United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Theodora Klayman
April 26, 2004
RG-50.549.02*0079

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Theodora Klayman, conducted by Neenah Ellis on April 26, 2004 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Chevy Chase, Maryland and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

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Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection. This is an interview with Dora Klayman conducted by Neenah Ellis on April 26th, 2004, in Chevy Chase, Maryland. This interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's post Holocaust interview project, and it's a follow up interview to a USHMM videotaped interview conducted with Dora Klayman in 2002. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A. Dora, maybe you could start here. We ended your video interview with your marriage, more or less, and we showed some photographs of all the family members who came.

Answer: Mm-hm.

Q: Can you talk some about that day and what -- what was your -- what were -- what were your expectations? What did you think your future was going to be when you got married?

A: Wow. It was a very strange way that -- that I got married, to begin with, and I don't remember how much time I had to talk about that. But I mentioned at that time that I met my husband a year before, and we met on the train. All that was there, I

think. And so I haven't actually seen him prior to that, for a whole year. Prior to the wedding, I mean. For a whole year. He came two weeks before our wedding. And I had never in my life seen a Jewish wedding, and I have never -- so I really didn't know exactly what was going to happen. And very differently from weddings that I'm witnessing now, including my sons. It never even occurred to me to think about arranging for anything or thinking about anything except my dress. That was about the only thing I thought about. And everything else I sort of just let be. It's like somebody -- was somebody else's thing to do it, a sort of -- sort of like I was going to a party, and my col -- main -- my -- my main concern was to think about, you know, Dan's coming and how is that going to be? Am I st -- am I truly, really in love or am I just making things up? Am I just bored in Switzerland, or unhappy in Switzerland or lonely? Because, of course, I had come there only -- less than a year before and I'd left all my friends behind in -- in Croatia and Yugoslavia. Had a boyfriend whom I, you know, forgot the minute I got on the train. Obviously it wasn't a very serious thing. And I lived a totally, totally different life in Switzerland than I had ever thought I would live. I mean, not only did I not know about Jewish weddings, I didn't know anything about Jewish period. And you know, I knew very little on -- my experience was one month in Switzerland before that, and I -- you know, a few years before that. So everything was sort of going to [indecipherable] plus I was going to meet my aunt and uncle, who were coming in from Switzerland -- from -- I'm sorry, from Israel, and I had never seen them as a adult.

Q: Which aunt and uncle was this?

A: That's my father's brother and my father's sister, both of whom decided to come in for my wedding. And so there were so many different things. I mean, I have -- I-I have -- I had very little -- almost no contact with them. My aunt, of course, I didn't even see a -- at all after the war. I only had pictures, I knew she existed. My father's sister.

Q: Can you say their names?

A: Lina. That was Lina who married a wi -- a Weesler, and I knew that she had two children and I had the -- I had the daughter's photograph with me when I was living in -- in Yugoslavia. Her photograph was left because was -- had been sent to my maternal grandparents, must be. I don't know how I got that photograph. And it was she as a child, and it's a beautiful little girl with -- and she's holding a gorgeous doll. And I had that after the war. And it was sort of like all -- like looking at Shirley Temple, like a movie star or something, because we didn't have such dolls or such clothes or such anything. So that was -- that -- that was my only image of -- of this aunt with this daughter, my dau -- my cousin Dina who now lives in Israel. And her -- her -- she had a brother, Rubin, whom -- whose picture I did not have and I -- he also now lives in Israel and of course, we now we know -- know each other. So -- so my aunt was coming. And then my uncle was coming, whom I last saw, I think as a seven or eight year old in Yugoslavia, because he came back from the prisoner of war camps -- camp. He was in Germany during the war. He was in the Yugoslav

army when the war started and so he -- he was -- he survived as a prisoner of war, he came back. He married a woman he met there in Yugoslavia, I think he may have known her from before. She and her three sisters had all together survived Auschwitz. Oh, it's a unbelievable story which I can't get her to talk about on tape, which I wish I could. They now live in Israel. But at that time he came -- he came, he found me in Ludbreg where I was living during the war, and he -- I remember that he -- he tried to talk to me about going with him, and I refused to go. I remem -- sort of remember that conversation. I -- I -- I had that memory, and of course he left me a picture, which I have, which you know, beautiful handwriting says, this is a -- in memor -- to remember him by. And he's wearing his army uniform. So, all of a sudden this aunt and uncle were going to come to the wedding. So that was going to be that. And of course my m -- my future mother-in-law was coming with my husband on the boat. And her brother, who is -- who survived the war -- actually th -- my husband's family left -- left Russia actually mol -- Moldavia -- Moldova in the early 1900's, but this brother went to -- to France rather than to the States. And he remained in Paris studying medicine. As a physician went to Oran, to al -- Algeria, married there, had one child. And during the conflict in Algeria with the liberation of Algeria from France, they came to live in Marseille. And they had a -- at the time of my marriage, they had a 13 year old -- 12 year old son. So they were coming to the wedding as well, and my brother-in-law, whom I had met bef -- before he came to visit me one time in Switzerland. And everybody, of course, had waited for my

brother-in-law Leon to -- to inform everyone, you know, who is this person that my husband was getting -- my future husband was getting ready to marry. And Leon is, you know, he's darling, he's here all the time, we are very close now. But a -- he wasn't very -- there's a big joke that at the time he only wrote to them, keep smiling. That's about what he sent to New York. And we had a good time, you know, we -- we -- when he came to visit, which was -- it would be before the wedding. And you know, we -- we rowed the boat and sang row, row, row the boat on Lake Geneva, and had a good time. But he -- he didn't tell me -- I mean, he was telling me things about Dan, but it was -- my future husband, but it was like, you know, sort of. So I had to de -- still depend on my letters, so he didn't -- wasn't very explicit. So -- and then of course -- so all these people were coming, and -- and Dan was coming two weeks ahead of time. And I think my -- so my wedding memories really go back to -- mostly to that day when he arrived.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And getting ready for his arrival.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And that was more important than the wedding itself. And that looms sort of large in terms of preparation and anxiety and -- and what was I going to wear and what was -- what was I going to look like and what he looked like and do I remember him, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Q: It had been a whole year since you'd seen him, wow.

A: Yes, almost, not quite. Yeah, we -- we met in the fall of the previous year. And this was -- yeah, it was almost a year, it was July 15th -- I'm sorry, August 15th that he arrived. We were married September one. So my aunt, who now lives in Israel, the one who just recently did this interview with us. She remembers every single detail and tells it over and over and over again. She sort of lived through that with me. And this was -- this was one sort of aspect also of the wedding, is that she -- she was very lonely in -- in Switzerland. She was married to my uncle, my brother's -- my brother's ha -- I'm sorry, my hu -- my father's brother. That was Yoshi and she's Monda. Monda and Yoshi survived Bergen-Belsen and ended up in Switzerland and had two children there. They lived from the beginning from hand to mouth, in fact they were in those camps, the relocation camps. And Monda got incredibly -- I don't know, I think I should say traumatized by the experience more-so than any of my other relatives. And her whole family except for her sister was killed in -- in -- during the war, and she found herself now in this new country without a language, without any means and -- and having these children, and she became -- basically she -- she -- she spent all her time cleaning and cooking and just taking care and cleaning to the extent of being really beyond no-normal cleaning. I mean, to sacrificing any kind of -- much social contact. And they lived in this very closed Orthodox Jewish community, where she didn't have true, true, good friends. And she tells me the story that even my arrival was a sort of like they -- you know, they were wondering, you know, how is this going to be, they didn't have much money. And how was this

going to be, you know, they have to support another person. And I was going to the university and I needed a bit of money for -- for tuition and for travel, because I -- they were in Montre and I had to travel to University of Lausanne by train. And they were able to get a little scholarship for me from the Jewish community. But it was a very close community. And what she found, and I'm telling you what she says to me, what she found that -- that I became her best friend. Because at that point I was 19 and she was 30 some -- could figure out how old she was, but I can't remember it now. Anyway -- and when she found out that I had met my husband -- I mean my future husband on the train and when the letters arrived, she went through that courtship with me, and almost sort of vicariously lived through that. And so when the day came of the -- of the wa -- I mean, she remembers in detail what I said to her about, you know, when he proposed and -- and you know, where she was sitting. She was sitting in the -- she was working in the bathroom, cleaning something and I came and -- and told her and just exactly what I told her, you know, and so it was like a big thing for her, bigger than it was for me. I was like, yeah, I'm getting married. Sort of a crazy 19 year old, 20 year old --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- by that point. So that I think, you know, she remembers in detail about -- and tells me all over again about, you know, my going to -- to get Dan at the -- at the train station, you know, wearing a -- a two piece blue dress with, you know, that was -- that was perfectly ironed and my nails were perfectly done, etcetera, etcetera. And

it's funny because -- and of course, I think I told on the other tape that one of the -- anyhow, I don't know, that -- that one of the nice things that my uncle had done for me is that before Dan came and I met him again, my uncle said, you know, the wedding is all arranged for, which was fine with me, I hadn't do -- done very much about that. And -- but you have not -- you know, you think you want to get married, but if something doesn't go right, you have two weeks and if you want to cancel it, it's okay.

Q: Oh --

A: Which was --

Q: That's great of him to say that.

A: That was very great of him to say and I appreciated it then and I appreciate it more as I am an adult and have children of my own. But he did say that, and so I have that in the background, so I was feeling fairly safe and okay. And now, as an adult I look back and everybody says, my God, what a risk, you know, all of this thing was. But it didn't seen to me that way at all. I mean, you know, you marry -- you meet somebody, you like them, and you just get married.

Q: Did you have a sense of -- this was more than 10 years after the end of the war.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: But did it have a sense for you because of all your aunts and uncles being there who had survived, and even though you were a child then, did it have any sense of continuance, and we -- of surviving, people having survived the war. Was there that

kind of a celebrat -- celebration as part of it? You hear people say this, people who got married in the late 40's --

A: Uh-huh.

Q: -- or immediately after the war. I'm wondering if that attitude was at all present in your wedding?

A: Probably less so.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Maybe because -- because it was late -- so much later and because I was so young when I lost my parents. And I lived with my uncle -- my -- my mother's sister's husband, whom I adored and he adored me. And you know, I star -- I started my life with him when I was, you know, in elementary school. So -- so I was in -- it-it -- it was, in a way, contrary to that i-in -- in a sense that he wasn't going to be able to be at my wedding. So in a way, I -- I her -- I felt the absence of a parent, but not my real parents, because it was so far in the background. I mean, I know that that is how my uncle and my aunt felt, and -- and to my uncle it was extremely important. That's why, you know, my aunt tells me that to my uncle -- and he had told me -- he passed away in '90, but he told me how important it was to him that -- that there was this continuation and th -- it was extremely important to them that I marry someone who is Jewish and that was behind their inviting me, much -- very much so. And that was said to me. You know, they wanted me to -- to meet people because they knew at -- my aunt says that she knew that -- he knew that if I was left in Yugoslavia I wouldn't

marry somebody Jewish and that would be the end of that. There was just nobody to meet there. And they thought I would meet someone in Montre, through them. And I met people, but I had pre-empted it all by meeting Dan on the -- on the train. So -- so it was extremely important to them, it was -- it was for them, because they were that generation to -- who understood it. I ha -- I-I don't think I understood it fully.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I may have understood it after my children were born, but at that time I didn't dwell much on the Holocaust and on the losses. I grew up happy and in school and just being fairly norm -- normal teenager. And I intellectually knew, but emotionally I ru -- I -- you know, as a child I used to say things like oh, I have to do this. Now, if I had a mother, I wouldn't have to do that. But that's sort of more, you know, a kid thing, you know.

Q: Yup.

A: I can -- I-I think, yeah, I had more of a kind of a response like maybe divorced -- divorced ch -- parents' children have, you know? If I didn't have this stepmother I would be doing much better kind of thing. But some of it is totally unrealistic. So the fact that my uncle wasn't coming to the wedding was sad for me. And I had originally when I -- when I decided that I would get married to Dan, I -- I -- I wou -- I -- I was -- I wrote to him with great trepidation about that. My Swiss family was happy bec -- because Dan was Jewish and everything. I translated all the letters and they knew all the particulars, you know, and everything read well, so it was okay.

But my uncle, of course, knew nothing about that. My -- my uncle -- my -- Dietrich is what I called him, so I'll refer to him that way, probably easier. He knew nothing about anything until I -- and in our house it was like an unspoken -- ma, what do I say unspoken, it was a spoken word. You are not to get married until you graduate from the university. So here I am in my sophomore year and I'm getting married to somebody and taking off fre -- for -- for the United States, leaving, basically, you know, him behind, which was mentioned in a very unkind way one of the books written about [indecipherable] and about him. But --

Q: You've mentioned that before.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: It just really bugged me. So -- but because I didn't sort of say, oh I'm -- you know, I'm going to leave you, which is circumstances, and I certainly did communicate with him from now on and -- and [indecipherable] that. But -- but he couldn't come because he di -- he was just not healthy enough and -- and strong enough to make the journey. And he wrote that -- you know, he wrote back saying that if I -- if my aunt and uncle in Switzerland felt that it was a good thing for me to do, then it was okay. So I went ahead. Anyway, so there are [indecipherable] sort of a [indecipherable]

Q: Mm-hm. So you got married in September 1st, 1959, is that --

A: 1958.

Q: ’58. And did you go immediately to the States then?

A: Oh, it was very strange, it was -- it -- we couldn’t get my visa on time, so we sort of spent a month in Europe. I had to go -- well, we got a visa. Oh, there was American visa, of course meaning that you have to have your health checked, and then you have to go and -- that -- but also my passport was expiring, my Yugoslav passport. So we had to go to Geneva and extend my passport. And all of that took at least a month. At -- at one point it looked almost as if Dan was going to have to leave without me. But we traveled -- w-we -- we traveled some, we went to some parts of Switzerland, we went to Lausanne and -- and we got -- we went to Gstaad, and went to Italy and then back, so that that’s how we spent the month. It was truly a honeymoon -- a moon, a moon, how a moon [indecipherable] fast. And then finally the visa came and -- and the passport was extended and the visa came and -- and we were able to -- to -- to go together. But I have to tell you -- I don’t know whether I said anything. I should have listened to the end of the tape, but I don’t know whether I told you anything about what the wedding was like.

Q: I don’t think so.

A: No?

Q: I don’t think there was anything like that.

A: Well, it was a very different affair from anything that happens here. It was in -- in the mountains, in the Swiss mountains, in -- in -- in a place called the Chateau Deux where there was the f -- there is a family -- there was a family in Moltar, a Jewish

family that ran a kosher ho -- a kosher restaurant and -- a pensionne actually, and they also used to rent a -- I think it was in theirs, a hotel in Chateau Deux for Passover. And I was there once at Passover before, where you know, where Orthodox people would go to a hotel and spend the entire Passover there so that they don't have to do anything at home. And that's where the wedding -- that's where the wedding was to take place. And we all had to go up there with a little bus. And I had this dress on that I had designed by looking at -- because my ha -- my uncle worked -- this is wer -- the work he found a -- in Switzerland. He -- they sent -- they sent people who were in these lo -- relocation camps to learn a trade, and they sent him to learn how to be a couture ha -- cutter, a cloth --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- cloth cutter. So he worked for a Jewish family again in -- in -- in -- was a very close community -- a Jewish family that had sort of a small couture house in -- in Montre and so I could design my own dress, and it was made. And I -- Dan had sent me from the States, "Bride" magazine and I did -- I sort of followed some of that, and I had this pretty dress. And then you go up there -- we went up there with a bus and I had to not see them for three days. But -- well, at least, because it was really longer that you don't see people in Orthodox Jewish wedding of -- weddings, the bride and groom are not to see each other. And we ran, of course, all over Montre that whole time because this had to be done and that had to be done. And the town was so small we ran into each other all the time. But officially we didn't see each

other. And then he was to -- to get me the bouquet. And of course you know -- you know what it's like here, I mean, how much you go through to for the bride to get these flowers and you're thinking about it. I told him I wanted to have white carnations. That's all I told him. I had no idea what to do and he had not the foggiest idea what to do. So, the afternoon before he goes to a florist and he said, I need a bouquet of white carnation. And they said, well, how many do you want? He said, well, whatever is appropriate for a bride. And they practically fainted [indecipherable] at the florist shop. Started running all over Montre apparently, looking for enough carnations to -- to make a bouquet, which they eventually came up with and put it together. So that's what he brought. And then there was a big fight about -- I think every wedding has to have a fight, and this one had to do with whatever hat he was going to wear. And he wanted to wear a yarmulke, which people here wear in Jewish weddings and that's fine. But that community and that level of observance called for a proper hat. A real -- one of those black hats, not a ha -- top hat, but you know, a hat. Well, he want -- didn't want to wear one. So there was a really tight situation, and finally his mother persuaded him to wear it. And -- and he wore it just for under the chupah, that's it. After that he took it off the second he could. But he wore it. And we were married by -- by the grand rabbi of Luxembourg, who had been a memb -- who had been a friend of the family. And he came from Luxembourg to -- to marry us. And the chupah was outdoor, which is very proper in Orthodox Jewish weddings. It was outdoors in a beautiful setting,

with you know, mountains in the background. And the entire Jewish community was invited, but not for dinner. Dinner was just the family, but everybody was invited for, you know, right now I think they would say this is a [indecipherable] wedding, you know, because you had little sandwiches and drinks and that was -- you know, that was that and everybody came out. And -- and then there was a family -- there was a family dinner after that. So -- and then after that we took our [indecipherable] on the train and that was that. That was the wedding.

Q: And your smiling, it was -- it was a good memory.

A: Oh, it was a great memory.

Q: Yeah.

A: I loved it. To me, it was -- except a horri -- I had a horrible headache on the way up and I had to sit there -- that's another thing of Orthodox Jewish weddings, you have a separation of the -- of the sexes and I -- I -- you sit there -- I've not -- now seen it many times, you -- you sit and the -- all the females come and say hello and -- and you -- you sit with your -- you know, with your veil up and -- or down, actually, I have pictures, and just, you know, talk with people. And you -- you were led to the chupah by two females and a man by two males, rather than, as we do mostly in the States, and certainly the way my son got married, the -- the -- the parents take you. Both parents, you know, and -- take you -- take the bride and the groom. And the -- the -- the father gives the bride away, none of that [indecipherable]. So my aunt and

my mother-in-law took me to the chupah. And my uncle and I think Dan's brother took him to the chupah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Or maybe it was his uncle, I'm not sure. I don't remember. His uncle and aunt from -- from France, who came.

Q: Uh-huh. Was there something symbolic about the carnation, or was it just a --

A: No, I just liked it.

Q: -- favorite flow -- okay, I'm gonna st-stop the tape and flip it over.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Dora Klayman. This is tape number one, side B. So you, after you had a month of traveling and getting to know each other --

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: -- you came to the States. To New York?

A: Came to New York. Was quite an experience. After the -- the -- you know, beautiful Switzerland and -- and the lake and this and that and we spend time in the most love -- the loveliest parts of Europe, to come to New York, which I was looking forward to, but I was afraid that it was going to be gray and ugly, sort of very European, but huge. And we came on a ship, we came on the Queen Mary, and -- and a -- I-I think if -- if I have to talk about experiences in coming, I think I have

to go slightly back to qu -- to queen -- to the queen -- the Queen Mary. It was -- I was so afraid to go on a ship because on my trips during the summer in Croatia, when we used to go to the island of Solta, we once went on a boat that took three hours from Split to Solta, which you can see from one another. It was like boom-boom-boom-boom, boom-boom-boom, you know, and everything was there, you know, and sometimes goats and vegetables and everything, and it was just, you know, a -- a small boat. And I would get -- I would get seasick, and so I was very afraid of being seasick on the way. And Dan assured me that I wasn't going to get seasick because these ships are very big and they don't rock and so on and so forth. And I remember in la -- getting, you know, close on the small boat that you go to the small boat to the ship and looking at this ship and saying, my God, it is enormous, it's like a huge skyscraper or something. And so I was reassured, but we did run one day into a hurricane. It was fall, the hurricanes are there, and near Ireland we ran into a hurricane, and Dan, who claimed he was never sick on ships, got very sick on a ship. Both of us were sick for the day. And then I have, you know, very sort of Americanization memories o-on that ship because it was now -- it was now a different world already, it wasn't just the arrival, it was already -- it was, you know, being -- being on foreign territory all by myself, and having to speak English all the time, and --

Q: How was your English?

A: My English was good because -- I mean decent, because I had studied English all through high school.

Q: Mm.

A: And I was an English major in college.

Q: Oh.

A: So --

Q: Great.

A: Yeah. So one of the reasons I met Dan is because I was dying to speak English to somebody. I -- I had met him because there were -- I think I talked on the tape about the discussion he was having on the ship with somebody and everybody was listening, it was [indecipherable] in Little Rock and all of that and I was dying to talk about things. So I sort of took little walks until he started talking to me. And so I-I -- you know, because I had -- I had studied English for a long time, but I had no experience actually speaking. There were no Americans or English speakers, and I was one of the very few studying English at that time in Yugoslavia. So -- so my English was decent, but there were many things I didn't know. I mean, lack of vocabulary, you know, and -- oh, and -- and the thing that really improved my English by the way, is while I was -- while I was still in Switzerland and we wrote to each other, and I -- I have these things, I would -- I asked Dan, good student that I am, I said to him, please correct my letters. And so what he did is -- is -- in -- he wrote me corrections back, but not just, you know, every correction, but he would

write me, for example, when you say something like, I don't know, I am at my second book, you don't say at, you say on. I am on my second book. And then he would give me a whole lesson on -- on prepositions. So, even during our -- our --

Q: He was a good teacher.

A: -- courtship, I -- I -- I learned -- I learned a lot. And I spoke with a reas -- with a somewhat British accent, from wherever, and I was still on aunt and cahn't, but I corrected that when I got here. So, my English was okay, but I lacked vocabulary and I lacked cultural knowledge, and -- and -- and that was one of my -- my low points on that ship that I remember. Sitting one evening in one of the lounges and there were a number of Americans, and they were sitting around the piano and we were included, sitting around the piano and someone is playing the piano and they are singing American songs. And I knew some, but I didn't know as many as they did, of course. I knew, you know -- well, anyway, it doesn't matter, but you know, just -- just American songs, from s -- from sea to shining sea and whatever they were. And I was never very good on my -- on memorizing voca -- words anyway, so that was enjoyable. But then Dan s -- ordered a ginger ale. We were sitting at the table, he ordered ginger ale and I said, what is ginger ale? And he said, well, you'll see when it comes. I said, well, what is it? And he's, well, you'll see when it comes. And I started crying. And I so remember that.

Q: Why?

A: All of a sudden --

Q: You just felt frustrated, or --

A: -- all of a sudden -- and he was terribly frustrate -- I mean, he was very upset that he had upset me. But a -- it -- it -- it -- then somehow all of a sudden everything came together. My God, I don't know anything about this country. I don't even know what someone orders at the table. What am I going to do? S -- and you know, he comforted me and then the ginger ale came and that was the end of that story. But I do -- I -- it -- it was sort of like, you know, you -- I remember a few little things that sort of were these kind of very small things. You think you, as an ESL teacher all my life later on, I was always aware how small things count. Just nothing counts -- nothing -- nothing [indecipherable] can trigger you, trigger that sense that you are a foreigner in a foreign country and that you don't really know everything, and -- and how much, you know, you miss and it doesn't have to do -- it does -- has nothing to do with Shakespeare, it has to do with ginger ale.

Q: And at that age too, it's a kind of time when you want to belong --

A: Yes.

Q: -- and fit in.

A: Exactly.

Q: Yeah.

A: Exactly. And I -- I didn't -- you know, I remember watching "Fantasia" on that ship, that was when it --

Q: In theater?

A: -- was in its original -- on the original version in the theater on -- on Queen Mary. But then we came into New York and I have pictures of myself on the ship with the Statue of Liberty behind me, early in the morning.

Q: What was that like?

A: That was fantastic. That was just fantastic, you know. It was just exactly what I expected, you know, the -- obviously the statue is such a powerful symbol all over the world and it was then as well. And, you know, seeing it was just amazing. And then we come to New York. And, you know, people always say, oh, my goodness, it's -- New York is ugly, but I thought it was actually very beautiful, because I think I expected to be gray and it's actually very colorful. And instead of disliking all the wild colors and red bricks and -- and there weren't graffiti in those days, but you know, posters and -- and advertising and you know, all of that. It was sort of -- it was exciting. It was exciting and I loved it. And Dan's parents waited for us and some other relatives.

Q: And this was October?

A: It was October.

Q: Beautiful time of year.

A: Yeah, it was a beautiful time of the year. And I remember very much it was October, because I remember witnessing my first Halloween very shortly after that. But anyway, we went to -- to Dan's parents' apartment and that was a shock. They lived in a very small apartment in a northern -- northern part of Manhattan across

from -- from Fort Tryon Park. That was the Inwood section of Washington Heights --

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: -- where a lot of Jewish community had settled. And my father-in-law had a small drugstore around the corner from where they lived. But they never -- they -- they lived not in -- they lived in an apartment to which they moved when the kids were little and they never moved out of there. And was very small. It was a one bedroom apartment and I've never lived in a one bedroom apartment before in my life. So here I come to the land of -- of -- of milk and honey and these people aren't living as well as I was used to. I grew up in a big house, and -- when I lived in Zagreb and I was roomed with friends, they -- was in a -- they -- the government had taken much away from them, but they had owned that villa that they lived in, and they also owned the land -- the little villa on the sha -- Solta. So, it was, you know, even though it was small, it was beautiful furniture and it overlooked the garden and -- and my aunt and uncle in Switzerland who were really not well-to-do, had two bedrooms. And the boys had one and they had one and I was -- I slept on the couch in the living room for the year I was there. But now, my in-laws lived in a one bedroom apartment with a tiny, tiny kitchen in an old house. In an old -- I mean old house, old building in New York that overlooked a courtyard, and you know, all the old buildings, the way they are. And my mother-in-law was sort of immovable in -- in terms of moving anywhere. I mean, eventually we got them to move here, but she

wouldn't change apartments and she liked where she was and she didn't -- changing a chair was like a major issue. And so they just continued living there, like they did when da -- when they first started out. But it was across from the -- from fort -- Fort Tryon Park and my husband adored the cloisters and spent time when he was at home studying there. And --

Q: And where did you and he live when you got there?

A: I wa -- we moo -- we moved to an even worse place.

Q: Did you move -- did you stay with them for a short time?

A: No, no, no --

Q: No.

A: -- we didn't. We didn't because what had happened was that my husband, when he met me he was just returning from India where he had spent a year as a Fulbright doing [indecipherable] work at the school of tropical medicine on Calcutta. And he took a very long way home and met me on the -- on the way. He went up to Japan and then to -- went to some -- he took I -- I don't know what kind of boats and went to Egypt and then he was in Turkey [indecipherable] was in Turkey on that trip and -- and to Italy and eventually to Yugoslavia, back to Italy where he took a ship to go home. And anyway, he a -- he had tried after that to find a job that he would -- that he wanted and it took a very long time. It was the time of what he used to call the Eisenhower depression, and -- not depression, it was, oh what they calling? Recession, sorry. And it was very difficult and he wanted to have a research job, and

he couldn't -- he didn't really want to work pharma -- pharmaceutical companies. He had done that during his graduate days and he just didn't want to do that again, he wanted an academic position. It was very hard to come by. He had been waiting for a position at NIH and it didn't come. While we were in Switzerland, he got a --a telegram saying that the position had opened and he is in at NIH, but it was too late. Because we were getting married, he took a position to teach at Hoffstra ha -- College, which is now University of Long Island. And he knew that that wasn't going to be great, but he took it anyway because, I mean, we had to live on something, and I certainly didn't have any money. So, he talked to some friends who said they would find us someplace to live on Long Island. So when we came, there was a place that they had sublet for us, and it was a sublet in someone's house. It was a second -- on the second story of someone's house. I must have been in love, that place was ga -- ghastly, you know. But I had ha -- I think I had a very typical American experience, people all -- pe -- so many people tell me about their horrible first year.

Q: First place [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well I had -- I had one, but I wasn't exactly expecting it. So this was -- Mr. and Mr. -- Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor and we had to go through their living room and the television was always on, to the second story. And it was filthy, and I spend the time -- I have just come from my super clean u -- eat off the floor aunt, and here it was like, you know, cockroach heaven.

Q: Oh my.

A: And anyway, we cleaned it up. It was a -- it was just a one room, one kitchen, share bathroom. And we didn't have a car, and -- to find something else, so it was a very difficult few months. Eventually -- that was wintertime and -- and we used to go do every -- all th -- our shopping taking buses and it was pretty cold and miserable. And eventually, however, we were able to somehow find an apartment. It was very difficult to find housing. We were in Hampstead, Long Island and it was almost impossible to find anything. Every time we would come to an apartment it was already taken. And eventually we found something in a small building that had six small apartments and the -- Mr. [indecipherable] said we could have this apartment, but he wasn't going to do anything. No painting, no nothing, take it or leave it, and so we did, we took it. And then finally by -- by -- by March, thank God a refund from the government, for -- on his taxes, and we were able to buy this hou -- incredible car, which was like a '51 Buick, I think. And it had a -- that -- you know, at least went, if nothing else. And in -- in the meantime, you know, we would take buses and stuff, and he took a long time to get to work every day and he hated it at Hoffstra. Not that he -- he doesn't di -- he didn't like it because he was teaching freshmen and he really couldn't understand at all kids, like I eventually got to understand because that's often what I had is kids who just weren't going to study, or didn't feel like chemi -- and chemistry's hard for most kids. And none of -- none of them were devoted to chemistry, it was just a subject they were taking. And, you

know, he was -- an-and he was extremely enthusiastic about chemistry. To him it meant a lot and -- and they were just, you know, coming up with you know, my dog -- the dog ate my homework, and he couldn’t understand that at all. So he didn't like it very much there and had im-immediately applied for other situation in the gover -- situations in the government. And of course the pay was extremely low, so that we couldn’t really afford anything. It was -- it was difficult to -- to -- to buy it -- to -- you know, to buy any furniture or anything. And we -- we bought something, but not very much. And -- so it was -- it was kind of hard. And I -- I was home alone and I had -- I could have started going to Hoffstra, but it was already in progress and I was really scared. I had just gone through this whole year in -- in Switzerland of coping with a new university where they required me to know much more French than I knew. I was doing [indecipherable] of the text of Proust and I could barely speak French because I was an English major and I had done very little French before, but they couldn't care less. You’re second year French, you take this. You know, there is none of that. I mean, you -- American universities coddle kids in comparison.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Of course I didn’t understand that they also didn’t expect me to take any exams. Just -- you know, just you fla -- you know, you’re just there. But -- but so it was actually lonely for me, and I waited for Dan to come home and I decided that I might as well have a baby. What else was there? You get married, you have a baby. So I

got pregnant right away. And Wanda was eventually born on our first wedding anniversary.

Q: Wow.

A: So -- well, being pregnant meant you have to find a doctor and you have to pay the doctor and I have an -- had an idiot, but that's not because we didn't pay him, we did, but he was just bad. And we pay -- tried to -- we painted our apartment ourselves and -- after we got tired of taking a shower and ending up with brown dots on our heads because the paint was dropping down, you know. So we painted and we had some furniture. But then things got really exciting because Dan got a -- a position at Walter Reed and he said he couldn't come until June because he had to -- he promised to be at Hoffstra til the end of the school year, and they said they would wait. And so that was -- that was great. So by June I was already highly pregnant. Wanda was born at the end of August. We took whatever possessions we had and we headed for Washington. And that was great.

Q: Yeah. So you were here in hot summer.

A: We got here in a hot summer with very little to no money. We borrowed some money.

Q: What -- what kind of job did he get?

A: As a researcher.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: In -- in a lab at Walter Reed, which -- where he remained for the rest of his -- for the rest of his life.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah. Not in -- in that lab. He came as a -- as a researcher, he eventually headed the lab and the section. And they were working on -- it was a-again a no -- tropical medicine.

Q: Oh, really.

A: Which is what he was interested in. Eventually he -- he worked in selenium chemistry. He had a -- his Ph.D. had to do with -- w-with e-e-extracting a new alkaloid from opium.

Q: Hm.

A: And so that kind of tropical medicine was of interest to him. Eventually he ended up working on anti-malarials. But they -- at Walter Reed at that time they were also doing anti-nuclear medicine. So I think I'm saying it right, because it was a long time that -- that they were working on that. They were thinking ab-bout how to -- of course it's the army, so they were always thinking in terms of, you know, what are we going to be afflicted with that we have to counteract.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And so the medicine was going in -- in -- the research was going in the direction of if there is a nuclear attack -- and they were still thinking a lot about that, it was still after the 50's and after McCarthyism.

Q: So it was tre-treating people who had been --

A: Who had been --

Q: -- exposed to radiation.

A: -- exposed to radiation, right.

Q: Oh.

A: So it's anti-radiation, that's what it's really called.

Q: Right.

A: That's anti-radiation. So anti-radiation and then eventually that kind of died down and they went more into doing anti-malarials and that's where really he did. And anyway, so th -- so w-we came to Washington and I will never forget the hotel we stayed in. It was on Dupont Circle in those old, old hotels before they were all destroyed. And barely any air conditioning and the temperature was high and I was very pregnant, and huge. And it was hot. But, we went to Walter Reed, and right next to Walter Reed there were these apartment houses and there were plenty of apartments to be had. It was unbelievable. And we got, right across from Walter Reed -- I, of course, didn't arrive -- right across from Walter Reed, there was this -- what it was called? A garden apartment that was beautiful and light and had two bedroom and a big living room and -- and a patio. And it was the same amount of money, it was like 115 dollars, I remember it. It was the same amount of money like that hole in the wall in New York. So, I was thrilled. And of course, I had been lonely and I'll never forget that Dan went to work and he could walk across the

street to work and somebody came and knocked on my door, and there was a neighbor from upstairs with -- pregnant, and with a baby on her arms, and she said, oh I heard you moved in, welcome. I was like -- I thought I was going to faint. No one talked to me in New York, ever.

Q: Huh.

A: On Long Island. It was a strange community. I -- I don't think this is true that people in New York don't talk to you, but it happened to have been my experience in that particular town. So, well, it was just the people that were there and there were no children and so on. But it was a different life in Washington.

Q: So things turned around pretty quickly.

A: Very quickly.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was like totally on the dime.

Q: Yeah.

A: The place was full of young physicians from Walter Reed and their wives and their children and I made some lifelong -- long friends. And, you know, that was just totally, totally different life.

Q: Did you join a Jewish community?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. We did not join -- join Jewish community. We went to services, Rosh Hashanah, but to just whatever was free and open and there we -- there always were some in town, but that's all we did. Not until we moved from there, when Wanda was four and we bought a house and we moved to where we are now, into -- to this community. And -- which is across from -- we are across from Ohr Kodesh congregation.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we joined, or --

Q: Which is over on East-West highway.

A: It's right on East-West highway. We join -- and we -- we -- our house was just around the corner from this house. This house was built in '79. But we moved into a three bedroom, small Maryland type house that -- that at that time cost 18,500. And was in -- it's insane. It just sold for like almost half a million dollars, ridiculous. But anyway, we moved into that house and we joined Ohr Kodesh, and that's where the kids went to -- and I'm still a member now, I'm much more active now than I was then, and -- and the kids went to Hebrew school there, and were Bar and Bat Mitzvah eventually. I had the -- that daughter, of course, that summer, and -- Wanda was born and then Elliot was born a year and a half later.

Q: So, '60 -- late '64 --

A: '59, '61.

Q: '61?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Wanda was born within the first year.

Q: Right.

A: We were married in ’50 -- in the fall of ’58, Wanda was born in September ’59 -- I’m sorry, in August of ’59.

Q: Mm.

A: And Elliot was born in March of ’61.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: And that was the end of children.

Q: Mm-hm. So the 60’s were raising kids for you.

A: 60’s were raising kids.

Q: Little kids.

A: Little kids. I did things here and there. I started -- I did that little work for VOA. I don’t remember how I found them, or they found me.

Q: But that was in the 60’s --

A: That was in the 60’s.

Q: [indecipherable] translation?

A: I did a lot of translation at the time for the Joint Publications Research Services. It was Department of Commerce. And that was excellent because I could neither type, n-nor -- nor nothing. I -- I couldn’t type. But it had to be perfectly typed and I

couldn't do that. So I lon -- wrote longhand translations the best I could and then edited them. And did a lot of work, but I really learned English that way. And th- then I gave it to somebody to type. So, whatever they paid me I shared with the typist. And so it was something -- something for me to do that -- that was sort of intellectually challenging and making a tiny bit of money. And that's that.

Q: By that time -- did you feel like an American by that time?

A: I -- I think so. You know, differently from very many people who come to this country, and I certainly have had much experience with that, because I ended up teaching ESL, I -- I did -- I did not have anybody who spoke my language, or who came from my culture.

Q: So you didn't have those constant reminders.

A: I didn't have those constant reminders. And I wrote home -- in quote home, less and less than my friends. And I got very involved with other mothers, and with, you know, what was going on with my kids.

Q: And your husband's family, too?

A: And my husband -- well, my husband's family, there was nobody in Washington, actually. At fi -- one short period of time a cousin was here, a cousin of my husbands. And they had a little boy -- and they still have him, but they ha -- they had a baby at that time, and they lived in Arlington and we saw them sometimes. But a very good friend of my husband's from high school -- junior high school and high school settled here. In fact, they're the ones who always pushed my husband to come

and work for the government. He was one of the early arrivals to the Washington area to work on the computer -- in the com -- he worked for the Bureau of Standards and he worked on the computers. [phone ringing] There wa --

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is the continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Dora Klayman. This is tape number two, side A. We -- you are in Washington, you have a cousin of your hu --

A: Husband.

Q: -- husband's cousin here.

A: Mm.

Q: And you said you stopped writing to a lot of your friends. But what about your uncle?

A: Well, I wrote to my uncle not as frequently as I should have probably, looking back. But I did. I sent pictures. And waited for, basically, for my -- I made promises -- when I wrote to him, I -- originally to say I would get -- I wanted to get married, I promised that I would go back to school and finish. And it waited until Elliot was in kindergarten, but once he was in kindergarten, I enrolled in Montgomery College, which was very, very close. I -- I finally learned how to drive. I was 27, I learned how to drive. And -- and I started taking -- I took -- I fre -- one course. And while he was in kindergarten, I would drive to Takoma Park and take my class and drive back, and be back for him to come back from school. And I took a class in English with a Dr. Laverne Miller, who shall not be forgotten by me forever. She just died recently. She was a fantastic teacher, the best I ever had, or one of the best I ever had, anyway. The best I had in the States, I think. And I took my first English

course, and you know, freshman English 101, and wrote my first essay and drove Dan crazy because I wanted him to read it and he wouldn't. And he said, just do it, just do it, just go. It's okay, you can do it. So I went with my first piece, and I have it, and the class ended and she se -- the class -- the new class began and we had to have that [indecipherable] when a new class began, she said that there was one good composition. And she started reading it, it was mine. I was like, oh my God, you know?

Q: What did you write about?

A: Oh, it was just something we had to summarize, it was nothing much. It was just a summary of -- of -- of some article about some planets or something. It wasn't -- it was just ri -- she sent us home to write a summary.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And obviously I knew how to write. I've said that many times, you know, people ask me, how do these ESL kids do it? And I say well, if they can write to begin with, they do fine. But it's not a matter of teaching just the language, it's teaching everything.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And -- and I wou -- I had always been a very good writer, so I just transferred the skill, it was no big deal. I had to learn English, but I didn't have to learn how to write.

Q: Right.

A: So -- so that was -- that was fine. So eventually I took a lot of classes from Dr. Miller, she taught [indecipherable] books at -- at Takoma Park. And she eventually hired me to, when I finished col -- when I finished University of Maryland she hired me, and then my -- that was my first job, was teaching at -- at Montgomery College.

Q: Huh. Huh.

A: So, anyway, I had [indecipherable]

Q: So when you went back to school, did you know that you wanted to teach English as a second language?

A: No, I had no idea, in fact, that that's what I would be doing. And -- and in fact, I -- I thought exactly what -- that I would not be doing that, because I felt like English as a second language was not a field that anybody even heard about here --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- at that time. [phone ringing] And now ignore it. [indecipherable] it's unknown, anyhow.

Q: Just let me -- let me pause it. [tape break] -- it wasn't a field that was known here.

A: No, it was not -- no one even talked about that. Certainly wasn't taught in the county. English as a second language was not a recognized class offering in Montgomery county. And I thought, even if the -- had ex -- if it had even started, I would have thought that they wouldn't want someone who had an accent and was from a different country. And so I went to my second experience, namely to my Swiss experience, and -- because I had become ru -- quite fluent that year in -- in

French. And so I thought I would be a French major. Languages was what I always wanted to study, so that was fine. So I was going to, you know, do French. Which I did do, I enrolled in French, but I had such -- just crazy experiences, because in -- in European schools you don't start from -- from ground zero at the university. You can't sort of decide you're going to be a French major and start with French 101 in college. Which you could here. I mean, it will take you some doing -- take some -- some doing, but you can if you want to. There it's im -- it's -- it was great -- greatly pro -- it was problematic in every way because when I came to Zagreb and I decided -- I-I was an English major, but I decided already to study some French because I knew I was going to go to Switzerland, I had planned on that. So I too -- I had to take French with the same student -- with the same kids who had studied French for five years in -- in high school.

Q: Mm.

A: I had studied English. And I had some pr -- private lessons, but I struggled greatly that year, trying to do French with people who were ahead of me. And the same thing happened again when I came to Switzerland. I was still struggling with French and they again put me too far ahead. I could never -- you -- you can't make a decision what you want to take. It's like what's available and where they think you should be, with -- without regard and -- where you actually are as a student. So I thought, oh God, I'm going to do this again? And when I realized that you can start from the beginning here, I enrolled in 101, French 101. Well, they threw me out of

there and I went to a higher level class, but I was at MC and I also started taking Spanish, which was the smartest thing I ever did. But anyway, I eventually graduated from University of Maryland with a degree in French and a minor in -- in Spanish. And then, at that point, ESL became already -- started to become a field a-and I had -- because I dragged through schools for such a long period of time, I didn't go like three or four years, I don't know how long it took me, a long time. And I had -- I started teaching ESL at Takoma Park in the evening program, before I had any kind of a degree. Because I -- while I was a student there, they recognized that I could -- that I knew something about what -- what -- what needed to be taught and that I understood the process. And they started the evening programs for the new Vietnamese community coming in.

Q: At Montgomery College, yeah.

A: At Montgomery College. Actually no, that's not even true. I-I started when the Cubans were coming in.

Q: In the early 80's?

A: In the early -- oh, it was la -- much earlier than that.

Q: Oh, oh, the first wave.

A: That first wave --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- of Cubans --

Q: Wow.

A: -- that came in.

Q: In the 60's.

A: Yes, and we had -- nobody knew how to teach it, nobody knew what to do and nobody knew n-no -- we didn't have any books. The only books we had were something that the army had used. It was -- it was -- it was an -- you know, an -- an old system. I [indecipherable] remember what it was called, English 800 or something, and it was like based on 800 vocabulary items and -- and there were these sent-sentences we were supposed to be teaching, it was like these Cuban ladies that y -- that didn't know what hit them, and we are teaching them, if it had been raining in Miami, I would have taken my umbrella. What? You know? Because we just had no idea. Nobody knew how to teach it. And we were just sort of like struggling and figuring things out. And -- and teaching in -- in the basement across the street from MC there was an old church and in that basement there was a classroom we could use. And then the Vietnamese population came in, and then some books were published, and we tried -- you know, there were three of us trying to figure out what was going on. I was coordinating the program; I hadn't even graduated from college, you know? It was crazy.

Q: I bet it was fulfilling.

A: It was very fulfilling and -- and it worked very well for me in every way because my husband could stay home with the kids and we taught -- and I taught twice a

week in the evening, and they paid me. Wasn't much, but it was great. And so I was -- I was doing that and -- and going to school at the same time.

Q: Mm.

A: But, to back up, you asked me about my uncle. When the kids -- so that was one thing I did, I -- I did -- I go back to school, not just because he wanted me to, but I did, too.

Q: You wanted to, sure.

A: And that was one thing. But the other thing was that in -- by 19 -- let me see, Wanda was five, so she was in kindergarten when I got my citizenship. That was another story. And -- and since she was in kindergarten we could take her out of school, we felt, for a little bit of time. Elliot was still in nursery school, and we went to -- we went to Switzerland for a bit and to cro -- to Yugoslavia to visit my uncle. And we stayed for a few months.

Q: A few months?

A: That was -- that was great, yeah.

Q: I bet he was so thrilled.

A: He was thrilled, yes, he was thrilled. There I am, you know, arriving back with two kids. And then eventually Dan came, and at that point, of course, we were doing --

Q: That was the first time he met Dan.

A: Yes. They got along very well. They spoke in -- Dan [indecipherable] German, but you know, he went up and he was -- Dan was very outgoing and lots of fun and they had a good time together. It was very nice, it was very fulfilling and really great. Oh, we -- at that time we were doing better financially so we could, you know, we -- first of all we -- we have saved enough money for all of us to go to Europe. And second, we could rent a car and you know, just go around a little bit and see a bit, and that was -- that was really a lovely trip. And so --

Q: Great, yeah. Let me ask you about the 60's in this country. A lot of people have commented that coming to this country as they did, and as you did, they felt extremely sensitive to the civil rights movement, especially people who moved anywhere close to the south and saw how blacks were being treated in this country. Was that -- was that of -- a -- a significant kind of thing on your radar at that time here in Washington?

A: Yeah, it was.

Q: Washington had quite a --

A: It was very much so.

Q: -- quite its share of conflicts here.

A: In fact, yeah, very much so. And in fact, I was just saying to the very friend whose phone just rang, how I remember so well all the Civil Rights marches. I was at a march yesterday, the --

Q: Women's march.

A: -- the Women's march and how huge it was, but -- but it was not fraught with danger, and those marches were fraught with danger. And I didn't go very much, I stayed with the kids, but -- but my husband went. I -- he was -- he was an avid photographer, and -- and also wanted to record everything and he -- he -- he would go down. But I went down too. I remember serving food in tent city in those days, with the kids. And we -- you know, we lived through the -- through the riots and Martin Luther King's death and I remember -- and of course, through President Kennedy's death. I -- I know that I was very American already, because I remember that I cried when President Kennedy was nominated because I wanted Stevenson to be nominated.

Q: You had already had strong feelings about American politics.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: That was pretty quick.

A: Yeah. Well, of course you know, I had -- I had a tutor living with me. And I didn't have that other community. That, I think is really major in my transformation, that -- that I got very involved -- oh yeah, I was - I was doing the dollars for democrats. I have pictures of myself co -- you know, trying to get money for Johnson to be elected. I mean, you know, it's -- so it's -- I-I got really involved in -- in -- in the community and in -- and in life here. With, you know, with Civil Rights and everything else that came -- that came down the pike with the democratic party. I -- I served as a judge of elections in -- at -- one year. And so I just got a -- to meet a

lot of people that were sort of kindred spirits. And of course in this com -- this particular community where we lived, we -- it was an all white community at the time. And from what I heard, even though this was built by -- by a -- a fellow Jew, it had originally, when it was built in the late 1930's, early 40's -- well, not by 40's, it was a-all gone. But -- but the early -- the houses built in the 30's actually had a-an anti-Jewish covenant. [indecipherable]

Q: In this neighborhood?

A: Yes, in this neighborhood.

Q: What is this neighborhood called?

A: This neighborhood is called Rock Creek Forest.

Q: Hm.

A: And I think it went off fast, and I never saw any original documents. But my next door neighbor in my old house wa -- told me about it, and -- and they were sa -- savvy. He was a newspaper [indecipherable] Levins, and he was a -- they were pe -- really involved in labor issues and he was -- he published the newspaper for the railway union. And so I -- I learned from them a lot, as well. So I -- so, at -- in this neighborhood at th -- at that time, I didn't even -- I wasn't aware that everybody was white in the neighborhood until a black family moved in and nobody said anything, everything was fine. But then they tried to buy a house -- th -- I think they were renting and then they tried to buy a house and -- and she came to tell us, I remember, that th -- th -- they had, I don't know, something had happened in their house. I can't

remember now whether somebody threw stones or whatever, what happen, or someone wrote graffiti. And the neighborhood, there were a lot of -- they were rather really progressive people living here and -- and people rallied around them. But then we became aware that -- that it's been difficult for -- for black people to buy houses here. And eventually things calmed down and -- and th-they bought some houses. It's not that mixed here now, but it -- it is, I mean, you know, I have --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- neighbors across the street, or down the street --

Q: At that time, did your friends know about your history and was it something that you either -- either consciously made a point of telling people or consciously didn't make a point of telling people? Or was it just relevant or irrelevant to your daily life or in your relations with friends?

A: I would tell people if they asked. I -- it wasn't something that I would -- I -- I certainly, you know didn't think, oh, I've got to go and tell people, or advocate for -- for knowledge of the Holocaust or I -- I -- I would be aware -- more aware of these issues when I would meet somebody from Croatia, that's one thing. I think I purposely did not seek out people from Yugoslavia because there was always an issue of, and where were you during the war and who are you?

Q: What side were you on?

A: What side were you on and what side are you on now?

Q: Because things were getting more and more tense over there, yeah.

A: Well, I o -- I was aware of the fact that a lot of people had escaped to this country and a lot of people left in 1945, and I just felt like I'm just as well avoiding it. Now, i-if there was somebody from Serbia, I would feel much more comfortable than if there was somebody from Croatia.

Q: Explain why.

A: Well, that's because during -- during the war, Croatia and Serbia were not in the same country. Yugoslavia fell apart after the invasion, and Croatia became an independent -- so-called ing -- it was called independent state of Croatia, Nezavisan Stanje od Hrvatski. And it was a puppet government that carried out the edicts of -- of the Third Reich. And so everything, including genocide perpetrated on Jews was also perpetrated on Serbs.

Q: Serbs.

A: And so that I had -- I -- I -- I knew that if I met a Serb, that Serb could not have been my enemy during the war, because they were enemies of my b -- they were enemies of Germany or -- and of the Ustasi, who were the Croatian Nazis, as a -- Croatian fascists, I should say --

Q: Who were your enemies.

A: Who -- who were my enemies.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: Right.

A: So -- but it was also interesting to meet some Serbs. I became -- you know, I had a very dist -- in some sense I had a revised sense of history. I still don't un -- I still don't know the truth -- not that anybody really does, but I find that talking to my friend Lucy, I find out a lot of things that I wasn't aware of. And it's interesting to work with Lucy, who is from s -- from -- from Croatia and who is in her 80's.

Q: We should say this is Lucie Rosenberg.

A: Lucie Rosenberg. And to Sanya Primoraz, who works at the Holocaust Museum and who is in her 30's, and who's also from Croatia, and she's Catholic, but married to a Jew, and me. And the three of us are basically three generations from Croatia. And each one of us has a different viewpoint. Now, I do -- shouldn't say different viewpoint. A different --

Q: Experience.

A: -- experience. And different educational background in terms of what had happened. Lucy, who left just before the war, and could view history from -- as it developed during the war, from here. Sanya, who wasn't born and I, who lived through that, but I was educated in communist Yugoslavia. I am a true product of Tito's schools. I know history of Yugoslavia as they wanted us to know it. I know -- and I've now forgotten a lot, but -- but I ne -- I-I -- I -- I'm a product of -- of the educational system of -- of -- of the communist era.

Q: And could you, as a little sidebar, sort of describe --

A: What that meant?

Q: -- what the factors of -- yeah, wha-what that means to you now.

A: Well, what that means to me now is that I really -- I really -- they -- we talked about Chetniks, for example. Chetniks were the Serbs who w -- fought against the Germans, apparently, but they also fought against the partisans. So in post-Communist Yugoslavia, they were the enemy. They were just as much the enemy as -- as the Germans. But na -- I didn't understand exactly why England, for example and United States were supporting Chetniks at the beginning of the war. Now I understand. First of all they didn't know who was who. Second, th-there were some circumstances where the Chetniks were doing some good things. On the other hand, of course, the sa -- they were nationalists at the same time so they also have their bad points. But when I would meet Serbs after, when I came here, who would tell me that -- that their families were Chetniks, I would think, my God, what horror. A-And -- and there probably was, but I still don't quite know. I still don't understand the Chetnik movement properly because I've never really delved into it. But I know that it is not exactly as black and white as I had learned it. So th-th-this whole business, and of course now, after the '92 war there, issues are changed the -- you know, that --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- that [indecipherable] sentiments changed again, because in fact, who was doing -- who -- who was, in fact, committing cheno -- genocide on the Bosnians? It was again the Chetniks. So, which Chetniks, you know? Whi --

Q: Yeah. But going back to the 50's, just as the Chetniks history was taught to you in a very black and white manner, I'm also guessing that the partisan history was taught to you in a gray --

A: Also as a -- exactly.

Q: -- in a -- in a --

A: Everything was perfect.

Q: -- in a very glorified manner.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah --

A: [indecipherable]

Q: -- and that Tito was --

A: God.

Q: Yeah.

A: Exactly. And you know, I -- I -- I was -- I mean I -- I have to -- I -- you know, I- I'm liberal now, which is sort of to the left of -- certainly President Bush. But -- but at that time, you know, that was starting school, and I would come home and have these heated discussions with my uncle about, you know, imperialist Americans and imperialist this and that. I grew out of that one eventually, but I wanted to go and,

you know, be with a brigade and -- and build a -- build the O-Otestrad [indecipherable] and --

Q: Fight for brotherhood and unity.

A: Yeah, fight for brotherhood and unity and -- and you know, it's not that he was to the right. He -- you know, and he was considered a -- because he had also been in the concentration camp. He was in the same concentration camp where my family was killed. And after the war, you know, he was considered also a hero and you know, he was director of the bank and so on, unofficial mayor of the town. I mean, he was highly respected and regarded by that government. But he also had a reasonable [phone ringing] middle of the little point of view. [tape break] Saying that oh, you know, oh I'll tell you more about my uncle and one of the -- wa -- one of the fa -- yeah, we were talking about my uncle and being -- not being really far to the left --

Q: Right.

A: -- but certainly not being right either. And I remember we had knockdown drag out fights about when -- when [indecipherable] of the Suez Canal. And the Suez Canal was handed over to Egypt, I was all for it and I -- you know, we -- because we were all herded out to go and -- and scream anti -- anti-Imperialist slogans, and they were saying well, you know, England invested so much money in the building of the canal, was like, so what? You know, so -- so you had that, you know, and of course Tito and you know, we -- we sang songs as children, you know? Tito was our [indecipherable] and blue violet and on the -- so -- and of course we were all -- had

to be pio -- Pioneers. And I had to, you know, march around with my red bandana around my neck. And you had to be part of the communist youth. Is that thing on?

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: And the -- it -- it -- it became a problem for me when I was trying to get my -- my U.S. citizenship.

Q: Citizenship.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Oh.

A: Not that I was in any way, any kind of a leader, ever. I -- and you never asked to be a Pioneer or to be the communist youth, you just were. If you were in school, you were communist youth, that's how it was. And you didn't volunteer to go out and -- and march for, you know, Trieste should be Yugoslav, you just had to go.

Q: You had to.

A: You were gathered from the school and you were marched out. But when I applied for my citizenship, there was -- I was in -- really interrogated. And I remember very well this lady asking me why I didn't quit. Why I didn't announce that I am quitting this organization. And I thought to myself, lady, I really wanted to survive. I -- you know, I really didn't --didn't want to be forbidden to go to school, and ended up in -- and end up in jail, I just -- I wasn't that kind of an activist.

Q: Because a lot of that was going on in the 50's.

A: Absolutely.

Q: Yeah.

A: Absolutely.

Q: Yeah.

A: A lot of that was going on. One of my friend's father ended up in jail, and we never understood exactly why. He was -- one day he was some sort of an off -- official and the next day he was nowhere to be seen. So a lot of that was going on and you had to be careful. And -- and I saw -- I saw many abuses that -- you know, as stupidities of the system. People who had no business running anything, you know. One minute they were shepherds and the next minute they were running the city, or being the police chiefs, or demanding that li -- that [indecipherable] we had a house and they demanded that we relinquish the house because we didn't have -- that was not the house we lived in, but we had another building that was under construction, starting from before the war. And then we were ordered to finish it, and of course we didn't have the money to finish it. And so we said well, we can't. They said well, then the government will finish it and -- any way they wanted to. And there's three people who probably didn't have a public -- didn't have an indoor plumbing of -- ever in their lives, now decided to make it into three apartments from two apartments and they made a total mess of it. You know, there was that kind of stuff going on. Those kinds of, you know, where everything was topsy-turvy. But, you know, you -- and -- and I was aware that you had to be quiet and not say certain things in certain places, and -- and you know, we listened to Voice of America and --

and BBC every day. So we did know what was going on. But you still had that sense of being -- you had that sense of being in -- in sort of -- some sort of jail.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah. Well, it took me -- for example, when I decided to -- when I decided to go first time to Switzerland, my aunt and my uncle finally, you know, wrote to me and -- and I decided to go. It took me a long time to get a visa. And of course it took some doing for me to have enough money to buy a ticket, even though my uncle was director of [indecipherable]. We only lived the way we lived because we have things from before the war we could sell. So, you know, there goes another gold chain that was sold and I got a ticket. But the visa -- I got only the passport, and visa I got only because I was considered a victim of fascism. That was the actual title --

Q: Hm.

A: -- that we were given, žrtva fašizam. And -- and --

Q: That was a Swiss categ --

A: No, that was Yugoslav.

Q: Huh.

A: Yugoslav, because you couldn't get a passport to leave. You couldn't leave the country. You know, none of the communist countries allowed people to --

Q: Right.

A: -- go out. So I was allowed -- I was given a passport because I wrote -- I wrote this letter that I wanted to go and how we had, you know --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: Okay.

A: Anyway, so I had to write that I had this one uncle in Switzerland and that I wanted to go and visit, he invited me. And so they gave me a passport. But when I came back, I was a celebrity, because nobody had been out of the country.

Q: Hm.

A: And I went through my hi -- my -- my classroom -- my -- my high school classrooms and I talked about things that I'd seen. And, you know, strange things were -- were -- I-I-I mean, the things that I talked about. I remember talking about doors that o -- that opened automatically when you go to a supermarket, which we didn't have either, and how -- you know, how many things are on the shelves and so on. Cause after the -- that was '54, I think ow -- whe -- but things were still really tough. You know, I don't know about that time, but just previous to that, I mean, we had to have coupons for everything. And getting a pair of shoes was a major thing. I remember buying my first pair of shoes that I could actually go out and buy from a store. And you know, that was so beautiful, I put them on my night table, I mean. And they were as ugly as can be, when I think back. I know exactly what they looked like.

Q: Hm.

A: And, you know, things were -- you know, there was very little to be had and even books, and -- you know, I n -- I remember how difficult it was to buy notebooks. And I got a first -- ma -- my -- my uncle sent me my fir -- my notebook -- notebooks and era -- an eraser, and ballpoint pen from Switzerland, that was like gold, you know? I went around showing it off to everybody and everybody was borrowing mine -- my eraser, because it didn't smudge everything. So, things were -- things were tough after the war, economically.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And of course it was, you know, the communist [indecipherable] was it was because of the war and because, you know, Imperialists were against us and we -- after nine -- after '48, after Yugoslavia broke off from Russia, it was, you know, we were independent and we were maverick and in forefront -- in the forefront of --

Q: Right.

A: -- the world, you know.

Q: It was the non-aligned movement.

A: Non-aligned movement.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was the beginning of the -- it was the non-aligned movement and you know, it was India and Egypt were our friends, and so on. So it was -- so I have that, you know. I grew up with that, I -- I got over that, I understand that. I don't und -- still

understand some of the intricacies of -- of what really kept things going and I don't -- historically I have not yet read enough, I'm pro -- I don't know whether I ever will, I keep buying histories of Yugoslavia to read everything, to -- to really figure out what was going on. I read quite a bit lately, since I've been involved in the project with the Holocaust Museum, because I need to know --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- what was happening.

Q: Let's jump ahead a little bit to the 70's, if you don't mind.

A: Mm-hm. Not at all.

Q: There was a time in this country when a lot of people became aware and spoke out publicly about the Holocaust for the first time. It was somehow not on the national radar much before then. And ene -- even people who were doing academic research into, you know, historical questions about the Holocaust were not always publicly received, acknowledged as doing important work. But suddenly in the late 70's there were -- a number of things happened. One was the television series that aired.

A: "The Holocaust," that -- that program?

Q: Yeah, and another was the Holocaust Remembrance Day --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- became sort of a genera -- a new generation of young people took that up. Do you remember those days and -- and -- and how did you respond?

A: I remember -- I remember the days, but I don't remember -- I -- I remember when that series was -- was filmed and I remember that a lot of people started asking me questions, that -- you know, how was it and what happened and what I remembered. That hadn't popped up before. So I remember -- people also were -- you know, I was -- people asked me about, you know, did I live like Anne Frank. And so I usually -- and even now I -- I tend to say to people when they ask me, where were -- you know, what were you doing during the war, I would say, well, I was hidden, but not like Anne Frank. Because I was really not -- I mean, I wa -- I may have been hidden for a day, not for years, in the -- in that same sense. I don't know -- I was so involved in school at that time. I finally -- I -- I-I -- I was -- I just got out of college and I was student teaching and -- and I got my first job and I was -- I was teaching at Bethesda Chevy Chase High School.

Q: Oh.

A: And that was -- well, after the year -- after the year at Montgomery College, where I was teaching full time in the regular students, rather than that evening program that I was doing, I was really busy. My kids were in junior high and -- or high school. No, they were in -- I think they were -- yeah, Elliot was still in middle school, Wanda was in high school, and I was student teaching and coming home tired, wondering whether this is what I wanted to do, screaming at everybody at home. I was like, I already had it with the kids. It was har -- I was student teaching half French and half ESL and I started to become aware of this whole new

immigrant community, and getting involved in all these other kids and their problems, all these kids coming from Vietnam and -- and I think I was more involved in that than I was in the issues of the Holocaust, somehow. I started teaching at -- was it at -- an-and then my husband had his first heart attack. And that also loomed fairly large. 1970 fo -- 1974, something like that, was his first heart attack. And Elliot was just Bar Mitzvah and so, you know, the -- I -- I-I was aware of it peripherally, but not involved in it in any way and it just seemed to me -- and I don't think I was that aware that it was not being talked about. That's another thing, you know, because what -- when I was in Switzerland with my aunt and uncle, it was so overwhelming. My aunt talks about it incessantly. But I don't th -- and I don't -- didn't know any survivors here, really. So I just thought well, you know, if I thought anything I would have thought well, why would Americans -- I think I -- I underst -- I think -- I know what -- I remember that, you know, there were many mo -- there were movies, like war-time movies, American war-time movies. Liberation movies. And I think it was more in my -- my mind, m-more work toward, you know, being liberated and what that felt like. The -- you know, being helped by the United States, I remembered UNRRA packages, things of that nature more, and I was just so involved in like present day issues, as I si -- mentioned, the politics of -- of the day that I -- I don't think that was very much on my mind.

Q: Interesting though, that you had -- that experience was, very clearly what moved you in the direction that you went in, to help other people who were --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- adjusting to life here just as you had. So, in a way you'd moved way -- you'd taken that experience with you and moved way into --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- another direction.

A: Yeah, exactly.

Q: In some way left it way far behind, and --

A: I le -- in some way --

Q: -- and taken it and moved ahead.

A: -- it was with me.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because I could always -- I al -- you know, I would tell the kids what my experience had been and I would understand the kids who came from war-time experiences, and I would talk with them about it, and I would say, you know, eventually you know, you have to think in a positive way and things are going to be better and -- cause we had -- at -- at BCC we had a whole group of kids, at one point early, who actually -- Vietnamese orphans, or perhaps they were orphans, they didn't even know. Kids that were boat people, boat kids, who [phone ringing, tape interruption]

Q: Kid -- you said there were kids who had been boat people.

A: Kids who had been boat people. There was -- BCC is right next to a Lourdes Catholic church and Lourdes had housed and taken care of some dozen kids who lived there.

Q: Hm.

A: And I -- they were all in -- in my program and I was -- at that time we still weren't a department. Eventually I was head of the ESL department, but when I came to BCC in '77 -- '76 - '77 school year, I was al -- I was alone. I -- I had all the ESL kids, I was their mother. And, you know, I mothered those kids til the day I retired, and I still do, to some extent, but it was just -- it was an overwhelming job sometimes. And some -- those kids who were -- who were at Lourdes had huge amounts of problems and -- and you know, y-you had to constantly be looking after them. And there were Cambodian kids too, and they were suicidal and they had, you know, just --

Q: They'd been through some terrible ordeals.

A: -- their -- their -- they -- they'd gone through some terrible times. Kao and Sao, the two Cambodian kids, one of them did commit suicide later on. So, it was -- you know, I was just really too involved with that. I mean, what -- think about it, I started teaching it -- teaching there in '76 - '77 school year. Elliot had just come there, he was in 10th grade and Wanda was in 12th grade. I was in -- I was 38 - 39. I-It was all I could do.

Q: Yeah, keep moving.

A: The Holocaust was very far behind me.

Q: Right.

A: That Holocaust. That was like --

Q: Yes.

A: -- I was with -- with these kids Holocaust.

Q: Yeah.

A: Listening about Cambodia and Vietnam.

Q: Yeah. How did your kids respond to -- number one, they knew your story, but your working with these other kids?

A: I don't know, they just sort of accepted it. They were just used to -- our house was very open and -- and you know, I had kids come to the house. We had parties in our house, I have -- we had -- I had big di -- Thanksgiving dinners for them. I cooked a dinner -- they still do it at BCC, it's continued. Th-The -- the tradition had continued. I had Thanksgiving, a whole Thanksgiving turkey, which we served like the week before Thanksgiving and we had a dinner at my house for everybody in ESL. Eventually it got too big. We had a few since I moved into this house, when -- fortunately was larger house, so we could do it. But then -- then we started doing it at school. So the kids were just sort of like part of it, and -- but sometimes not as involved as I would have wanted them to be actually, because they were just -- you know they were just American kids, who wanted to be with other American kids and I'm -- I've always had trouble getting American kids to participate with -- with

foreign kids. They -- I -- I -- you know, as open as I -- I always say when they say, oh Americans don't like us, or this and that. And I say no, no, no, you know, Americans are very open and they're very accepting, and I think generally they are. But there always is sort of a divide, nevertheless and you know, I felt like I was always sort of there to be between them and -- and that other world. And funny that I never felt-- I know that there are people who feel -- and there are many foreign ESL teachers now, I mean foreign born ESL teachers now, and very often they will feel with the kids against that outside. But I never did. I just always felt that I was the American. And you know, people ca -- kids ask me, you know, where I'm from and I said, well, I'm from here, but I wasn't born here. I'll tell them right away. But -- and -- and I often tell them when they ask me about it, I say well, that's why I can understand you better, because I had this -- I went through the same experience. Of course, I was very lucky in that I had someone to take care of me and guide me and -- and I knew the language and -- and I was educated and makes a big difference.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Makes a huge difference. But even the way I grew up, I grew up, you know, in a small town with sort of a -- it -- it's very funny because Yugoslavia is -- I mean, Croatia now, but Yugoslavia certainly, it's -- it's a -- really a class society. It's a -- a -- United States is too, but we -- we claim we aren't. And to some extent, even though we are, I -- I think there is an easier way of -- th-the -- the division, the vertical division isn't nearly as strong as it is there. And I g -- I grew up -- I know

that sounds funny because of what had happened to me, but I grew up privileged in many ways, you know, because I was sort of [speaks foreign language here] which means sort of like a -- from a noble family, you know. But that's because of my uncle, not so much -- and -- and I was always taught that -- that you had to ha -- to help and -- and be -- I know that sounds awfully patrician, but was like, you know, to not lord it over kids who have less, and to give. And -- and be helpful, and it just kind of stayed with me. So that -- so it comes to me naturally to -- to -- to do -- you know, to work, to -- to work with these all -- kids. I had all -- both of those things, you know. To having come from di -- from -- from that background and then -- then come from -- then come to this country. So it's a -- it's sort of a double whammy. It was sort of I s -- I often instinctively understood, or I think I understood.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: The kids [indecipherable] I don't know.

Q: And -- and when did you start your work volunteering at the museum? It's recent --

A: Oh, that happened fairly recently.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Because in '99 I retired from Montgomery county public schools. Not that I couldn't have gone on, but a lot of my friends were retiring and I was getting a bit tired of being there morning, noon and night, from seven in the morning til who knows what hour and then doing work in the evening. And the school was closing

for two years and moving to another venue, and while --while BCC was being rebuilt. And I thought well, that's sort of -- I -- and I just -- I -- I had just turned 60 and I thought, well, it's an opportune moment for me to close down, so I don't have to pack and repack and unpack and okay, so this is it. So I had just retired, and -- when -- and I -- of course I knew Lucie Rosenberg for awhile. Actually, an ESL person who is a mutual friend introduced us, and -- some years ago, and she had started telling me about that -- about this material arriving from Jasenovac, and from Croatia and that she had started working on it. And then I asked her about it again and again. And I had started working immediately back for the county, but on a part time basis as a -- as a -- a consultant. So I was working basically two days a week and I had more time and I said well, you know, let me take a look at it and she said she never -- she hadn't wanted to ask me to come, but she was thrilled that I would want to go. But she hadn't wanted to ask me because she thought it would be too close to home for me, emotionally. And -- but I said yeah, I'm pretty tough, I'll look at it. So I went one time with her and Sanya. They were working on this material that had arrived from Jasenovac and that was in Linthicum, ready to be -- well, they had already been working on it, was in -- totally in process -- in progress. But they were doing everything from classifying material, a written material to packing forks and knives and spoons that had been found in camp. Not knives, forks and spoons that have been unearthed from the camp, into envelopes and marking them to -- you know, writing translations of letters and there was one cookbook and things of that

nature. And I said fine, I'll do it with you once a week, so we went there once a week and started working on it, and that's how I started doing it.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I've been there ever since.

Q: Hm. Well, that's a long time.

A: Yeah.

Q: Five years now.

A: I don't know, is it five years already? No, I don't know.

Q: You said '99.

A: '99 is I retired, but I don't think that happened right away. I don't know what I was doing that year. I don't remember what year that came, that material came.

Q: When you, in the process of -- of seeing these documents and things, did you li -- did you come across anything specific about anybody in your family that -- or your parent's --

A: Just names. I did s -- find an -- names of my father and my uncle. Nobody else. But of course, I had seen -- I ha -- I had -- came late, and they had looked at most of the list before that. Lucy found some things for me. In the museum there are other things that we found that had been borrowed from the archives before and they are already on microfiche in the li -- in the museum. There are -- there are papers from my mother's side of the family. Grandfather, aunt, uncle, all my mother's side of the family, cousins. There are p -- there are papers that they had to -- f-forms they had to

fill out declaring their worldly goods and that's -- tha-that's very sad to just look at, you know, because here it is, you know, a nine year old child declaring her possessions and it says things like, you know, one winter coat, one spring jacket, three dresses, two pairs of shoes, one gold chain. You know, it's just awful, just awful. So, you know, I continue working on it, I've -- I've -- I-I can steel myself and do these things because I feel like the language is so important, and there are so few people that can translate and so -- and that can un -- that understand that world, so -- so I do it. It's not what I thought I would do. I thought if I would volunteer, I was planning on volunteering maybe at the Sackler or someplace like that. I like Asian artists, you notice.

Q: Yeah.

A: And, you know, I -- I like art and I love music and I -- I got involved, you know, in the [indecipherable] morning music club and helped my friend organize music competitions. It's more, you know, what my -- you know. I go to more chamber music concerts, but it's okay.

Q: Do you think that -- has it forced you to examine things --

A: Hugely, hugely.

Q: -- in a way that you might not have otherwise?

A: Hugely. It's been -- it's been eye-opening in many ways and -- and I have gotten enormously educated through the process. I just sort of -- I think what I -- what I did is not that it didn't touch me, but I didn't allow me -- allow it to touch me. I think

one of the ways that I dealt with the whole issue was the -- to just not think about it. And --

Q: You mean all those years that --

A: All those years.

Q: 60's, 70's.

A: Yeah -- well, no.

Q: After you came back?

A: Those years not even so -- yeah, I suppose so. I just -- you know, early childhood and you know, just thinking about what had happened. And I would just always say well, I was very lucky and you know, I -- I know other people suffered and suffered terribly, but I was very lucky, so I'll just take my luck and run with it. But it's not -- it's -- right now I don't feel differently about myself, but I -- I think it -- I think it was -- I have a greater understanding. I-I think it's still sort of intellectual rather than emotional. I still don't like the emotional to -- to get me. I feel like I -- as I said to my aunt, every -- every time that you -- that you let yourself suffer is one point for them and one loss for you. And I'm not going to let it happen, if I can help it. So, I don't know, maybe it's Pollyanna-ish in my way, but -- in -- in -- in a way, but --

Q: But it -- there's something in you that it -- it -- you worked hard to help and to do things --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- and this fulfills part of that as well --

A: I think so.

Q: -- because it's something you can do.

A: That's something that I can do, and I feel that that's -- yeah, I do those things that -- that -- sort of like I can move in a positive way. And -- but I can -- that out of -- out of these ashes -- I don't want to be -- I don't want to be dramatic, but that something good comes, that I -- you know, the never again business is -- is important, and -- and it's -- and it's real. And I -- I think that it does -- the history does need to be understood, and -- and -- and I don't understand enough so -- so -- but I have -- so -- so I'm -- I've been learning, because I've had to -- I've had to learn about things, you know. Like, for example I'm -- never knew because certainly wasn't taught to me, anything about what was happening in Dalmatia during that time, for example, to Jews. I mean I don't ha -- didn't have the foggiest idea about, you know, the -- the camps that were run wa -- you know, in Italy and -- I mean, I -- I saw Italians as the enemy, because that's what I was taught. The Italians were the southern enemy and it was very nice when we got rid of them, and we won against them, but of course, you know -- and it was the partisans, of course, that chased them out of Dalmatia. That was how I saw things. Never a -- never realizing, you know, that if not for Italians, many more Jews would have been killed, and that, you know, that m -- some -- many of my friends survived there a -- and that, you know, th-there were uprisings there. There was the first Jewish brigade. I mean, all of that, that --

that whole -- that whole chunk of history I knew nothing about. And I'm very grateful that I do know it, and --

Q: When you came to this work, did you have -- I think I know the answer, but I want to ask, did you have questions that you needed answered, or you just came upon these things not knowing that you'd had gaps in your knowledge?

A: No, I knew that I had gaps, and --

Q: And -- and -- but now that you've done this for a few years, do -- do you -- has it completed something in you that was incomplete? Has it answered questions for you that you maybe didn't even know you had?

A: Yeah, I think it -- it does, and -- and it -- it's -- it's the questions, some that I perhaps didn't know I had, but some that I did know I had. Cause I had -- I think I was very aware that I had, and I still have big chunks of -- of missing knowledge, historical knowledge. And of course, you know, I would like to know more about, you know, how -- what my family did, or I -- you know, I -- especially my mother's side of the family, there is nobody living to know about their childhood and I know nothing, and I have lots and lots of pictures, and I always knew that I -- I always know that I knew more about them, because my uncle lived there, too, and so I knew about them. But I don't know anything about their, you know, feelings, thoughts, where they were going, what they were doing. And I remember my cousins very well, and I s -- I do miss them. Because I grew up with those pictures, you know, and it's kind of sad. I grew up with those pictures and I grew up with -- with their clothes

and their toys, and when I think about that sometimes, it's a sort of a -- an emotional soft par -- spot. But -- but in terms of just general knowledge of what was going on there, I -- I have -- I have chunks that I still don't -- don't know, and -- and I just -- I just sort of s -- thought, you know, oh, I don't want to -- I don't want to think about it, I don't want to know it because I don't -- I don't want to feel sad and I don't want to feel upset, and -- and you know, people say to me now, you know, oh it's so brave of you to work there. And I don't feel it's brave of me to work there, but it's not -- it's not the most amusing thing, let's put it that way. I mean, you know, yo-you have that yourself, you know, how much of that do you want to hear? And I grew -- I joined a group a few years ago, since I've started working -- well, maybe not.

Q: I have s -- let me turn this over.

A: Mm-hm.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Dora Klayman. This is tape number three, side A. You -- you started to say that you joined a group --

A: I joined a group of child Holocaust survivors in the area, Washington area, do you know about that group? It was just by accident. I sort of didn't even realize it was -- that it existed. And then I found out about it from a fellow who also originally came from Croatia. I met him at Flori Dragota's and he is, you know, very -- has very different reactions from mine, and he's quite bitter and unhappy in many ways. And he said that this is the place that he's very happy with, because he could never talk about what had happened, which I didn't have any trouble w -- you a -- asked me that before. I didn't go around talking about it, but if anybody ever asked, I talked about it. Well, he said he -- he wa-was into denial in many ways, until he met this group. And I can't remember exactly when the group put itself together and how, but it's fairly decent size, and it -- it did one thing for me, and that is it said, okay, I am a Holocaust survivor, because children -- and that -- everybody in that group says that, that those of us, especially those of us who were hidden, that's really the -- I mean, there is now a special group for that, but among this group of childhood Holocaust survivors, some of them were in camps and some of them were not. Many were not. And -- like my -- my daughter-in-law's mother, from -- who is from Poland lost practically all of her family. Everybody except her -- I think one

uncle and her mother. And she is much more acting traum -- was much more traumatized by it -- by it than I. And she mentions it -- something about the Holocaust practically every time I see her. Now, whether she does it because she knows I went through the experience, or whether it's general, I don't know. But people either -- I know people who talk about it a lot, like my aunt, or people who never talk about it. I was probably someplace in the middle. And s-so -- so this -- this -- this fellow said they will -- had this group and I said oh, I'd like to come and see. So I have joined the group since, and have -- it's supposed -- it's been interesting to listen to other people's experiences, and to -- to see to what extent -- I -- I'm -- I was also trying to categorize, you know, are people who lived in camps different from those who didn't, or there a -- are -- there i -- there is a sort of great affinity among people who came from different countries, I noticed. You know, just to -- there are many people from Poland, for example, and many -- fewer from Germany or certainly fewer from Croatia. And people meet -- we meet once a month and people bring food to share and there is a program. And some of the program -- for a long time they did almost nothing but taken turns to talk about --

Q: Themselves.

A: -- themselves.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And many of them would say that this is the first time that they had talked about themselves to anybody. And many of them have talked about their relationship to

their kids, or how their kids don't really -- some of them feel that their kids don't care to hear about it, and others have kids who are very involved, and -- an-and so on and so forth. It's -- it's -- it's been sort of an eye opener for me, too.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: To be -- to be with these people. Some of them are involved in doing volunteer work, many of -- a number of them are volunteering at the Holocaust museum. And so that's sort of been an interesting experience for me, too.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And -- so I -- I find that I much m -- some of them have become personal friends, so it's -- it's -- it's sort of the -- somehow I'm so more -- so much more involved in thinking or doing or m -- or meeting with people. I went to th -- there was a -- recently, just a few months ago there was a huge meeting at the Mayflower of the hidden children. So it's a -- you know, with seminars and -- and speeches and personal explorations, and -- so this is just a -- sort of another world I've sort of been in lately.

Q: Mm-hm. What about your kids and -- and I-I'm assuming all along here that your kids know your story and --

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: -- you've never had any trouble telling them about it and wanted them to know, I'm sure.

A: Yeah, they know the story.

Q: Yeah.

A: They nev -- they don't ask questions. I've -- I've yet to -- ask to see -- to hear one of them -- well, maybe they asked questions as children, I can't remember. But right now, as adults, maybe they feel that they know everything. They don't ask, I don't tell anything. I just -- we never get on that subject.

Q: Do you think -- oftentimes people s-say their kids are afraid to ask because they think it's painful for you.

A: Possible. I have never asked. I think now we are getting to a stage where my grandchildren will know about it. In fact, Daniella, who is now nine and a half started talking about Anne Frank recently. Apparently her mother has been reading it with her. And I don't -- I didn't talk to Iona, to her mother, to see what that was all about. Daniella is pretty with it, so you know, she -- for a nine and a half year old, she -- she reads well, and she understands a lot. And the other day we were talking about the black experience, and she was talking to me about the underground railroad. So I'm sure she could understand some of that. She goes to Hebrew school, so they must have been talking about -- about it there for Yom HaShoah.

Q: Mm.

A: But I have not had the time to sit down with her and sort of obliquely say something to see if she will come up with something. Obviously I'm not going to start telling her anything unless I feel that she must know. I -- I -- you know, with

your grandchildren you don't know exactly when they're ready for what, because you don't have them every day and I-I -- I don't want to dump anything on them.

Q: Yeah. It's always an interesting -- there's -- it's an interesting issue that comes up in all these interviews is, when do you tell them --

A: When do you tell.

Q: -- how do you tell them, and --

A: I have not the foggiest idea, I have no memory of when I told my kids. I think probably they were asking question -- you know, they were in Croatia with me when they were very little. And I probably told them early that my parents were killed in a war. I don't know whether I told them how, or -- I think I told them why. And I may have told them how, I may have told them they got killed in concentration camps, but they probably found out later on what that meant. I don't know that -- I don't know -- I d -- I d -- I do -- I can't think of th -- of any time when I had this moment where I would sit them down and talk to them about it, no.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: I don't remember that.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I may have, but I rather doubt it.

Q: Mm-hm. What -- wh-wh-what was it like for you when war broke out again in the 90's?

A: Oh, I was very upset. And again, that probably again has to do with my experience in post-war Yugoslavia as a -- as a product of communist education. I really felt like they -- they -- they need to stay together. I -- and I -- I just wanted United States to go and bomb Serbia and stop the war. I think I was right, but the Croats -- I still feel -- think I was right, but I don't know whether you were reading Louis in the "New York Times." He -- I -- I really agreed with his point of view. I think people here -- I mean, the politicians here, the government felt -- you know, they thought it was going to be another Vietnam. No, I mean, Iraq is going to be another Vietnam, but herl -- but Yugoslavia could have been saved, but not by -- by doing what [indecipherable] was doing, like siding with Milosevic. But -- but by getting him out of power and -- and reestablishing law and order and -- and -- and some semblance of democracy.

Q: During those early days when Slovenia broke away and then it was sort of --

A: Croatia.

Q: -- Croatia -- tension was building in Croatia and then Bosnia. Were your friends asking you what -- what's going on wi -- because I remember I --

A: Everybody.

Q: Yeah. Who -- who could understand it? I mean, it's just -- it was so hard for people to grasp.

A: I was trying to explain to them -- everybody was asking me and I was trying to explain that it's not a Vietnam and that it could be stopped easily. I think it could

have been stopped very easily from the beginning. I was starting to explain that there are -- th-the business of, you know, the ethnic animosity is age long -- you know, ages long. Well, of course there were, but I mean -- so there are between the north and the south in the United States, but we don't go killing each other, you know. Yeah, there are -- there are crazies running around in bars and stripes, so what, you know? And the fact that I felt like, you know, you could have -- yo -- if you had that kind of leadership in United States, you could have this country in a -- in turmoil at no time at all. You get a lot of those Nazi party types, or you know, David whatever his name was, or somebody elected t-t --

Q: You're talking about the guy from Louisiana?

A: Yes, what was his name?

Q: Can't think of his last name.

A: I mean, people like that can stir up ethnic hatreds in two seconds. I mean, you know, Latinos, blacks, you know, the -- cities could burn. I mean, you have to -- you have to have the kind of leadership that says no, this will not do. We cannot have that kind of behavior and -- and do -- instead of allowing that kind of -- that kind of, you know, leadership to -- to go on, I -- I just -- I just felt like it was -- it's such a pity. I mean, my Croatian friends, mind you, don't feel that way. I mean, they feel that -- they feel that they are -- they are very happy to be rid of Serbs. They are very happy to be rid of Yugoslavia and communism. Okay, communism I can see, but you know, if they wanted to separate, it could have been done later, I mean the -- but

if, you know, if Romania can make it, and -- and Poland can make it, Yugoslavia could have made it. I don't know. I -- I -- it's -- it's a pity, I think. I don't know.

Q: Yeah. … What -- I -- I've kind of come across all my questions, but there must be things that I didn't hit upon. I mean, obviously we could go on for a long time, but there must be something that I haven't asked you that you'd like to talk about, or some --

A: [inaudible] have anything, I don't know. … I don't know, what didn't we talk about?

Q: You've had a very interesting, une -- everybody's story is unique, but yours is quite unusual from so many --

A: You think?

Q: -- that I've done, because in -- I don't know, you seem to have, probably because of -- it's probably a personality thing, but you've moved so -- in such a straight line and -- and eithe -- coped well, it seems like in -- in -- in every --

A: It must be personality. I was really lucky.

Q: In every phase, in ever -- well, you think of yourself as lucky, too, you know?

A: Mm-hm. Yeah.

Q: So you've adapted to a lot of tre-tremendous upheaval.

A: I was -- I -- I really would have [indecipherable]

Q: Which -- which can tear people apart, emotionally --

A: Right.

Q: -- and you seem to have really had a pragmatic, sort of optimistic way of dealing with all these things.

A: True, and I think -- I think it's my Shoah tape, I -- which I haven't seen the whole thing either, but I remember doing it and I remember talking about everything and I cried at the very end because I think -- well, I think as the loss of my parents as being a horrendous thing. I think it was horrendous for them, and I don't think it's as horrendous for me, which is a horrible thing to say, but because I have no memory of it. I can imagine what must have been like, now that I have children. After I had children, I was thinking of it. What must have been like for my parents to have given me away? Basically, that's what they did. And even worse for my -- to -- to give away my brother. [phone ringing][tape break]

Q: -- it's harder -- you think harder when they gave up your brother?

A: I think about my brother because I left -- I left almost like I'm going to my grandparents and I'm going sort of like --

Q: For a visit.

A: -- who knows, you know, for a visit and maybe I'll be back. Maybe [indecipherable] maybe -- maybe it'll be -- all be okay. But my brother, they were already in jail and he was a baby and my mother handed him away. So it must have been just horrendous. I think for me and my -- of course, my uncle died when he was in his 80's, so that was sad, but you expect older people to die. But to lose my husband when I did was really a horrendous experience. That was the worst.

Q: Yeah. You were quite young.

A: Yeah, I was 54. And I think -- the reason I say I'm luck -- I was lucky -- and I was, because I had these people through my life, you know, first my uncle and then my husband, who really were there for me to lean on and -- and -- and just continue, you know, in my nice, as you say, straight way. If not for them, I don't know what my life would have been like. It would have been -- I -- I may have -- I -- I was born with -- with -- with a person -- with this personality, but who knows how my personality would have been developed had I not had them. So, yes I'm lucky that I was -- that I was born -- I mean, it's good that I was born this way and I ha -- that I have the personality I have, but -- but I was extremely lucky to -- to have -- to have had that op -- you know, to have had these people in my life. And -- and later on, you know, to have my children, who are, you know, who were here, and -- and a lot of friends. That, of course, you know, could have all been different. Let's say that I continued living in Long Island, let's say that I didn't meet my husband, that I went back to Yugoslavia. I'm very glad to have -- to have been able to -- to turn back toward being Jewish, which I knew nothing about. I knew I was Jewish, but it meant nothing.

Q: When did it start to mean something to you?

A: I think -- you know, I have early, early remembrances both pro and con. I don't think I ever told anybody this story. I remember in ne -- a story of rejection. I had a little -- this is true confession story. I don't think I ever told anyone. I -- I remember

that I had, I don't know why it was mine, but I had a little Mogen Davide, that was family's. And why, at one time, must have been in one of those times when I felt like being Jewish was horrible because, you know, children told me that Jews killed Christ and it was terrible. And I gave that away. I gave it to one of my -- one of the like farmer girls, peasant girls. And I said, well, I'm not going to need this. So that's story one. Then story two, I remember finding papers in the house, and I found a -- the music for [indecipherable] and I could play the piano and I played that and somehow like from some other world, that sounded very emotionally stirring to me. And I don't know how old I was. I was fairly young. And then, of course, came my -- the watershed trip to -- to -- to Switzerland, when all of a sudden I found myself in an Orthodox family. And -- but -- but I had such a good feeling toward my uncle, that -- my father's brother. I-I remember seeing him as he waited -- he came to wait for me at the border and the train came into the border and I'm looking out a window and I'm thinking, am I going to recognize him? But I did, and he recognized me immediately. We did exchange pictures, but still I thought I might not recognize him, and I was fairly scared. That was 1954, I think, I was young and -- high school kid. And I had this really very warm experience and very emotional experience that this was someone I was related to. I had never -- I -- I hadn't -- from the time that I was like seven, when I saw my other co -- uncle for the last time, I never had any -- met any family members. It was so -- it was stirring. And then coming into this family, I was very willing to -- to learn and to find out and to think -- to accept the

fact that I was Jewish and -- and everything that went with it. And you know, at that point, I mean that -- that -- that -- that Mogen Davide experience was I must have been like eight years old or something. Was very long time ago. And -- but I -- I remembered it because I often thought about it later and I kind of regretted it. So it was -- it was sort of a new -- an -- an -- an -- an experience that -- that I was willing to -- to accept and it just felt -- it felt right, just sort of right. And, you know, when -- when I met Dan, of course, I -- I didn't know he was Jewish, because I couldn't tell Jews. I can -- you know, now I can. It's like I couldn't tell on the phone somebody who was from the south, and certainly someone who was black, I couldn't tell. I remember being totally surprised that Dan once got off the phone and said, this was a black lady and she wanted to know this and that. I was like, how do you know? You were on the phone. Are you clairvoyant or something? I didn't understand anything about language, and so I couldn't un -- I didn't know anything about people's physiognomy or recognizing anything special, or expressions or anything. Anyway -- and of course -- and he -- he, who would normally have recognized it, didn't recognize it in me because he never expected the Jew from Yugoslavia, in Yugoslavia, I should say. Because you know, people think, oh well, they were all annihilated and who knows whether there were any. I mean, who knows --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- what about Yugoslavia? Dan was really savvy, but still he didn't know. So I remember when -- when the excitement, overall excitement, and I -- you see, I -- I ex

-- I w -- this is -- this is actually going back to one of your questions that I -- I would tell people. In like my third letter I wrote to him about my history, because he asked me what I was doing in Switzerland. And I would have just said I'm visiting in -- an uncle and an aunt.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But I went through the whole story and I told him that -- that they had survived Bergen-Belsen and they are in Switzerland since the end of the war, and that my parents had been killed, and that -- that I'm living with them for a year. And so he wrote immediately back in saying how excited he was to find out that I was Jewish because he was Jewish too, and there was great excitement in the -- in the family, because I told them. So it -- so that alone tells me that I was always very open about my experience. And -- and I -- I just -- I just -- I don't know. I -- I just -- you know, felt right about it. My aunt, of course, always says that it's in the blood because I -- I learned all the kosher rules and everything very fast.

Q: And about -- and how about your kids, are they religious?

A: No, no. They're not religious. Wanda's particularly not religious, but -- but they feel -- they -- they -- they feel very Jewish. Elliot is -- Elliot married a Jewish girl and they are -- they belong to Avas Israel and the kids go to Hebrew school. They're not very religious, but they follow holidays and I don't know, you know. I think some of it is Iona's doing. But that's often so, you know.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Women --

Q: Seem to be the carriers of the --

A: -- seem to be the carriers, yeah, of -- of customs and so on. I don't know what Elliot would have done on his own. Not that he doesn't feel very Jewish, but he may not -- they don't -- neither of them is particularly observant.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So --

Q: And, you know -- but I think, you know, I think one of -- one of -- well, I don't know. I -- I -- I don't know to what extent they would be more observant in different circumstances or what. They both went through Hebrew school, especially Wanda. She was -- I think that -- I think both kids are pretty much the way my husband was, who also wasn't observant and didn't particularly -- you know, I had to drag him away to -- to -- to holidays. And so when I say to Wanda anything, she says, I'm just like my father, so that's it. And -- and -- but yet, he felt very Jewish --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- in -- in every way. It's just that he always felt like that's too much praying.

Q: Too much praying. I want to ask you one question. I'm going to flip the tape over becau --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Dora Klayman. This is tape number three, side B. Something that has -- often comes up is relationship with American relatives when you come here, a lot of people have had very tense relationships with their -- with people that they've become related to. Someti -- you know, for all kinds of reasons. Sometimes because there really isn't any understanding of what happened on either side. I'm wondering what it -- if you'd like to share something about that, if -- if -- if anything like that was -- because sometimes, you know, somebody comes from another country, those were times -- they were different times. And I know I -- you know, you heard all kinds of slurs about people who came to this country, no matter where they were from, east Europe -- from Europe or eastern Europe or whatever. So anyway, I'm just wondering if you had --

A: Well, another bit of luck. I think the fact that my in-laws and that whole generation of people, their siblings, were all immigrants. They all came early, but they came in the 1920's, made a huge difference. So, my husband and -- and all the -- and his brother and all the cousins, they were all first generation. They had all grown up with parents who talked about the old country, and so I was accepted absolutely totally and completely into the family. And they have -- that family has been absolutely fantastic to me. And after Dan's death, cause he -- he was the oldest of the -- of the children, and he di -- of that generation -- he was the oldest of that generation and he died first. And the -- the ca -- the cousins -- well, his brother is,

you know, very close to me, but all -- but that's almost to be expected, but the cousins have all absolutely rallied around me and I am absolutely part of that family, totally. The cousins that I mentioned before who were -- lived in Arlington, they eventually returned, had lived all over and then they came from -- th-they're -- they were in England and they're now in Arlington. And I see them all the time, we went to the march yesterday together. And the other cousin, this person's brother, Danny who lives in Long Island, they were just here also, they went to a wedding here, and they stayed with me. So it's just we're -- we are very -- everybody is very close, and their children are close to my children. My children, unfortunately, don't have any cousins. Their -- I only have these two children and my brother-in-law had no children and I have no siblings, so my children have no cousins. And they pretty much consider Dan's cousin's children their cousins and -- and they're quite close. So I was s-super, super lucky on that score as well.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: In fact, A-A-Aunt Mara, my mother's sister, who lived a -- in Long Island and her -- her son Paul is exactly my age. And she was constantly telling him why o -- a-asking him why couldn't he cou -- why couldn't he go and marry somebody from Europe? That would be so nice. Oh, he married a no -- he married a lovely American girl whom I adore, Joan, and that's that. But anyway, they -- the -- that -- I did not have that -- that problem, because, m-mainly I think people face that with families who have, you know, been here for a very long time and -- and have gotten totally,

you know, im -- Americanized. My in-laws were -- used to joke that you can take -- which is probably why they lived the way I -- they lived, you know, I -- we used to say that -- that they came out of the shtetl, but they couldn't -- you can take them out of the shtetl, but you can't take the shtetl out of them, you know. And you know, Mom was always satisfied with very little. She never wanted very much of anything, you know, and they -- they were super -- had super modest way of life. And just, you know, they were very, very -- still very, very much part of the old country, even though, you know the-they came here, they stru -- they really struggled hard in life. My father-in-law came here with no English. He was 20 years old. He came with no money. How he ever -- and he was not a l -- a -- a -- a language learner. In fact, I mean, to hi -- to the end of his life, and he died in his 90's, he spoke English in si -- with -- with great deal of Yiddish and -- thrown in and whatever. And -- but he -- he -- and he -- but he made it through -- through -- through school and -- and got a d -- degree in pharmacy and became a pharmacist, a licensed pharmacist in the state -- in the state of New York, and -- and had -- had -- had a small, you know, sort of professional kind of a drugstore, you know, not -- no -- no pri -- n-no counter, just -- just drugs. So, you know, how they made it on, you know -- a-and so every fe -- every little bit that they had, it was like there and preserved and -- and so they lived a sort of -- in -- and they were very, very American in their eye -- you know, pro-American, but their outlook was very much steeped in Europe, in old Europe, yeah. And it's -- Mom went to -- Mom came -- had a easier time coming, because she

already had an uncle here. But you know, she -- you know, th-th-they -- they were also lucky in a sense that they -- they got educated reasonably well in Europe. They both went through high school, which was not a very common thing in those days in -- in Russian. So -- and Mom spoke English quite well, and sh-she was much more of a language person than Pop, but -- and, you know, we had -- we had the usual, you know, daughter, in-laws relationship sometimes, where you -- but -- but the -- th-the -- the problems I had with them were mostly problems that my husband had with them, too, rather than, you know, just you know, mostly -- I don't know what the problems were like, you know, are you going to buy this sofa or that sofa, or you can't buy the house, it's so expensive.

Q: Right, right.

A: Or whatever now, since it's --

Q: It's just the normal stuff that everybody has --

A: Just the normal stuff, yeah.

Q: Right.

A: Nothing that -- that would be related to my being from another -- from another world, also.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They were much more from another world than I.

Q: Hm. Hm. [indecipherable] Good. I -- I -- I think I'm done.

A: Good.

Q: Un-Unless there's something else you'd like to talk about. [indecipherable]

A: No, I -- I wish -- I so wish that we had done a tape like that with my husband, I have so little from him.

Q: Hm.

A: It's a very -- it's -- it's -- it's really good. I think all -- every family should do that.

Q: Yeah.

A: Never mind --

Q: Yeah.

A: Never mind hav -- this having to do with a particular issue that other people may -- may want to understand later on.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: But it's just -- just to understand what goes on in families and how they relate to each other and to the world. That would be an interesting thing to do.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Well, thank you.

A: Thank you so much.

Q: Thank you for all your time. This concludes the United States Holoclo -- Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Dora Klayman.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview