

Hulda Gittelsohn Transcript

BETSY ABRAMS: This is Bobbie Burstein and Betsy Abrams on June 20th 1997 interviewing Hulda Phillips Teschler Gittelsohn who we know very fondly as Bubbles.

[Recorder is turned off and then back on.]

And, of course, the first question I'm dying to ask you is how

did the name Hulda come to Bubbles?

HULDA GITTELSON: That is always somebody's first question.

BA: Of course.

HG: Because it doesn't seem at all related to Hulda. Well, first of all, the Hulda came from my grandmother. She was born in Berlin and it was a perfectly good name.

But I was born on top of Corey Hill in Brookline in the middle of a snowstorm. And there was a nurse in attendance and she looked at me and I was blowing bubbles. Lots of newborn babies do. But he realized that they do. And she said, "You know, Hulda is such a heavy name for a new baby. She needs a nickname. Why don't you call her Bubbles?" And so they did. So I've had Bubbles just as long as I've had Hulda. And it's been kind of a hard name to carry through, kind of an embarrassment to my sons as they grew older and never knew quite how to introduce me. And, of course, much later it led to greater embarrassment. But I'll save that for later.

BA: That's interesting. I can't tell you how long I've always wanted to know the answer to that. When I read over the letter that you had written to us several years ago, you had mentioned that your family came from Germany and Sweden.

HG: Yes.

BA: That's very interesting. Why did your family come from Sweden?

HG: I don't why they were in Sweden to begin with. But my great grandfather was Faist, F-A-I-S-T, Nordan Sheld. And he is the one who was a founder of Temple Israel in 18, what '54, I believe it was. And, of course, in time his name became Ferdinand Nordanshield. And that's the name that was carried on by my father and my brother. But the Nordanshields were Swedish. And at what point they went to Germany or who went to Germany, I'm not sure. But—

BA: Your family went from Sweden to Germany?

HG: Some of them went to Germany and some went to England. That's where I found my father's family came from England. The Phillips came from London.

BA: Interesting.

HG: And that was where the Swedish part of me came from. My maternal grandmother was born in Berlin. And her husband was born on the Polish/German border. So I must have German and a little Polish blood as well as Swedish and English.

BA: Well it all came out very well, so—

HG: Thank you, thank you.

BETSY BERSTEIN: It is considered unusual to think of Jews in Sweden particularly in that period of time. I've never heard of it.

HG: I am not that fully convinced that he was Jewish, the original Faïst Nordan Sheld, because there was a crest, a family crest. And he was an explorer and all of his life and the circumstances around it don't sound particularly Jewish. So I have a very strong

feeling that the Jewish part of me came into my blood later on in that direction from my father's side.

BA: And they were amongst one of the founders of Temple Israel.

HG: Yes.

BA: So your connection to Temple Israel has been, to say the least—

HG: My connection has been since the beginning.

BA: Yes, absolutely.

HG: Yes. So it's always been my temple.

BA: Isn't that wonderful?

HG: Yes it is.

BA: So tell us something about your--. Do you remember your grandparents?

HG: I don't remember any of my father's parents. I think that the great grandmother Nordanshield was still living when I was born. But I didn't know her. The only grandparent I knew was my mother's father. And his name was Ignas Whitt.

BA: He also was a member of Temple Israel.

HG: Well there we have a little divergence in my story because Temple Israel's always been my temple, the Temple Ohabei in those days, Shalom, was also, in a way, my temple because that was the other branch of my family. My mother's father and mother belonged to Temple Ohabei. In fact he was president of the congregation when they built the temple on Beacon Street. And he laid the cornerstone there, which always led to a little problem at high holy days because he enjoyed having his seven children and ten

grandchildren stretched out on the lawn for the service. So we had a connection there. But, of course, it was really Temple Israel that we belonged to. And we went to Sunday school and so forth.

BA: So tell us about your parents. Did they have many Jewish customs in the home at that time like holiday celebrations?

HG: Well, yes, but not with a complete ritual. I think that by this time the history of the temple has shown that our temple was not very ritualistic in the beginning.

BA: That's true.

HG: In fact, quite the opposite. But we still had candles on Friday nights when we were home. It wasn't always done. And Friday nights often could be a very good night for parties, bridge games, other things, because we didn't consider it as the beginning of the Sabbath because of sermons and Sunday school were on Sunday.

BA: That's right.

HG: And so it was a different way of life. But it was still a very Jewish household and we read prayers whether they were always very suitable or not, I'm not sure. And we had our own formal services at high holy days unless we were in temple.

BA: Did you have special foods that your family prepared?

HG: No.

BA: No.

BB: Now you were talking about the contrast with Ohabei Shalom. Now they were much more—still much more Orthodox, were they not, at this period of time?

HG: You are so right. It seemed when I would go to temple as a child I would feel as if I were in an Orthodox temple. I mean I didn't know about Orthodoxy. But to me it seemed so Orthodox because there was so much Hebrew in it. And the men wore hats. All these things were different.

AB: They didn't separate men and women for seating.

HG: No. It wasn't Orthodox. I mean it was semi-conservative as we would--. I mean for now I would think it wasn't at all. It would be reformed today certainly. But to me at that time it seemed so much more Orthodox that it felt very strange to me and kind of foreign even though I would look up at the stained glass window and see my grandmother's Talmud there. And knew I belonged, but it was strange. It was quite different.

BB: They still celebrate some holidays with two days.

HG: Yes.

BB: Which we didn't even then, did we?

HG: No. No we didn't then. But I'm not sure now but what we do most of the time, don't we a lot, a lot of the holidays.

BB: We don't observe them for two days.

HG: No. But some of the—

BA: Ohabei still has two days for Rosh Hashana..

HG: That's right.

BA: I think that may be the only one that they still do.

BB: Did you have brothers and sisters?

HG: I had two brothers whom I lost. I lost one brother at twenty-one in an accident. That was the young brother that you knew, Betsy, I think, Donald. Did you know Donald? Yeah. And my brother, Freddy, who died two weeks before my mother in 1970. Those were my only two siblings.

BB: And they were too young to be married and have children.

HG: Actually, oh no, oh no. My brother had married in February just as he was turning twenty-one. And he died in May that same year. So that was hardly married. My older brother had a family. And, of course, he was at Temple Israel and so were his children. And so his children were confirmed, a boy and a girl, Laurice and Tommy.

BB: Do you have any special memories of things that went on at Temple Israel religious school during that time? I noted in your letter you said you particularly enjoyed Ruben Laurie.

HG: Yes. That's true, I did, because he was wonderful. He really sparked us. He sort of--. I must say, you know, I went to Sunday school. I went to Sunday school like everyone went to Sunday school because I was supposed to go to Sunday school. But I really wasn't exultant about going to Sunday school until I was in confirmation and post-confirmation class and particularly with Ruben Laurie because—

BB: Was he your confirmation teacher?

HG: He was a post-con. And he really sparked us intellectually and we had wonderful debates, wonderful debates. I remember those in his class. And I have my memories of going in the little side door of the temple to go downstairs, the basement, for classes. And it was—

BA: Did you go in the morning or the afternoon?

HG: In the morning, went in the morning. And we did not, you know, not too often did we go into the main sanctuary. And I remember we always were kind of in awe of the main sanctuary because everything there, of course, as you know, I would talk about the kind of service then was a little different.

Because we really loved Rabbi Levi but we were in awe of him, too, because he stood there in his black robe. And the collection boxes were passed with long sticks and little black boxes. And it was in my memory I had to put it in my letter.

BB: That's very interesting.

BA: Do you know what the money that was collected on Sunday morning was ever used for?

HG: I haven't the vaguest idea. I assume for charity and maybe to pay, to pay entrance for people who couldn't afford to belong to temple. It seemed to me that's what it was for.

BA: Because I do remember finding something that I had written. And, actually, I think I wrote it in the temple bulletin a few years ago about it. And that we saw that money was collected—

HG: Money was. It was collected regularly at every service.

BA: On Sunday mornings.

HG: On Sunday morning.

BA: Because they could do—they couldn't have done it on Saturday morning.

HG: And, of course, the children didn't get to services all that often. They never went to regular services it seemed to me except maybe high holy days. But, as I said before, my

attendance at high holy days was always mixed when I was very young.

But I remember there was no such thing as a baby in temple ever. And if there were children we were very good children. Because I can remember the executive director walking up and down like a beadle out of Dickens looking, hushing the children and pointing a warning finger if they made a single sound.

BA: Was that—

HG: And, of course--. And I remember sitting and looking up in hard fascination at the big candelabra with the star of David, a huge one, wondering if it was ever going to come down on anyone because it looked so ominous up there. [Laughter] You remember it. It finally did come down I understand when finally we gave up the temple it did come down.

BB: You mean it fell?

HG: Fell. It did.

BA: I thought it was the lectern that fell.

HG: No. You know how stories go. My story was the candelabra. But I wouldn't vouch for it.

BA: It could have been both.

HG: It could have been both.

BA: Do you--? My guess is that you were probably too young to remember Rabbi Fleischer.

HG: I don't remember him, no.

BA: Did your parents ever talk about him?

HG: My aunt did. My father—my father had a sister, just a single sister, who never married. And they were the only two siblings. And their parents died when they were very young in their early twenties. And she used to talk about Fleischer. I think he was the one who was quite a ladies man back in those days.

BA: He was supposed to be the most handsome clergy in the whole Boston area.

HG: Very handsome. And that was, I guess, around the time that she was in temple and they were--. I have the picture, which I think I gave to temple of my aunt at confirmation—my aunt and there was someone else in the picture whom the temple knew. And I think it was Ruth Rosenbaum's mother. It was me--. Yeah, it was. She was in the same class with my Aunt Edith. And I figured it was about 1901 or '02. And the confirmation class picture was taken on the stoops of a house building, which I guess was temple at that point. And confirmation class was probably about twelve or fourteen people, that's all.

BB: That's how many were there this year.

HG: Yeah. I know. It'll be better, I think. It'll be better. There are more young people in now. I think it will improve.

BB: Oh yeah.

HG: Yeah.

BA: Classes have gotten larger.

HG: Classes are getting larger.

BB: You mentioned before that you had gone to Wellesley. That must--. Tell us about that experience. That must have been a tremendous experience.

HG: Well it's--. You asked me about it at just the right time because I just came back from my sixtieth reunion at Wellesley. And I must say--. And it was a wonderful weekend, a wonderful weekend. And there were lots of great things going on. And it was fun being with the girls.

And from the class of sixty years out and on we were all in the same building. I thought there would be some--. My class was '37 and I thought there would be some from '32 and '27, '22. There were.

But there was also some from the class of '17. Can you imagine? She was 102 years old. And when I heard she was there in my dorm I said, "Isn't that nice? I'd like to talk to her." And they said, "Well, sure, but you're going to have to wait a little bit. She's out for a walk." [Laughter] She walked a mile a day. That's what kept her so fit. And she was just as sharp as she could be. It was wonderful.

But we were, all of us, all the old ladies in the building. And they treated us as if we were made of porcelain. We were chauffeured everywhere which is just fine for my bad leg. It was great. And it was a wonderful weekend.

But I must tell you, and this is much more even to the point than this, the high spot, the high spot in the weekend as far as I was concerned, was a chapel service on Sunday morning. Now chapel, when I was at Wellesley with the ten percent quota or whatever it was, chapel was a required attendance. On Friday night, on Friday nights no less, and chapel was a completely, absolutely Christian service in the name of the Father and the Son. I mean, completely Christian.

BB: On Friday night? Isn't that interesting.

HG: On Friday night. And it was a required attendance. And so this was Wellesley. This was Wellesley to me. And this was the chapel as I remember the chapel except in the interim when we had singing on the steps or something. But I'd never really been in

the chapel.

So we--. The chapel--. First of all on Sunday morning I went to Hillel. To have a Hillel at Wellesley was something that was beyond imagining to me, too. And I thought, "Well this I must go to." So a few of us did. And there was quite a nice attendance there.

And they have a rabbi. They have a rabbi now, a Hillel rabbi. And they had an awfully nice girl who was the really the organizing person for the alumnae behind Hillel. And it was a nice little breakfast. And the rabbi spoke and the president of the college came and spoke to the group. And then we had the parade.

BB: Is that where you wore this outfit? Is this for the parade or something? [Laughter]
What is the significance of all white.

GH: But before the parade--. Well before the parade it was—you were all white when you would go in the parade. And then you have things—our class had a visor with our number and a market bag with--. Every class had something different. But you were dressed in whites, basically in whites to go with it.

But before the parade and after the Hillel breakfast—and some of the others had a group. The Catholics, I think, went to mass. But some of the other groups met for breakfast or things. And then they had this chapel service on Sunday morning before the march. And it was called a Flower Service, an inter-faith service.

And they—it was the biggest surprise to me. It was really inter-faith. It was really completely--. They didn't call it ecumenical. They called it inter-faith, which it was. It began--. I'll show you. I saved it. I think it's a priceless document to me of what went on.

The service opened with something like a Buddhist bell song. And then the Protestant minister spoke, and a priest spoke and somebody else from another, I can't remember,

spoke. And then our rabbi spoke, the Hillel rabbi spoke. And she spoke beautifully.

But, also, and printed right in the program was a Hebrew song. I can't remember the name of it. I'll look it up for you again. But it was printed right in along with the names of everything and everybody's names, the only song that was in there. And the rabbi went over each word with the assemblage.

Now the assemblage--. It's a huge chapel. It was meant to hold all of the students. And it would probably hold well over two thousand. And it was jammed. And this rabbi said each word. Sung each word as if she were cantor.

She said, "I doubt if many of you are very conversant with Hebrew. So let me do this with you." And she sang each word, had them sing it back. And then she had them sing the whole song. And then she divided the chapel in two to do it in a part singing because she said this would be very beautiful if you want to hear. And that was what happened with this whole chapel.

BB: Hava na shira, I'll bet.

HG: Yes, it was. [Laughter] You're too smart.

BB: No.

HG: Yes.

BB: Because Roy does it very often. We do it in the temple very often, Hava na shira.

HG: Yes. And it was just so beautiful to have this assemblage in this chapel where I sat in misery for four years. Well I was sitting with Ruth Rose. You know Ruth, Dave Rose's widow. And she and I were crying. We couldn't help it. It was just too much.

BB: Yeah, the contrast.

HG: The contrast that we thought the day would ever, ever come when this would happen at Wellesley.

BB: That's wonderful.

HG: And someone said the--. Now that I think that the—twenty-five percent of the instructors, the professors are Jewish. There was one when we were there, one part-time, I think in probably economics. I thought I remember psychology. Chances are it was economics. [Laughter]

BB: That's a stereotype.

HG: That's what I mean and that's it. That's all.

BB: What did you major in?

HG: English comp, English composition and I minored in French and German. I love languages.

BB: Oh, interesting. Where you aware of antisemitism other than this experience that you described?

HG: I'm not--. No, not acute antisemitism and not a speaker like this miserable fellow who's out there now, Martin. I mean, still causing trouble. And we didn't have anything like that going on. But I was always--. I guess I was always a very self-conscious Jew. I think I always was. And I was conscious always of being a Jew where we were very much a minority.

BA: Did they—did the ones who were Jewish get together there or—

HG: It's very funny, you know. All through the week we were very good friends, everybody was our friend and there was no feeling--. But came to weekend and dates

there was a sharp division because we would each go in our own circle. And I noticed even here at reunion as much as friendly as we were with everyone, the closest knit group, again, you were with the Jewish girls.

BB: Have you maintained your friendship with those Jewish girls?

HG: Well, you know, in a manner of speaking I have, not strongly, not strongly. But one of them was Margie Frank. Did you know Margie Frank? Her husband--. Margie Schumann. She married a doctor. Her brother used—was the professor at MIT.

Well she was in my class and I've always known her. We walked to school together like I walked with Ruth here. And so she was there. Of my group of five, who we lived together for five years—separate rooms but in a little cluster—the only one who came back was Mackie Bloom, who was Mackie King. She was--. Her mother and family ran Camp Fernwood. Do you remember Fernwood in Poland?

BB: Yes.

HG: She still runs it.

BB: Oh, my goodness.

HG: Yeah. In fact her daughter and her granddaughter now are working in it. She came back and so this was very wonderful to renew friendship. And I have seen some of the non-Jewish girls in the interim--. I've gone to one or two of the luncheons and they were good friends. But there was something about your Jewish friends, somehow it's closer. I can't explain. The same thing that brings everyone here in this building so close even though all our lives have been different. We have the same strand in our backgrounds. So that it becomes very easy to become close friends in no time.

BA: Yeah. You said something about being together for five years?

HG: Four years, I should have said. [Laughs] No I was thinking--. You know why I said five because three of the girls—we were counselors at Camp Iwane when we got word that we were admitted to Wellesley. I guess we didn't hear until summertime in those days. So I always think of that as our first year together because we were all together at camp.

BB: Where was the camp?

HG: Iwane was in Brandon, Vermont.

BB: I see. And was that a Jewish camp?

HG: Yes, oh yes.

BA: How soon after you graduated from Wellesley did you marry your husband?

HG: A year, a year after because we had been going together for a few years before.

BB: Now, you I'm sure went to some of the social events that Temple Israel had. You mentioned those in your letter.

HG: Yes. They were very important in my life. It's funny but they were. Of course we were at an all girls' school. And you had to check out if you went out at night. And you had only a few nights that you could go out. And then you had to list with whom you were going, where you were going and when you'd be back.

And, but, of course, I lived very near. And so even though I lived at Wellesley I managed to be home a lot over the weekends. But your dating was mostly over the weekends because--. And the few days you were in school we had to do some work. So the weekends were very important. And the tea dances—that's what you mentioned—were very important to all the college community in those days. I mean it was a very—

BA: They were run by the Sisterhood was it not?

HG: It was run by the Sisterhood, and it was so good. That that was something that I did right after I got married was work at the temple with those tea dances because I thought they were so wonderful. I just missed them in my children's lives. Although they've been so far away at college they couldn't have come anyhow. But for all the college students around it was wonderful. I don't know by the time you came years later whether it—

BB: Yes, yes.

HG: Yes. Not for you, for you—you remember.

BB: My roommate at college met her husband at a tea dance.

HG: Yes. This happened to a lot of people.

BA: Is that where you met Carl?

HG: No I met Carl at a wedding at—Sylvia and Henry Pollack's wedding. [Laughter] And Carl, my first husband, really lived around the corner from me. And went to Devotion and to high school and everywhere around, but I just didn't know him because he was almost five years older. So I hadn't met him until then. But he also—and I think I made mention of that in my letter—was a confirmand of Temple Israel.

BB: Yes you did, yes. Well the ties are always tightening.

HG: Yes, yes. It's true.

BB: Then you had two children.

HG: Yes.

BB: And tell us about, something about that being a young mother and—

HG: A young mother in temple. [Laughs]

BB: In your life. I just don't mean temple.

HG: You just don't mean temple. [Laughs] Well it was--. I had a very hard time having my children. I really had to work to have children. And I was very blessed that I could have two. I miscarried a little girl in the middle. But I had two sons and I was very grateful for that. And they went to temple, of course, not always willingly, but they went. They went. And they too as they got nearer to confirmation began to perk up a bit. It became much more important to them.

BA: They still didn't have bar mitzvahs in those days, did they?

HG: No, no bar mitzvahs. In fact my first husband, Carl, Carl's family wanted him to have a bar mitzvah. He had to go outside to have the bar mitzvah.

BA: Do you know where he had it?

HG: I haven't the vaguest idea. But my grandson, who's extremely religious, wants to know because he wants to know more about Hebrew names and things and—

BB: Oh yes we met him.

HG: You met Carl when he was searching for it, yes. And he called me from London the other day and said, "Grama, do me a favor. Call up Kehilleth Israel,"—he has a feeling it might have been Kehilleth Israel—"and ask them if that's where--," that's where his grandfather—because, you know, they never knew their grandfather. I lost Carl when my boys were just seventeen and twenty.

BB: A very young age, yeah.

HG: And so, you know, they never--. Roland was their grandfather in effect. But they did—they did go all through Sunday school finally and confirmation. And Jerry went to post-confirmation. And, of course, temple—I watched the temple change over the years. I mean I wasn't--. I was very active in Sisterhood once upon a time. And----

BA: While you were a young mother, too?

HG: Yes. I was very active when I was a young mother. And I found Sisterhood was so vitally important to me when I was a widow, a young widow. You know we didn't have the solace group that they have now. But Sisterhood was close. And Sisterhood was very meaningful to me.

And that's why I worked all those years in Sisterhood because everyone was close. We knew everyone in those days. And it was great. And we did work hard. Because remember sending out all those hundreds of letters you had to hand stamp to send out before the machines. [Laughs] And then I did secretarial work. And I remember I was so afraid of being chastised for not following the rules that I took--. Do you remember I took her course, yeah.

BB: Oh, who—. Esther Small's—

HG: Esther Small's course because I said if I took her course she couldn't criticize me. I'd be following what she told me and that was fine.

BA: A course in parliamentary procedures.

HG: Yes, all the parliamentary procedures.

BA: Were you involved in other organizations while you---?

HG: Yes, Well, yes. I was involved in Council. I was fairly active in Council. I started giving my book reviews, which you asked me about—

BB: Oh yes. Tell us about that.

HG: While I was in Council and then they asked me to do it at temple. Well Council was a smaller group and we met in people's homes, you know. This was different from temple. It might be a large group. Although at that point what they were doing, they were having large groups but they were trying to use large homes. They were using large living rooms sometimes to do—to give them.

I remember sometimes—in fact I remember giving one. I must have had a lot of chutzpah. [Laughs] Because I remember giving one in someone's home, someone on Clinton Road, I can remember in a huge living room. And Josh Leibman would come to these sometimes. And Josh Leibman came to that one. And I was giving a review on the latest biography of Freud. [Laughter]

BA: Oh he must have enjoyed that very much.

BB: Was he helpful?

HG: I don't remember. But, you know, as you gathered from there, the fact that I never go up in the pulpit or do anything. I did my review from notes. But I did field questions afterwards. I don't think he asked me any questions. But you see I didn't have any background really to speak of in the field. I did another one on architecture, about which I knew nothing either. But I was doing a literary critique. I wasn't doing too much in the--.

BB: Well that's quite challenging.

HG: They were challenging. And that was when the children were still quite young and Carl was urging me to go ahead and do it. He was active in Brotherhood at that point. And I found it very interesting. And, of course, I knew Josh. And when I lost my young brother, Josh was very helpful to my mother. I remember that his coming to the house—and he wasn't driving. Remember, he never drove.

BB: How did he get around then?

HG: Ruth drove him, his wife.

BB: Really.

HG: Fan, I mean Fan.

BB: Ruth was Rabbi???? wife.

HG: Yeah, Fan drove him everywhere.

BA: Or he took a cab.

HG: But I remember coming to the--. I just lived around the corner from the temple and not far from them. And she always would drive him and she would sit outside. She wouldn't come in. She would be afraid. And she would drive him and stay outside while he came and—to visit. And he came very often because this was a shock to mother. And, of course, this was right up his field, you know.

BA: It's interesting that you say that Fan wouldn't visit people, you know, like that given her background as a social worker.

HG: Well I think only that she wouldn't—she'd feel it was interference.

BB: No, but I mean being also a social worker you would think—

HG: If she paid her own call. But I think not to come in on his, no. On a pastoral call I don't think so, no. No, I think that's it. But, anyway, it was--. I guess he was very helpful in those days. I think those were—the years he was there were—I would think of as more introspective years at temple. You know, if you had this--. I watched temple change, evolve, whatever it's done, it's done with a different rabbi that I've been used to, you know. And as I wrote, we liked Harry Levi so much. And when I said we all came

back from college on Sunday mornings to go to hear his sermons and be there. And it was partly for the sermons. It was also partly social because it was a great thing to meet everyone there. But we did, we did go.

But it was—it was such a different kind of temple in those days. And it began to be a little different still in complexion when, I think, when Josh Leibman was there. And, of course, when Roland Gittelsohn came it changed quite a good deal in those years.

BA: Don't you think that's inevitable though—

BB: Each brings their own stamp.

HG: I think it has to be that way. But I think that the reformed Judaism was evolving anyway outside and with these men.

BA: And don't forget one of Rabbi Liberman's conditions was that we have a Shabbat services, you know.

HG: Yeah, yeah.

BA: That we had a service Friday night and Saturday morning which we didn't used to, you know, used to have.

HG: No, no. And it was very important. And I remember when Roland first got up to preach knowing he'd said—he couldn't change the custom of wearing a black robe because—

BB: We have that sermon about the robe. [Laughs]

HG: About the robe?

BB: Yeah.

BA: That was when Rabbi Mehlman came and refused to wear it.

BB: Oh that's right. That was Rabbi Mehlman's sermon, right.

HG: Roland was the one who wouldn't wear the—wore the robe at first. At first he wore it because they didn't want him to change it. But he said if he was going to wear a robe that at least he wasn't going to look like a minister, like a Unitarian. And he put on his—

BA: The equivalent of the talis.

HG: His short talis, yeah, his short talis, which he always wore after that. And then gradually he took the robe off and just had the talis because he didn't like the robe. He wanted it to look like he was a rabbi and not a minister.

BB: Well we're getting a little ahead of our story.

HG: Yes.

BB: Talking about Rabbi Gittelsohn because—

HG: I know. I knew it wouldn't be very chronological but—

BB: It doesn't have to be chronological at all. [Laughter] When you graduated from Wellesley did your friends by and large all become married women or did some of them have careers in areas—

HG: My closest friends, most of them, married. But a lot of them went into social work of that era. As I read in my alumnae books when they come, you know, I see that there were a great many who did a great many other things and went on a lot further in professions, or did it after they married or had children. But my immediate group, more or less, just married. And that was a profession. Raising a family was your profession.

BA: And you said you married Carl a year after college. What did you do for that year?

HG: I went back to college and audited a few courses. And I was doing some work in the community—charity work in the community.

BA: For what organizations?

HG: Just in general, I guess, whatever it was. I'm trying to think because then in the war years--. We were approaching the war years. I get them—[telephone rings]. I'll let my machine take it.

[Recorder is turned off and then back on.]

HG: We got into the war years and the aftermath. And the refugees were coming and it was so difficult for them coming without any knowledge of English, most of them, and without any money, without anything. And so that was the work I was doing for a long while because I still had fairly good command of my languages at that point and it was helpful. It was helpful because they didn't know how to order food or what the food meant or what they wanted, how to get it. And so it was very helpful for them, I think, and it was a very useful kind of thing for me to feel I was doing because it was vital.

BA: Was the temple involved—

HG: Not in what I was doing.

BA: No. I just wondered. I mean, you know, the way we are involved with the Soviet Jews, you know, who come in recent years—

HG: I somehow can't feel that we were as heavily involved as we are now, or have been. I think that was something that was learned. I think that all of America was very lax. The whole world was lax in really buckling up to help these people.

BA: Oh yeah. But I wondered whether it was, you know, it was a synagogue that was involved or whether it was just some of the organizations.

HG: No. I think it was just all through organizations that I did my work. And then so that you kind of adopted a few couples and their families and watched over them, and saw them, really, become so quickly--. It's marvelous the way they do establish themselves. And it was a great comfort to see this. Yeah.

BB: Tell us what was the business that your husband, Carl, was in.

HG: Carl was in the antique business. His father before him had opened, I think, one of the first—if not the first—antique store on Charles Street, which of course became the hub of the antique business eventually. And he was in that business. In fact he had to go into it very young because he lost his father while he was still in college. And—

BA: Where had he gone to college?

HG: He went to BU. So he finished BU but he had really wanted to go on to law school. And he thought, well, perhaps he'd take some night courses. But that was too difficult running his father's business and taking courses, too. So he never could finish.

Sometimes I think that's why my son, his son, went into law because he felt he was finishing something his father couldn't do. In fact I was afraid he might be doing it for that reason. But he said no. It was something that he just wanted to do.

At any rate, Carl ran that business and he was still running it during the war, but working in another business, too, because that wasn't exactly essential to the war effort. Although he had two small children and a widowed mother and sister that he still had an ear and an eye out for. So that actually he had lots of things to keep him here. But I think really holding down all those jobs didn't contribute to his health because he was only just fifty when he died.

BB: Was he ill?

HG: He had a heart attack. He had had a heart attack about twelve years before when he was only thirty-eight. So we had kind of lived with a sword over our head all those years.

BB: You lost a lot of members of your family, young.

HG: Yes, very young, everyone was young.

BA: Sorry.

HG: Right now I think I'm the longest lived of my whole family. Anyhow. [Laughs]

BB: That's why we want this recording. You'll live eternally.

HG: Thank you.

BB: Tell us about your boys. I know Jerry is an attorney.

HG: Jerry is an attorney.

BB: And your other son, Doug—

HG: My other son, Doug, seems to be following in the antique tradition more or less. He handles lots of different old things that he is interested in and works in the business, has a mail order business in that field and works at an antique mart in between and has a little display. And it's just great nostalgia for a long ago thing.

BB: So both your boys have sort of carried their dad's interests.

HG: Yes, in a way they have.

BB: Well I think now the time has come that we've come to the Roland part of your life.

BA: Maybe we should make sure that she's told us everything in between.

HG: Have I told you everything in between?

BB: You have been widowed for many years, seventeen years, I think your letter said.

HG: That's right before I remarried.

BB: Those years must have been difficult for you with the children.

HG: They were difficult years because--. I mean now I'm here and there are widows all around me. And in the course of time some of my friends were widowed unfortunately. But at that time of life when I was only in my forties, of course, I was it. And I had no desire for more marriage. I just wanted to raise my children and be with my family. I had my mother to look out for and my brother at that point. And our life was—life was just busy like that.

BB: So you had your hands full.

HG: I had my hands full, yes.

BB: You obviously still maintained a relationship to Temple Israel.

HG: Oh yes, always.

BB: Yeah. And you knew Rabbi Gittelsohn as your rabbi.

HG: I knew him as my rabbi, sure. And I knew his wife, Ruth. When she was well she was in Sisterhood and she was very good at Sisterhood. She had lovely prayers of her own and she was a very sweet and very bright woman. And I knew her really better than I knew Roland.

But Roland had had a great impression on my children. That's when I felt a change. I felt a change in the temple when he came. I mean long before I really knew him I felt the temple changing around. It seemed as though ritual was becoming more meaningful.

And it seemed as though because he was so interested in the ethical side of religion, that somehow religion was beginning to play a more important part in daily life or, at least you could see its relationship to daily life more clearly.

BB: Did you boys have him in religious school as a teacher?

HG: Yes. Roland officiated at the burial of my first husband. Then they were friends because Carl had been active in Brotherhood. And the children felt an affinity for that. But he had a tremendous impact on them with his own way of thinking. And Jerry, in particular, so admired his sermons, and his orderly mind and the way he would outline his sermons and summarize them so that you always knew what was going on and where you were going. And to Jerry's kind of mind this was a real wonderful thing. And I think really he had a—as I say he had an impact, a tremendous impact on them.

BA: Can I ask—can I go back a little if we're doing chronological?

HG: Yes.

BA: Did you have any relationship with Rabbi Glozner?

HG: No. I never really knew him.

BB: And you didn't know Judy either.

[end of side A]

BA: Well, you should tell us about your wedding.

HG: My first wedding.

BA: Yes.

BB: I don't think I know what you mean.

HG: Harry Levi, he married me, my first marriage. Okay. And he had retired.

BA: So that was in what year?

HG: Thirty-eight. He had retired. And Carl and I, you know, he was our only rabbi and we assumed when the time came, he would marry us. And we went over--. I didn't even know it was pro forma to do it at that point, but it seemed logical.

We went over to talk to him at his house. And that's when he told us he had retired as of the first of the month after confirmation, I guess. And we weren't going to married until the twenty-first of June. So he would not, probably would not, be in town to marry us. And we were absolutely flabbergasted and flattened.

And we went home, and sat on the couch and looked at each other sadly, and said, "What will we do?" Well the only thing we could do, of course, at that point was Ohabei. That would be my refuge. But we weren't happy at the thought of it. And while we were sitting on the couch commiserating the telephone rang and I said to Carl, "Wouldn't it be nice if that were Harry Levi and he changed his mind." Sure enough. [Laughter] It was, it was. And he said, you know, it had bothered him to refuse.

And now, also, it had come to him Leonard and Janet Kaplan who were going to be married, I think, two days, before or after we were. And they were both confirmands, too, and he said, "I don't see how I can walk out on all four of you. So I'm going to stay in town 'til you're married." And he did.

And my father wasn't well and so we didn't have a big marriage. We had a small—we had a suite at the Copley, just, I don't know, thirty or forty people whatever it was. Besides being the longest day of the year it was also the hottest and there was no air conditioning. I remember that.

And Carl was nervous as any groom would be nervous. And I was nervous. And I was in, I guess, an afternoon dress with a big hat and the brim was going like this. And poor Harry Levi who was suffering at that point was going like this so the whole of the bridal party was in motion. [Laughter] That's what I mean.

BA: Did he have Parkinson's?

HG: Yeah, I think he did. He did. And he, I mean, he really had fought to stay and do this for us and we were most appreciative.

BB: Yes, I'm sure you are.

HG: But the whole scene stays so in my mind.

BB: I'm sure.

HG: Yeah.

BB: Now—

BA: Where'd you go for your honeymoon?

HG: Bermuda. Where did anyone ever go? In those days it was wonderful, yeah.

BB: You had gone to Israel with a group of Temple Israel members at a certain point. I remember. I had just become—

HG: Well this was our great love story, Roland kept saying. If you want my love story on that, too.

BB: That's exactly why I asked because I had that sense.

HG: Actually that was his love story because it wasn't mine until we came home. But this was a temple group he was leading.

BA: It was a family group.

HG: It was a family group. And it came about we went in a funny way because I lost Carl so early and I was so young. I hadn't traveled with him except maybe to camps to go to visit the children in camps. But we just had no time. And all of a sudden--. And one night it seems Jerry, I think I told you, always admired Roland so much.

Oh, I've left out one thing that's important because you wouldn't understand why. I have to stress on this that Jerry meanwhile had married a girl, lovely girl, with a conservative background. And for a short while they belonged to both Temple Emmanuel and Israel. But it was expensive belonging to two temples. And then when the children came and were ready for Sunday school, they were much closer. They lived in—to Emmanuel. And so it was natural they became Emmanuel.

Which, in a way, it kind of breaks my heart because I have one son still there. So it's fifth generation. But my grandchildren would be sixth generation at temple if they were there now.

But anyway, this meant that Jerry belonged to Emmanuel but his heart was still in Israel with Roland. And he worked in town. Jerry's law office is in town. And he called me one Friday night and said, "Mother, do you know whether Roland is speaking tonight or not." And I said, "Frankly, Jerry, I don't" because I must confess at that point I really hadn't had much interest. I hadn't been used to going to temple on Friday nights and I really didn't know. I mean we did go when the children were in confirmation classes, if you remember. [Laughs]

BA: You had to. Didn't you have to go a certain number of years?

HG: But I just wasn't used to it otherwise. And I said, "I'll look at my bulletin." And I said, "Yes, he is speaking, Jerry." Jerry said, "Good. Then I'm going to stop at temple on my way in from town before I go home because I miss his sermons and I want to hear him." So I said, "Fine" because I knew Jerry was interested.

So about ten thirty or eleven o'clock at night my phone rang and it was Jerry. And Jerry said to me, "Mother, why didn't you tell me?" And I said, "Tell you what Jerry?" And he said, "Tell me that Rabbi Gittelsohn was leading a trip to Israel." He said, "You've always wanted to go to Israel and to go with Rabbi Gittelsohn as the guide, it's so perfect. We have to take that trip." And I said I was thrilled at the idea because I had never had a trip with my children like that.

And I did want to go to Israel. But that trip I wasn't sure how I was going to like a whole trip like that. But anyway it was going to be a great opportunity. I said, "Fine, Jerry." He said, "Good, I'll call in the morning." Well he called the temple in the morning. And that's when Roland always picked the story up from that point on.

And he would say that Bessie, his secretary, came to him when he came in and said--. Oh I must tell you. This was supposed to be a family trip.

BB: Yeah.

HG: He loved having young children there because they could, you know, children, eleven, twelve, thirteen years old who would be so impressed with it. But he had traveled with them and liked it. So it was to be a family trip with children.

And Bessie said, "I had a call from Jerry Tischler. And he said that he knew that yours was a family trip and you wanted young children." "But," he said, "If he and his brother and his wife went with their mother, that would be a family trip." [Laughter] And so he said that he said to Bessie—business hadn't been so good up to that point and he still needed people. He said, "All right. Tell Jerry yes because he remembered and he liked

the children.” And he said, “Tell him yes and we’ll make it a family trip. They can come.” [Laughter] And that was how we happened to go to that trip.

BA: So they didn’t have—Jerry didn’t have kids at the time.

HG: Yes. He had one. Did he have--? Yes. He had one, a four year old, a four year old. [Laughs] Yes, a little too young so he wasn’t coming. And Roland took his sister and his daughter with him because his wife, Ruth, at that point—by that time was in the Jewish Center there.

BA: Jewish Memorial Hospital.

HG: Jewish Memorial. So we went to Israel. And in Israel I just, you know, was so impressed being away—being there and being with my children. I had never had a chance to travel, you know.

I didn’t think of Roland as anything but our leader. And when he would say nice things about the children I would bristle with joy, you know. And that was really all I thought about on that trip. But it wasn’t all Roland was thinking about that trip, which I found out when we got back. And so that’s when our relationship started.

BB: Oh it’s a very auspicious beginning in a very auspicious place.

HG: He said he even remembered the moment. [Laughter] It was a moment we were at the—in one of the hotel lobbies about to set off on the day trip. And who was our wonderful teacher?

BB: Helen Fine.

HG: Helen was on the trip. And Helen had been trying to teach me some Hebrew words. And as we stood in the lobby she said, “Now tell her Roland.” She said, “What’s the word I just taught you?” And I said, “B’vakasha.” [Laughter] And he said, “I fell in

love with you with that word.” [Laughter]

BB: May I ask what that word means?

HG: It means thank you, I think, doesn't it. B'vakasha, I think so.

BB: Couldn't prove it by me.

HG: That was probably the beginning and end of my Hebrew anyhow unfortunately. Because I never--. If we wanted Hebrew in my days you went early on a Sunday morning before services, or before Sunday school, and you could have some Hebrew. Otherwise you never really got passed the shema. I never got passed the shema. I managed to sit and fool a lot of people in my day. In my day as a rebbetzin I would say. When I had to sit beside rabbis and everything all the time.

BA: Out of curiosity—

HG: Yes.

BA: Were girls allowed to come to an early Hebrew class as well as boys?

HG: In Levi's day?

BA: Yeah.

HG: Oh I think anybody who wanted Hebrew could come. But there weren't many who did because they weren't getting ready for bar mitzvahs or anything.

BA: No, I realize that. But in my day in Temple Israel Sunday school the girls didn't get the--. You know, they had already started—

HG: Hebrew school started and it wasn't for both?

BA: No. They had started the Tuesday and Thursday afternoon Hebrew school under Joshua Liebman?(sp).

HG: Oh really?

BA: But the girls didn't go. That's why it—

HG: I don't know. Now that you've asked me I don't know because I never went. I never knew anyone who went. [Laughs]

BA: But obviously if you're saying that you could have gone—

HG: I think so, yes. I think so.

BA: That is interesting.

BB: What kind of adjustments did you have being married to a rabbi just forgetting adjustments that you would have being married to anyone?

HG: Well for me-- I always said my life has sort of been chapterized anyhow. It just seemed, you know, that everything ended with a bang. And this was such a brand new chapter.

I was used to just a quiet provincial life. And all of a sudden it was a global life. [Laughs] And thousand of new people came into my [unclear]. And the first time I found myself in a party with twelve or fourteen rabbis was sort of a shocker for the first time. But then gradually I got used to it, you know.

And I got used to all of the weekends I would take when Roland would be scholar in residence speaking. And I would have a whole new group. I'd have the rabbi and the rabbi's family and the board of directors and me. And then several groups and we would be hosted by different rabbis. And I said, "Well I think I'll always remember them." And

he said, "Don't say that because you'll find that after a while it'll merge." And it did merge. And, of course, it did.

The hundreds of temples that we went in and the families. And, of course, he was always so wonderful at remembering and knowing names and calling everything back. And I was always so terrible. I always relied on him.

BB: Yes.

HG: Always.

BB: Yes.

HG: But it was a very different kind of life and very interesting kind of life.

BB: I'm sure.

BA: Stimulating.

HG: Very stimulating, always. It was so different because I had had all those seventeen years I had. I had, you know, when I wasn't busy I had filled with my friends. I think I played in three different bridge games and mah jong games and, you know, anything to fill the days so the nights wouldn't be too long.

BB: I understand perfectly.

HG: And so--. This was so different to be stimulated to go and to go, you know. Bridge and everything just sort of fell by the wayside because I think I told you that that was one bargain that was a premarital agreement that we had; that I would never ask him to play bridge if he never asked me to go up in the pulpit. [Laughter] And I meant it and he meant it, too. So bridge went by the way.

BA: But you were allowed to play with your friends once in a while?

HG: Yeah. And you asked me, you know, when it came to my book reviews way back in the beginning when you asked me that. I never went up on anything. I said I would only give them if I could have a lectern down in the floor at the same level. So that when I first had to get up at a head table on a platform that was not very good fun either. I had to get used to that. Everything took getting used to.

BB: Your boys, obviously, had great admiration for Rabbi Gittelsohn.

HG: Yes.

BB: So that must have made that whole adjustment, family adjustment, easy.

HG: It did. Family adjustments were very easy to make because they respected him and they loved him. They had to get used to him in a different—sort of like friends, in a completely different context. They never knew him as anything but a rabbi.

BB: Yes.

HG: It was really difficult for them. But they loved him and so it worked. And as for his family, poor Ruth had been sick so long, you know that they were just glad to have him be happy and have something of a life again because he hadn't, so that our family adjustments were easy for that reason.

BB: That's good.

HG: But really it was funny with my friends; some that just didn't know him at all and others, lots of them, who knew him at temple but in a different way. [Laughs]

BA: Kind of difficult to have him as a friend rather than a rabbi.

HG: Yes. And my biggest problem with him came on Friday nights because my group was used to having their parties on Friday nights because they could get their

accommodators more easily. And they began trying to change to a Saturday night because he wouldn't come on a Friday night.

And then finally he said, "I will go if we have service. If we don't go out." He won't go out. If I'm in a house and we have a Shabbat, a little Shabbat service before. So sometimes, a couple of times we would go and have a service. We'd go fifteen minutes earlier to somebody's house, and we would have candles [laughs] and wine and bread before the others came.

And I remember Hookie, Hookie Derek, yeah. Hookie always had a Christmas party. She had a wonderful Christmas party. And her sister used to come as Santa Claus and it was all just a lot of fun. Well when Roland came on the scene he said--. She had an upside down Christmas tree and she put a Star of David on the top. It was a Chanukah party. [Laughter]

BB: Well that's an adjustment for everybody.

HG: Yes, it was. It was. It was an adjustment.

BA: Did it lead to your changing your attitude, say, toward Zionism. I mean did you grow up with a family that believed in it or—

HG: I grew up with the blue box. But, I mean, that was the extent of our Zionism. We never carried it further or knew very much further about it. So in that way I was a Zionist. If you call it that. But I knew nothing. And, of course, I learned everything with my travels and being in Israel. I was in Israel probably twelve or thirteen times with Roland. He was there twenty odd because I didn't go with him.

When he was going as president of ARZA he would go, you know, three or four times a year. I would go maybe twice because that was a big trip. But it was fascinating. And, of course, I grew to have so many friends there, too. And friends wherever we went.

Friends in South Africa where we stayed longer than we expected to. But when he had his operation there—

BB: Tell me about that.

HG: He had a strangulated hernia. One day after we came back from the park--. If we'd ever had it out on, you know, with the animals—

BB: The safari.

HG: Yeah. We were on safari in four days. And if you're out there with just little cars it's pretty hard because this needed immediate attention. So we stayed there two extra weeks and so we were there about six weeks in South Africa.

BB: What city did the surgery take place?

HG: In Johannesburg, which was lucky, too, although it wouldn't have been too bad in some of the other cities. But Joburg is easier. Cape Town would have been all right. But Joburg was the best. And we had more--. We had friends in all the cities but most in Joburg.

BB: Interesting.

HG: Yeah, it was. He said he still owed them. I think he was supposed to give about twenty-five lectures in the course of the month. And I think he still owed them seven when we left. [Laughter]

BB: On a slightly different subject; and I think this might be a difficult question. If you had been born male instead of female do you think that your life--. I mean, of course, your life would have been very different. But in what ways do you think, that you can think of off the top of your head that your life would have been very different?

HG: I can't imagine what it would have been like because--. I think, you know, I lived through the years when my mother wasn't well. She was—she had a terrible time with her health with her periods. And she had had an operation or was planning one.

She had had her family and if she'd been given a hysterectomy it would have been fine. But she woke up--. The doctor did not want to give her a hysterectomy because she was so young. That was the feeling then. She was only in her thirties. But she'd had her three children. She didn't want more children. And she woke up with the same thing with this terrible hemorrhaging that she had every month for a week or two weeks. It was life threatening each time. And it went on for years.

And then finally she had, she had x-ray treatments to dry her up. And she had, I don't know, fifteen or twenty of those. And they were awful to go through. So it was a very painful period.

And I was a daughter in the house, you know, so that I was very sensitive to it. I think more than my brothers would have been. And maybe as a man I wouldn't have been. And so, you know, that affects you.

And I just can't imagine what I would have done. I would have gone out in the world, certainly. I would have gone into a field. But what the field would have been, what different kind of courses I would have taken I have no idea.

BB: It's an odd question. I just wondered if you had any thoughts--. If you had any interests that because you were a—

HG: That I had given up.

BB: Were not encouraged at that time. That was sort of really what I meant.

HG: Yes. I think you did mean that. But I think because of that it's a hard question to answer.

BB: I think it is.

HG: Because I really--. It was very much a liberal arts background I had. It wasn't really--. I don't know what field I was really ready for, maybe publishing or something. I thought maybe I would write but I wasn't that great a writer. It was my major. But I don't know. You just don't sit down and say, "Today I'm going to write." And I'd thought about it many times but never did it. So it's no good if that's the kind of writer you are. You have to sit yourself down and write.

BB: Hard work.

HG: It's hard work. And whether I would have done anything more with that if I'd been a man I don't know. It's possible.

BB: It might not have been a good question. But I—

HG: No, it's a free question.

BB: I just wondered. Do you have anything else that you would like us to—to tell us about or to know about about when someone who doesn't know you is going to be, you know, interested in you and anything else that you think might be of interest?

HG: Well I think maybe a retirement community is of interest.

BB: Oh yes, your life here.

HG: My life here—

BB: Yes.

HG: Which is different. I mean if you may remember we lived on the twenty-ninth floor Jamaicaway. And had Roland left me when I was there it would have been a very different situation I would have found myself in.

I know I would probably have used more of the resources of temple at that point because they, you know, have been very, very nice about sending me all the information on this—on the groups that meet, the support groups that meet. And every time my answer has always been, you know, that I thank them.

But there were so many people here in this retirement community in the same boat that I had my own built-in support group right here. We supported each other, which is, in affect, what a support group does anyhow.

BA: And you didn't have to get yourself all the way into the temple to drive and—

HG: Well this is a problem. The driving is a problem. I'm glad I'm still driving but I don't drive at night and I don't like a distant driving. So I'm somewhat restricted. And that is what happens they do drive you out for something.

But a retirement community such as this is has so many bright active—actively and intellectual and intelligent. And they're wonderful people here who still do so much in the world, that think so much. And they form so many different kinds of groups, you know, like the "Great Decisions" that we do. And they have drama groups and book—

BB: Book reviews. [Laughter]

HG: Yeah. There are a few book reviews. But I haven't volunteered.

BA: Gee, I'm surprised. [Laughter] What's more, you're being a lot more positive about what happened since Roland died than what happened when your first husband, Carl, died, that--. I mean there are more supportive groups for you to be active with and to be

involved with.

HG: Well when he died, when Carl died, I was very busy with my children. And it's a different kind of a loss, a terrible loss. I mean I had two wonderful husbands. And it was a terrible loss.

But with Carl, he was working and I was working separately. Our work was sort of separate because he had to out with his and I was in. And our life together was beautiful but it wasn't constant like it was with Roland in the second marriage where we did everything together especially after he retired. And we could go away for the whole summer and be together. Carl and I never had a chance to do that. So that my life went on like I was half a person when Carl died, but the half a person still went on doing the same things: taking care of the children and the mother and being with friends.

And so much with friends in those days outside that some of the girls I was closest to were like sisters to me and they were wonderful. And they were with me or took me or they were there all the time for me, which was great, which was helpful.

But when you come to a second marriage—and the marriage that I had with Roland which was so beautiful and so different—we were together all the time. And it's just completely different now. Life is completely different.

I think had I come here as a widow—I don't know as I would've come here as a widow—but had I, I would probably have been more friendly with just the other widows, single people in this house originally.

But because I came with Roland and we were together our friends were couple, more couples. And they have remained my friends, which is very good, which is very good, because I never understood.

The one person that I remembered who was widowed near the same time I was I used to take—purposely have her over when Carl would be busy. And she said to me once, “You know I’d like to come some time when Carl is home.” And she said, “You know, I like to have a man around every once in a while.” It never occurred to me.

And then I began to understand, you know. It’s just to get a man’s viewpoint to have. It’s a little different than being in an all female group. So that I have lots of female friends here, of course, and we see each other all the time. But it’s also nice to have these couples.

BB: Yes, I can understand that.

HG: It makes a big difference. But just since I lost Roland two of my good friends here lost their husbands, you know. And that’s the thing. Ruth Segal, Arnold died—Jim’s father, just exactly a year after Roland--. Jim reminded me because it was Chanukah time when Roland died and Chanukah time when Arnold, Jim’s father died. And so Ruth had to get used to it. And then Frank Auman died. You knew Frank, too. And Sarah was right up the hall. So that’s the way life goes on here. It goes on the same way outside. But you’re much more aware of it here.

BB: Yes.

HG: But intellectually it keeps you alive here because there is so much going on.

BB: Well that’s what they had hoped would be the case.

HG: Yes. Yes, they did. And it’s a beautiful spot. I think it’s important to have a pretty spot. They’ve opened little gardening groups for the people, you know. They’ve established a place where they have gardens that are chest high. And, you now, the men have so many fields that they have been expertised in. And they often give lectures.

Roland had taken great care not to be a rabbi in this house, you know. He did not want to be the house rabbi. And so we never—he never did anything rabbinical. Friendly, yes, friendly rabbi, but not real rabbinical.

But he was just at the point where he was going to give a series of lectures because that's what they were doing. He was just supposed to do it that fall and he couldn't. And he couldn't do that. He was supposed to go to Washington that winter, the next winter to give another speech in Washington, and he couldn't. And he was supposed to go to Cathedral of the Pines in the summer for their fiftieth anniversary and that was out. All these things he was going to do. So it's hard.

BB: I'm sure it is.

BA: Well this place does have a marvelous reputation.

BB: Oh yes. Betsy do you have any other questions?

BA: I can't think of anything right at the moment. I think she's given us some fascinating things.

HG: I can't remember whether there was anything else that you might have wanted to know that I haven't told you.

BB: Well I read your letter very carefully because I thought that would be a wonderful starting out point.

HG: You thought it was a starting out. I thought it was a finish, you know. [Laughs]

BB: It was very enjoyable really.

BA: The idea is that what you had in the letter gives the person who's interviewing—

HG: A chance—

BA: Yeah, a chance to do it.

BB: Just sort of a background.

HG: Yes. I understand.

BA: That we are doing a really [unclear]—I won't say an experiment. But it's the primary development.

HG: Yeah.

BA: In fact they're using Temple Israel for it, for the Jewish Women's Archives. And then they wanted—they're going to try to do it throughout the country. But they wanted us to do it so that we would—

BB: For purposes of this tape I want to thank you very, very much, Bubbles. It was a pleasure, as always, to be in your company.

HG: It was lovely to have you both here with me. And thank you for your attention.

BB: Not at all. We loved it. The pleasure was ours.

BA: Yes.

[END OF INTERVIEW]