you feel about your grandsons for what they did?

LA: Oh, God. I kissed them and I kissed them, and I said, “God be with you preciathos mios [my precious ones]. Queridos mios [my loved ones]. God be with you and help your mom.” And they have it here that I said that. “Remember, Nonna” “Yeah, I remember, honey. I wish for your mom to get well.” Yeah.

RB: I bet you’re very proud of them.

LA: Yes, I am, honest to God.

RB: All of them.

LA: They’re like my kids. Yeah, very good. And Lily has good kids, really, honest to God.

RB: Lily and Isaac have wonderful children.

LA: Lily, oh. One better than the other. Jack goes even to Africa.

RB: Really?

LA: He phoned me from there. I said, "Where are you, honey?" "In Africa." I said, "What? In Africa, with the animals?" He said, "Nonna, I can't see any. I can't see any animals. They're not here, Nonna. Over here is hotels and people. They're dancing in the streets. They're very nice. I don't see any animals. Nonna, don't worry. Over here it's good. It's not the Africa you think. It's different than the other one." He went to Kenya – Solomon. They're here, both of them.

RB: Were they working in Africa?

LA: From their work, they sent them.

RB: From work.

LA: Yeah. Jack, too.

RB: What are the names of your grandchildren?

LA: My grandchildren is –

RB: Jack and Solomon.

LA: Jack and Solomon, Jossi and Aimee – he has four children. And that's all. Aimee is the baby. They're my great-grand. She has two more and another one – Solomon's wife is expecting in June, very soon. And they're going to be my fourteen great-grand.

RB: That's wonderful.

LA: Yeah.

RB: Your other children, how many children do they have?

LA: Oh, they have mostly one. David has one. Albert has one. Selma has one. And the rest is three or four. Isaac has four, and Solomon has three kids – four? The fourth

coming, yeah.

RB: What is it like to be a grandmother?

LA: I love it, but if I'm not sick to take care of them, go with them. I can't. I can't go. I have that walker. If I go to that place, it's with a walker. I can't go alone. I'm almost ninety-six. Yeah, I'll be ninety – I didn't ask for it, but God gave me life.

RB: God gave you life. Yes.

LA: That's it. I can't throw it away. Sometimes I want to, but I can't.

RB: Yeah. What are some of the most meaningful parts of being a grandmother to you? What have you enjoyed the most?

LA: To have those kids. Honest to God, I love them all. I have Daniella, which is Jossi's. You said you know Jossi from Seattle.

RB: I know who he is.

LA: Yeah. He has two, one boy and one girl.

RB: These are your great grandchildren?

LA: Yes, great – mostly great-grand. Now they're on great-grand, three boys. She got on the phone – no, Albert got on the phone to see about Aimee. She didn't have the baby yet – oh, she had the baby, yeah. And she said, "Where's your mother, Albert" – to her kid, who is seven – or six, I don't know, something like that. "Where's your mom?" "She's feeding – she's nursing the baby." Albert was going out of his mind. Mom, that kid said that, and I didn't believe it. It's a kid, for God's sake, not even six yet. He said, "My mother is feeding the baby – is nursing the baby." Albert was going to – he got so happy. "Mom, he said that." "Sure, he said that. They're telling him." So he learned.

RB: Yes.

LA: Yeah. Yeah, poor Lily, she's there in jail now.

RB: You're mentioning Lily again. Your mind is on her, yes.

LA: Boy.

RB: Yes. And you'd like to be with her too, it sounds like.

LA: I'd like to see her, honest to God.

RB: Yes.

LA: But Isaac told me, "It's impossible, Mom. The doctor won't let her out of his sight because he promised her that he's going to make her well." On the Internet, they saw that – the boys. Right away, they said, "Mom, we're going to New York." They were here. They lived here, both of them. "Mom, you come with me. Let's go."

RB: And they took her –

LA: Isaac had to do something. He wasn't yet out of Ezzy Bezzy. "So, kids, you go with Mom, and I'll follow you." Which he did. He retired from –

RB: He was the chazan –

LA: Yes.

RB: – at Ezra Bessaroth. Okay.

LA: Thirty-four years.

RB: Thirty-four years. Wow.

LA: He was there, yeah. When they take something, my sons or my kids, they keep it, yeah.

RB: I'm not sure what you mean by that. Tell us what you mean. [inaudible]

LA: When they say something, they don't let go. They keep it tied to –

RB: They stick with what they do.

LA: They stick with it.

RB: They stick with it.

LA: Yeah. That's good, you know. They don't go other ways. They go one way only.

RB: They're very faithful in many ways, it sounds like.

LA: Very, very. Yeah. They won't move from her side. They go every day to see her –

RB: In New York.

LA: – the kids. They're Jack, Solomon. Yeah, very good kids, honest to God. She has beautiful kids. They're all well to do, and they know everything. I told you, they send them all over the world. When he called me now, I said, "Are you still in –?" "No, Nonna, I came a long time ago. Don't worry. I'm not in Africa." Honest to God, that's what he said. "Nonna, I'm going now. My boss is sending me all over Europe. That's what I want. I want to see Europe, not only Israel and Africa. I want to see Europe." He wants to go to Czechoslovakia, and the other thing. What is it besides that?

RB: So they're world travelers like you once were?

LA: Yes.

RB: You were a world traveler, yes.

LA: Yeah, I told you I went five times to Israel.

RB: Five times to Israel with Jack?

LA: With Jack, yes. The last time he sent money to Selma, he said, "Keep it there because if it's here, I'm going to spend it. You keep there my money. Maybe I'll go again." But he got sick and didn't.

RB: So, was Selma living in Israel?

LA: No, she was living in Los Angeles.

RB: Oh, okay.

LA: He sent money to her for Israel. And then she send me [inaudible] she sent it to me.

RB: I see. When was the first year you went to Israel with Jack?

LA: In the '60s. And then '65, '67, and then '70. In '70, we stopped. He got sick. He was going to go again, I told you. He sent money to Selma. He said, "Keep it because I'm going again." But he couldn't do it.

RB: I don't know much about the circumstances of Jack's illness? What or when —?

LA: Alzheimer's.

RB: I see. I didn't know that.

LA: It started from Israel when we went the second or third time. He was walking, wobbling. And my nephew, a Turkish boy, but he's Jewish — he was born in Turkey —

said, "Unkle, Unkle, why are you going that way?" "Which way?" he said. "You're not going straight, Uncle. Why?" He used to call him Unkle. "Why you doing that Unkle? Why? You're not feeling well?" " Sure, I'm feeling well. I'm okay." "But I'm going to take you to a doctor in Istanbul." They were in a resort that time. We were there too.

So, the next day, he took the boat, and he took him to a good doctor, his own doctor that – my nephew. He took him there, and he took a look. He said, "Don't wear that" – he wore a yarmulke all the time. He never took it off. He said, "Don't wear that anymore because that thing goes to your brain." That did it.

RB: Really? What year was this, do you remember?

LA: When we were in Israel the last time. It was '70-something. '75 or '72, around there, the last time. Then we came over here. I took him to the doctor. He threw the medicine from Turkey away. He said, "Don't you ever give him that medicine." "Okay." I threw it away. And then so many times I took him to my doctor. He said, "Mrs. Azose, you're going to have something in your hands. Just be careful. Don't let him out of your sight, and he'll be okay. I'm going to see to it." My doctor. He tried, and he tried, and he tried. And he was with me almost two years.

RB: Two years?

LA: Like that, little bit, not much.

RB: With Alzheimer's. Not much. I see.

LA: I took care of him. And there came a time – I used to give him a bath every day – not one, three, or four times. And all of a sudden, I found myself on the floor.

RB: What happened?

LA: Not dizzy, not sick, no nothing. He's in the bathtub, standing up. I got to the phone, walking on my knees. I got Isaac. He understood because he knew his father was sick. He came right away. I'm on the floor. He picked me up first, then he put me on that couch. He said, "Mom, that's the last time you're going to take care of Dad. I won't let you anymore. That's it. You're going to die before him, Mom." "Well, I want to die before him," I said, "I don't want to live anymore." He said, "We're going to call the Kline-Galland Home – somebody to come and get him." I said, "What? No, no. Uh-uh. He's not going." I didn't let him.

RB: The Kline-Galland Home. For people outside of Seattle, what is the Kline-Galland Home?

LA: In Seattle.

RB: In Seattle, it's a Jewish home for –

LA: Yeah, for old people.

RB: For older people, okay.

LA: Yeah. I said, "Daddy is not going there, Isaac. I'm going to take care of him. I'm here. I'm right here." So another year passed. I took care of him. At the end, I told you, I failed. I couldn't – I couldn't help him. "See, Mom," Isaac said. "See, Mom? You're going to die before him. It's no use." Because I used to take good care of him, honest to God. You have no idea what I did for him, but still, they came and got him by force.

RB: Oh. When you say by force, I'm not sure what you mean. He didn't want to go either.

LA: He did.

RB: He did want to go.

LA: Yeah, because he didn't know where he was.

RB: Oh. So he had –

LA: It was in his brain, honey.

RB: Of course, of course.

LA: So they took him. I cried for three months. I was crying. All three months, I was crying. I never stopped.

RB: What were the tears about? The tears were –?

LA: That I put him there myself.

RB: You felt responsible for him being there?

LA: I put him there.

RB: Even though you had fallen and you knew –

LA: I didn't let him go. Many times my son said, "That's enough, Mom. [inaudible] Come on, let him go there. They'll take good care of him. Good care of him." I said, "Come on. Not good care over there. No, they don't." Even your grandmother is complaining a lot.

RB: So you cried for three –

LA: Three whole months while he was there. But I was with him. I came home, I cried. I cried. I never went to sleep for years, honest to God. I went crazy. But I used to go every day. I went 9:00. I came home 10:00 p.m. I didn't want to let him go. But he was a little better over there.

RB: He was?

LA: He talked to everybody, and he slept well. He ate. But it started again.

RB: What year did he go into the home?

LA: He's been there four years. He was there four years. And he went about eighty, eighty years old.

RB: So you went every day for four years. You were there with him, taking care of him there.

LA: I said to the nurses, "Don't touch him. He's mine." I wouldn't let them touch him because when they touch him – phsht – he'll stink. I took care of him for years, nobody else. Me.

RB: You were very dedicated.

LA: Yes.

RB: Very loving.

LA: Yes, yes, I was. I didn't touch – I mean, I didn't let them touch him. Because we used to have the – there were Sephardias munchas [many Sephardics] over there. Too many.

RB: Lots of Sephardic people there.

LA: Yeah. We had 3:00 coffee over there in the big hall. Yeah, and the made it now something. Anyway, we used to – the girls used to go there and have coffee. And the boys – I mean, the sick guys over there – somebody else had her husband there.

Anyway, one day, I said, "I want my Jack here. You don't mind, kids?" "No, bring him." He starts singing.

RB: Your husband Jack started singing?

LA: Honest to God.

RB: When he came here to your house?

LA: No, over there.

RB: At the home?

LA: Yeah, at the home to have coffee with us. I called him. I called him. I said, "Come, Jack." But I changed him first. I used to ask for a lot of towels and a lot of soaps and a lot of sheets, changing every – every time he went, I changed. I didn't let no smell at all. Selma used to send me big bottles of cologne, men's cologne, honest to God. Every week she used to send me four or five. And I used to do – after I washed him and put new clothes – I used to buy clothes for him because they used to – they used to – stole it or something, I don't know. Your grandmother is missing something, she said. Yeah. So I took care of him for four years. Nobody touched him, only me.

RB: Only you.

LA: And the night he died, Selma was in Los Angeles. And he didn't die yet. And the nurse came to give him a shot. I said, "Why are you giving this shot to him? He's dead. Why are you doing that?" "I have orders." "No order. You're not going to give him anymore because he's dead. He's not alive." But he was a little bit breathing. I told the nurse not to. They used to give him shot, shot. For what? I don't know. What did he need a shot for? So that nurse is mad at me now, right now.

RB: Really?

LA: Yeah, because I took him out of there. And then Selma came. And all the boys came. And they were around him. And he just hold Selma's hand, and he died. Semaica [Selma] cries every time she remembers.

RB: So she made it back from Los Angeles?

LA: Yes.

RB: And he held onto life until she got there?

LA: That's it. That's it. He loved her. He loved her because one girl in the whole family.

RB: They were especially close.

LA: Yes, very. Very, very. The father with the sons.

RB: What was it like to –? After he died, what was it like for you?

LA: What life? I didn't call life. But I made a few ladies to come over. I said, "This is not life." I finished going there. For a year, I went and helped them. I made blankets.

RB: So you continued to volunteer?

LA: Volunteer.

RB: I see. At the home.

LA: Yeah. But I didn't want to anymore because it reminded me of him all the time, that he was dead. So, I came home. Then I started calling ladies. And they start coming. They loved it.

RB: They loved being with you.

LA: Yes.

RB: Is this what –? There's something – custom of vijita [visiting].

LA: Vijita.

RB: What is that? For people who don't know, can you describe it?

LA: Yeah. Vijita is somebody that either going to get married or get engaged or something. They make just like a party for her or for him, for the bride or the groom – same thing.

RB: But not for other occasions, though.

LA: Yes, some occasions they do that. Yeah.

RB: I see, okay.

LA: And they made some.

RB: But after Jack died, the women would come over, but it was for social – what would you do with the women?

LA: Yeah. Cards.

RB: For cards?

LA: We played.

RB: What kind of games did you play?

LA: Canasta. It was very good then. And then we left the Canasta. We played Kalooki.

RB: Kalooki. What's Kalooki?

LA: Kalooki is like Five Hundred, if you know – maybe you don't.

RB: I don't. I've never played it.

LA: You don't play it. I know. That's Kalooki [inaudible] – yeah.

RB: So the women were a big support to you.

LA: Yes.

RB: They kept you company and were good friends.

LA: Yeah. They start coming, and we made a party every time they came. Yeah, set tables and danced a la Turka.

RB: The women did too.

LA: Yes, they did, with the men, together. Yeah, we had fun after. Because you couldn't stay forever sad. They won't let you.

RB: The women and your friends wouldn't let you?

LA: No, they wouldn't let me because I was very bad. I don't want to see anybody. I was home, home, home all the time. And then those things started, and I felt better, yeah. I have pictures of this gathering.

RB: You do?

LA: Honest to God. I have pictures of that.

RB: That would be fun to see.

LA: Yeah.

RB: I would love to see them.

LA: They're over there. They call it boudoir.

RB: Your boudoir. What is exactly a boudoir?

LA: In French, means bedroom – not real bedroom. Somebody there if they come from outside, they give you the boudoir, extra bed.

RB: The guest room.

LA: They call it in French, boudoir. My David slept there until he bought a house. He bought a house over there where he is now.

RB: All right. Well, you look a little bit tired. How are you doing? Are you a little tired?

LA: I'm fine. I'm okay.

RB: You're fine, okay. Well, maybe what we should do is stop for today.

LA: Yeah, come again.

RB: I would love to. I've enjoyed this interview so much.

LA: But I'll give you something that she made.

RB: That who made?

LA: Sophia.

RB: Sophia, okay. Thank you.

LA: But I showed her how.

RB: Okay. Let me turn the tape off. Thank you, Louise.

LA: You're very welcome.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

RB: Louise, your daughter Selma just called as we finished our interview, and she reminded you of the song that her –

LA: Arvoles [Trees].

RB: Arvoles. And that was one of her favorite songs you would sing.

LA: It was.

RB: So. I wondered if you would sing it now for us.

LA: Okay.

RB: I'm ready.

LA: [Singing] Arvoles yoran por luvias y montanas por aires. Ansi esta mi corazon quemado de amores. [Trees cry for rain and mountains for air. Thus is my heart burnt with loves.] It won't come.

RB: It's beautiful, though.

LA: It won't come out. I sing the other one you said. Which one?

RB: And do you want to sing Las Montanas for us one more time?

LA: Uh-huh.

RB: What is it called, Las Montanas?

LA: The Mountains. Let me remember which one.

RB: Actually, you know what? Before you sing that, can you tell us what arvoles – what it means, the words, in English?

LA: Trees. The trees are crying for your love. It's just lover's songs. All Jewish love songs. It's lovers.

RB: It's beautiful.

LA: Which one now, Las Montanas?

RB: Las Montanas?

LA: [Singing] Estas Montanas de enfrente se ensienden y van quemando. Aya deshi al mi amor yorando y sospirando. Montanyikas de yasimin. En mis brazos te engrandesi. Te engrandesi te espulesi. Otros te estan gozando. [These mountains from across the way, they light up and burn. It is there that I left my love crying and sighing. Little mountains of jasmine, I raised you in my arms. I raised you, I brought you up. Others are enjoying you.]

RB: Okay.

LA: Close it now, and I'll tell you what it is. The mountains are beautiful mountains. Are they just for me? Estas Montanyas de enfrente. They're burning. Se ensienden y va quemando means they're burning, and they're getting hot, mountains. They're getting hot, and they're burning. [Singing] Estas montanyas de enfrente se ensienden y van quemando. Aya deshi al mi amor yorando y sospirando

RB: Beautiful.

LA: That's for my Isaac. I used to cry every time I sing it. He was in London.

RB: Beautiful, Louise.

LA: Yeah.

RB: Thank you so much.

LA: You're very welcome, preciada.

RB: Beautiful, beautiful songs.

LA: When I am a little better, I'm going to sing some for you – Jewish songs.

RB: They're gorgeous.

LA: I have another one, just a minute.

RB: Oh, good, let's keep going if you feel up to it.

LA: I just sang it today – not over here. [Singing] Tu te echas en cama alta. Yo debasho "shaneesheek" para ver tu lindo suenyo. Ande te echas a durmir para ver tu lindo suenyo. Ande te echas a durmir. [You sleep in a tall bed. I beneath [Turkish word] to see your beautiful dream. Where you lay down to sleep to see your beautiful dream. Where you lay down to sleep.] Ya ay mas [there is more], but I can't. I can't anymore today.

RB: That's great. Okay.

LA: This is another one.

RB: That's wonderful.

LA: That it's saying, yo me echo en cama alta. I sleep in a high bed, and you sleep over there, for instance. Shanesheek means another place. I forget quick. I don't know why. I don't know why.

RB: Do you have any –?

LA: [Singing] Yo me echo en cama alta tu debasho el shanesheek para ver tu lindo suenyo. Ande te echas a dormir. I want to see where you sleep. I'm high because I want to see where you sleep. I think that's what it is, yeah. It's all love stories. Love songs.

RB: Love songs.

LA: The whole thing I know is love songs.

RB: That's terrific.

LA: Yeah.

RB: Did you sing any lullabies to your children?

LA: I think so, but who remembers now? "Nani, Nani." [Singing] Nani, Nani, Nani. El ijiko mio. Durmete presiado. Durmete ijiko. [Nani, Nani, Nani. My little boy. Sleep, precious one Sleep, my little boy.] Good song, huh?

RB: Yeah, it's great. During what we would call vijitas when the women would come over for the weddings –

LA: [inaudible] songs.

RB: – I heard that sometimes some of the songs were a little raucous. Do you remember some of them that were –?

LA: Yeah, yeah. "La Boda." [Singing] A La boda y Al Biscocho. A la boda y al biscocho. Me combidan a las ocho I pasare. Pasaria I tornaria I le dire ke la novia era mia I non del rey. [To the wedding and to the biscuit. To the wedding and to the biscuit. They invite me for eight o'clock, and I will pass. I will pass, and I will turn around, and I will tell him that the bride belongs to me and not to the king.] [inaudible]

RB: That's okay. Listen, thank you so—

LA: That's the wedding.

RB: Yeah, for the wedding song, right.

LA: Yeah.

RB: That's great. Listen, thank you so much.

LA: Very welcome, honey.

RB: Yeah.

LA: I'm glad you came, honest to God. I changed a little bit. I was very sad. I don't know why. Very down. I'm glad, honest to God. I'm glad you came.

RB: Listen, thanks so much for your time.

LA: It's okay, sweetheart. I had nothing to do, honest to God, nothing.

RB: Well, it wonderful to be here with you.

LA: They clean, they cook. I'm just nada – nothing to do.

RB: Well, listen, hopefully, we can get together again soon.

LA: Okay, honey.

RB: Thank you.

LA: And then I'll sing some more.

RB: That'd be great.

[END OF INTERVIEW SESSION]

RB: Hi, this is Roz Bornstein, and I am back with Louise Azose at Louise's home in Seattle, Washington. The date is May 26th, 2001. I'm here today completing Louise's oral history interview for the Weaving Women's Words Project of the Jewish Women's Archives.

LA: [inaudible] over there.

RB: And Louise, do I have your permission to tape you today?

LA: You have my permission anytime.

RB: Thank you. Thank you.

LA: Yes, honey.

RB: There was a song that you recently sang at the Kline-Galland Home.

LA: The Kline?

RB: For the birthday party, you said.

LA: This is it.

RB: Yes. And I wondered if you would sing it for us today.

LA: Yeah. But it's just one copla [stanza].

RB: That's okay.

LA: I didn't know the rest.

RB: That's all right.

LA: [Singing] Entre una casa rica, vide una ijica. De anios era chica. Le ize entrar el amor. De anios era chica. Le ize entrar el amor. [In a rich house, I saw a young girl. She was young of age. I made her fall in love. She was young of age. I made her fall in love.] There's two, three things more, but I forgot them.

RB: Such a beautiful tune.

LA: I left the [inaudible] in Turkey.

RB: Ah, they are so beautiful.

LA: Yeah. I told that guy that was singing all Yiddish songs – I said, “You should have been in Turkey. They all sing Sephardic songs.”

RB: Is that right?

LA: He said, “Mrs. Azose, I’m sorry. Today, it’s my day. I can sing anything.” “Yeah, I said, don’t feel bad that I said that. But I wanted to hear a little bit of Spanish too.” Nobody said anything. I said, “Why should I pop up?”

RB: Yes.

LA: Well, I got a little peeved. He should sing one at least or two Sephardic songs.

RB: So you were at a birthday party and there was a man singing Yiddish songs.

LA: All Yiddish. Not even one English – no, not in English, yeah – Sephardic. I said, “Why don’t you sing one of them?” “I want to sing one for you, Mrs. Azose. But I didn’t know the rest.”

RB: Yes.

LA: That’s too bad. A beautiful song.

RB: They're beautiful. If I name a couple, I wonder if you might want to sing them.

LA: Do it again? Sure.

RB: Do you remember "A La Una?"

LA: [Singing] A La Una nassi yo. A la dos me baptizaron. A las tres esposi yo. A las cuatro me casi. Me casi con un amor. Alma I vida I corason. Me casi con un amor. Alma I vida I corason. [I was born at one o'clock. At two o'clock, I was baptized. At three o'clock, I got engaged. At four o'clock, I was married. I married my love. Soul, life, and heart. I married my love

Soul, life, and heart.]

RB: That's so beautiful, beautiful. So the next one I thought of is "Dame La Mano."

LA: Yeah. [Singing] Dame la mano lo paloma para suvir a tu nido. Me han dicho ke durmes sola. Vengo a durmir contigo. Me han dicho ke durmes sola. Vengo a durmir contigo. [Give me your hand, my dove, to climb up to your nest. They've told me that you sleep alone. I come to sleep with you. They've told me that you sleep alone. I come to sleep with you.]

Let me get some water.

RB: Fine. That's great.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

LA: [Singing] Alta, alta va la luna cuando empesa esclarecer. [Higher and higher goes the moon when it starts to brighten up.]

RB: That's fine. That's okay. Do you remember when would you sing these songs?

LA: When we had company.

RB: Company. So the men and women –

LA: Same all, all, the whole thing.

RB: – would they sing – together would you sing with the men, the women?

LA: No. By myself.

RB: By yourself? Really? For people? They would come over.

LA: You know why? Because I had the voice.

RB: That's wonderful.

LA: That's why. I had a good voice, boy. It isn't very long ago that I was in the JCC doing those American songs – I mean, not those. I was fine. But getting older –

RB: It's harder. It makes it harder.

LA: Which one do you have there?

RB: Let's see. I'm just going to name a few for you.

LA: Yeah.

RB: Let's see. "Morenica." [Dark Beauty].

LA: Yeah. [Singing] Morenica a mi me yaman. Yo blanca nasi. Si otra vez a mi me yaman, yo me vo con el, Morenica. Ach Morenica y savrosica y galanica sos. [They call me dark-skinned beauty. I was born white. If they call me again, I will go with him, dark-skinned beauty. Ach, dark-skinned beauty, tasty and beautiful are you.]

RB: That's beautiful.

LA: Morenica.

RB: Was this a wedding song?

LA: Wedding, yes.

RB: That's the wedding song. Beautiful.

LA: Yeah. There's weddings there [inaudible]

RB: Is that right, that – oh, this is a collection of lots of different ones.

LA: Go ahead. Tell me.

RB: How about "Ven Hermoza?"

LA: Yeah, I don't know this.

RB: Come Pretty Girl – I don't know.

LA: I don't know this one.

RB: How about – there's one – "Barmeenon."

LA: Oh. This one is an old – from Turkey.

RB: Is that right? You'd sing in it Salonika or in Istanbul?

LA: In Turkey, not over here. I never heard this here.

RB: Is that right? They didn't sing it here.

LA: Never.

RB: Okay. How about "En Este Mundo," in this world? No?

LA: No. It wasn't me, maybe somebody else.

RB: Oh, I know one that actually my grandmother used to sing, "Durme Durme."

LA: "Durme Donzella."

RB: That's a beautiful one. Do you sing that? It's okay. If you're not up to it, it's okay.

LA: Yeah. I don't know. Sometimes your voice – and I ate, that's why.

RB: I know. I know sometimes –

LA: I had lunch.

RB: That's fine. That's fine. All right. Well, we could –

LA: I was going to – wait a minute. Before you came, I thought of one that I sing it for you, but it isn't there.

RB: That's okay. If you think of one, this is just a small –

LA: Second-hand. Which one was it? [inaudible] I sang it, or I didn't. I was going to, maybe. I don't know. I'm thinking I sang it over there on the porch yesterday. The

wedding is there too? The wedding? “A La Boda Y Al Biscocho.”

RB: That's not on here. Do you – is that one of your favorites? No?

LA: They're old as I am.

RB: There's one, “La Vida ...”.

LA: “Do por el raki?” [I would give my life for raki. Raki is an anise-based liqueur.]

RB: Yeah.

LA: It's very, very old.

RB: Is that right?

LA: Very old.

RB: What did they sing that for?

LA: Just to be together, ladies and gentlemen.

RB: Just for being joyous.

LA: Sure. I don't know how many groups in this house. Yeah.

RB: That's wonderful. Well, I think I've named the ones here that I have that come to mind. If you think of any others that you'd like – let's see. Actually, here's one, “Galanica” [Pretty One].

LA: Yeah. “Galanica Sos.”

RB: Well, listen, I can come back another time and do this.

LA: Yeah.

RB: It's no problem.

LA: [Singing] A la boda y al Biscocho. A la boda y al biscocho. Me combidan a las ocho. See, it comes after.

RB: Yes, yes.

LA: I'm going to call you someday that my voice is better than this.

RB: That's a great idea. Why don't you do that?

LA: Yeah, yeah.

RB: That sounds great. So, why don't we stop for today?

LA: Tell me a few that I sang before.

RB: You sang the beautiful one, "Arvoles."

LA: Oh, yeah.

RB: That was beautiful.

RB: And "Esta Montanyas." Beautiful.

LA: Oh, yes. This is my son, Isaac. He went, and I miss him. And I sing to – me and Selma sing it together. Every time we were in Los Angeles in the car, I used to sing it.

RB: Oh, isn't that something?

LA: [Singing] Estas montanyas de enfrente. Se ensienden y van quemando. Aya deshi al mi amor yorando y sospirando. Ni vo comer ni vo beber. A fin ke yo me muero. La vida entera vo pedrer eentras de este mansevo. [I won't eat, and I won't drink until I die. I'll lose my whole life after this young man.] That's no good. I forgot it.

RB: Actually, it was just beautiful. Let's see. I'm just going to go through the list a little bit.

LA: Go ahead.

RB: "Quando Veyo Hija Hermoza." [When I See a Pretty Girl].

LA: I didn't sing this one.

RB: No, it's a different one.

LA: Who did?

RB: I don't know. "Durme Hermoza Donzella." [Sleep, beautiful damsel].

LA: Donzella.

RB: Beautiful. That's a beautiful song.

LA: (Singing:) Durme Durme hermoza Donzella. Durme Durme sin ansia y dolor. Durme Durme sin ansia y dolor. [Sleep, sleep, beautiful damsel.

Sleep, sleep, without anxiety and pain. Sleep, sleep, without anxiety and pain.]

RB: Isn't that gorgeous?

LA: I know about a hundred, honest.

RB: Isn't that something?

LA: I mean it.

RB: I believe you. I believe you.

LA: It has to come to my mind.

RB: Yes. What about the –?

LA: Which one, honey?

RB: Let's see. "Almond Trees."

LA: "Arvolicos D'Almendra."

RB: Yes, that's it. [laughter]

LA: [Singing] Arvolicos D'Almendra que yo planti. [Almond trees that I planted.] See?
There's no way. I can't remember.

RB: Yeah. You've got the first line, though.

LA: [Singing] Arvolicos D'Almendra que yo planti. That's it. It doesn't come. If I'm alone
and sleeping on – I sing all day long at home.

RB: [laughter] Is that right?

LA: Honest, all day, because I want the time to go faster. And I sing.

RB: And it's comforting to you.

LA: Yes.

RB: Isn't that something?

LA: At night, you should see me sing and sing and sing.

RB: Isn't that something? Maybe I should leave the minidisc player for you. [laughter]
Put it near your bedside. Okay. You are so wonderful to let me come back.

LA: Why not, honey?

RB: And hear some more of your –

LA: I love you, honest to God.

RB: You're just terrific.

LA: Yes.

RB: You're just terrific.

LA: I wish I could remember all of them. I know about a hundred, really, not fooling,
either.

RB: I believe you.

LA: A hundred of them.

RB: I know.

LA: I used to sing it. The voice was good, and the memory was good.

RB: Yes. You know, it's good now. It's good now.

LA: I don't think so.

RB: No.

LA: Forgetful. That's no good for singing. But when I'm on the porch, I sing, and it comes out fine. But here, look.

RB: Oh, it's okay.

LA: [inaudible]

RB: I know. Well, not to worry. It's been wonderful. Why don't we stop just today, for now? Hopefully, we'll come back. Okay?

LA: Yes, honey, come back anytime. Maybe I feel better.

RB: Okay. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

ADDENDUM"

Notes from page 68 written by Louise Azose's son, Isaac Azose: My mother's sister, Fannie, was married on Sunday, January 11, 1931, at the Sephardic Bikur Holim on 20th and Fir Street. The custom my mother is referring to is called Avraham Seev. On the Shabbat following their wedding, the bride and groom come to the synagogue. One extra sefer torah is taken out. After the regular weekly perasha reading, the extra sefer torah is placed on the tevah [reading desk] and the bridegroom is called up. Verse one through seven in Genesis twenty-four is read from the sefer torah. However, the Ba'al Koreh [the one reading the sefer torah] sings the first sentence, which starts out, in Hebrew, "Ve Avra'am zaken" [and Abraham was old]. Each sentence is then followed by singing its translation in Aramaic, in this case, the words "Ve Avra'am Seev." The name of this ceremony comes from this phrase.

Since my grandfather passed away either late Saturday night or early Saturday morning, I'm not sure if they went ahead with the ceremony. My Uncle Isaac Adatto, the bridegroom, may have been there, but it's certain that my aunt, Fannie Adatto, did not go since her father had just passed away.

The entire "Avraham Seev" service can be found in a new siddur dedicated to Seattle's two Sephardic congregations, Sephardic Bikur Holim and Ezra Bessaroth. The title of this siddur is Zehut Yosef, The Seattle Sephardic Community Daily and Sabbath Siddur. A description of this ceremony and the actual service is on page 375.