Ingeborg B. Weinberger Transcript

JEAN FREEDMAN: This is an interview with Inge Weinberger. It's May 20th, 2001. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. I'm Jean Freedman, recording for the Jewish Women's Archive, Weaving Women's Words Project. Okay. Well, I always start out my interviews the same way, and that's by asking the person to tell me their full name and when and where they were born.

INGEBORG WEINBERGER: Well, my name is Ingeborg Bertha Weinberger. I was born November 23rd, 1920, in Gautzsch--

JF: What was your maiden name?

IW: Cohn, C-o-h-n -- German name.

JF: Okay. Can you tell me a bit about your family and where you grew up?

IW: Well, I come of a family -- we were seven children, five girls, and the youngest were two boys. I was the youngest of the girls.

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IW: My father was a physician, and his practice was in Gautzsch and surrounding area.

JF: Where is Gautzsch?

IW: Gautzsch is about six kilometers south of Leipzig, which is the larger (Laughs) city. Actually, there were very few -- I think there were about three Jewish families in the whole place (Laughs).

JF: In Gautzsch?

IW: Yes, yes.

JF: What was that like?

IW: I guess it didn't (laughs) bother me. We belonged to the Jewish community in Leipzig. We had religious school there, and also, services, we went there. But my friends at the time were all non-Jewish, except, you know, for my cousins and so forth. Of course, this was more or less until Hitler came to power, and things did change somewhat.

JF: Right. Well, before 1933, can you tell me a bit about growing up in this town, and your school and so forth?

IW: Well, it was a small, small community. Germany, it was quite different. If your father -- they were very rank-conscious or class-conscious. If your father was a physician, you were the doctor's children. My mother was Frau Doktor, stuff like that. I went to public school, which was wonderful because it was right across the street from where we lived for years. At the age of ten, after four years public school, we changed, and we went to so-called higher school, which was like Gymnasium or something. You had to pass a test, an entrance exam. Also, it was no longer free; you had to pay for it. The schools were either from the city or from the state, or there were some private schools. Which, of course, were in town. It meant--

JF: In town--

IW: In Leipzig. So, when -- I, well, passed the test, and I started school in town. At first, I used to take the train into it, which was a long ride, but anyway -- Then it was a little walk, you know, to get to school. Later, when I was older, I went by bike, you know, to school.

JF: Wow, that's a long ride.

IW: Well, yeah, it was not that much. Six kilometers wasn't that much. It was a nice ride through the woods. As soon as I started school, I also had to go to religious school. Now, in our area, religion, most of them were, I guess, Protestant. It was taught right in school. They had religion in school. So, while they taught religion, of course, I had a free hour. But I went for a religious school -- I had to go in town in the afternoon.

JF: This was after the regular school?

IW: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. Twice a week.

JF: Was this connected with the synagogue?

IW: It was from the Jewish community. The setup in Germany was quite different than what it is here.

JF: Can you tell me about that? That's very interesting.

IW: Because actually there was one Jewish community to which you pay taxes, and then there were different synagogues. We belonged to the so-called Liberal, which the only thing liberal about it was that they had an organ. But otherwise, men and women were sitting separately, and you know, the service was all in Hebrew except to the sermon. Then they had an Orthodox synagogue.

JF: So, the Liberal would not be like our Reform?

IW: Reform, no, it was not. It was even -- I would say, more than the Conservative here. As I said, the only difference was that there was an organ. As I said, you paid taxes to the Jewish community, and they really were in charge of the whole setup, as far as charity or anything was concerned, which concerned the, well, members.

JF: Right. So, they would take care of any needs in the church community?

IW: Yeah, I think whatever was necessary. Of course, the rabbis were paid by the Jewish community and the cantor, and so forth. It was not like here. Every little congregation has their own thing. It was quite different. As I said, I went to religious school. Actually, our grades had to be on our regular school grades, from religion. They had to be reported. They had to be on there. And in my class, there was a Catholic girl too, and we usually -- while the others had the religion (laughs), we were sitting it out for an hour.

JF: Were you supposed to be doing something different, or just--

IW: No, we just had a free hour (laughs)--

JF: (laughs) Well, that's nice.

IW: -- to kill time. Yeah. So, that was a quite different setup than here, yeah.

JF: Did your family attend services regularly?

IW: Yeah, yeah, yeah. In fact, they also had a separate -- during the High Holidays, for Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, they had separate services for youths and for children, which were not held in the synagogue because usually, the service took all day, you know. We went, actually, to different places to go for service.

JF: How about at home? Did your family keep kosher?

IW: We didn't keep kosher, although my parents both grew up kosher. But when my father left home to study medicine, and then he had got away from it. But he was extremely knowledgeable as far as religious (laughs) things were concerned. He had quite a library and so forth. We kept the holidays. I especially remember Passover, Seder, was wonderful, you know, it was.

JF: Did you have a lot of family nearby?

IW: Well, we had some relatives in town which used to -- there was an uncle and aunt and two cousins, and then there was an uncle and aunt of my father's, the older (Laughs) generation, and they came. And of course, we ourselves were nine people already, just the immediate family, so it was -- and my father kept the whole thing. It was in Hebrew. In fact, I have his Haggadah; it's beautiful (inaudible).

JF: Oh, I'd love to see that later and take a picture of it.

IW: Yeah.

JF: It sounds wonderful.

IW: It's really something I cherish. Somebody had it rebound, who happened to be also from Leipzig, which I met in the office. He rebound it for me. But it still has all the wine spots and charoset spots (Laughs).

JF: Wonderful.

IW: Yeah. No, it's the -- the only time, which was really -- in 1933 and Hitler came to power, and things really were rough, and we didn't have seder. My father -- they didn't have -- it was awful!

JF: Yes.

IW: But we just -- this one year, and then we picked it up again.

JF: Really?

IW: Yeah, yeah. We had it again in 1934; we had it again until -- But this first year when Hitler came to power, I don't know, they had the boycott on April first '33 when they posted the storm troopers in front of the house where we lived. It was an apartment house, and we lived -- had one whole floor. Then on the next floor was my father's office,

you know, (Inaudible) office. These were posted downstairs to stop, you know, patients from going in. But--

JF: This was immediately?

IW: That was April first, '33, the boycott.

JF: Did you have any experiences with antisemitism before this, during the Weimar Republic? Was there any feeling--

IW: I personally did not. I did not. The only thing I remember that my father told us -- but that was actually before the Weimar Republic--

JF: Oh, really.

IW: He had to serve in the German Army, I think, even before World War I. He said there was quite a bit of antisemitism in the army. Of course, World War I was four years he served in the war as a physician. He was both at the eastern and western fronts.

JF: But personally, you didn't experience anything at school or...

IW: Personally, before Hitler came to power, no.

JF: So, that must have been an incredible shock.

IW: Yeah, because, well, you know, you belong to a sport club in the community where we live, and we were kicked out right away. So, that was tough also. In school, you know, some of the classmates changed.

JF: Could you tell me more about that, about how things changed after '33?

IW: Well, actually maybe it became more difficult actually for my parents, I would say for my father, than for us. Well, my father, there are certain things he was in our community.

He was the official doctor for the school when the children were examined every year; also, for the police, if anything happened, he was called. He also -- and well, in Germany, I guess these social laws were much more advanced than here, especially as far as sickness insurance was concerned. Almost everybody belonged through work or private insurance. My father worked for two of these insurance companies. One was from the city, and one was the, I guess, like state or something.

They had offices in town, where he had to examine, you know, people, to find whether they could go back to work or were still sick. That, of course, was extra income that he lost, which was quite considerable because -- But they did not take away that he could treat patients who had this insurance. That, fortunately, he could keep.

JF: How did the patients react?

IW: Well, the patients -- well, I would think that he was very much beloved. In fact, in 1947, my oldest sister went back. They wanted to know when is the doctor coming back? (laughs). He delivered; I don't know how many thousands of babies. I just adored him. He was a wonderful man, and he was a doctor like you don't have anymore.

JF: So, a general practitioner?

IW: GP, yes.

JF: What about at school? You were in the Gymnasium at this point?

IW: Yes, I was in it in '33, yeah, I was. That was the first (inaudible). I changed in '32, yeah.

JF: Were you able to stay?

IW: Yes, yeah. Yeah, I stayed. I was very much into sports, very active, you know, in school. I can show you; I still have (laughs)--

JF: Yes, I'd love to.

IW: -- you know, diplomas or -- with my name, Inge Cohn, right on the swastika, you know (laughs).

JF: I definitely want a picture of that.

IW: I was involved in school. School was okay, really. The teachers -- I really did not have any trouble. I had to be careful with some of the girls. You had to be careful what you said. I mean-

JF: Why was that?

IW: Because they might report. In fact, some parents were afraid to talk in front of their children because they may report things. It was bad. Then you're always listening, looking around as if the walls have ears. You were very careful what you would be saying. But I mean, I kept my friends. I still have a friend, girlfriend in Berlin. We started first grade together, and I just saw her last September. We e-mail constantly. She's not Jewish. The only time we were not in contact was during the war years. Right after the war, we got in touch in Leipzig.

JF: That's great.

IW: Yeah. Then the Jewish artists were kicked out, and so forth. Then the Jewish community in Germany, they started to organize there. They had the so-called *Kulturbund*, Culture Organization, where all the artists performed. Then you had performances, which you could -- which was great for both sides (laughs) of the party, both the audience and the artist to have a way of expressing themselves. Then also they had sport clubs. They had two. They had one, Bar Kochba, which was a Zionist (laughs). They had the *Schild*, to which I belonged, which was -- there was an organization which was, I guess, formed after World War I, which was an organization of

Jewish war veterans who participated. They had this sports club called *Schild*, which I belonged to, which started, I guess, in '34, '35. Also then, they had youth groups. I think they always had the Zionist groups before, but we were, I guess, very German. I don't know.

(laughs). I really did not have any Zionist feelings at that time. We belonged to this other group, of course, called *Bund Deutsch Jüdischer Jugend*, meaning the Organization of German Jewish Youth (laughs)--

JF: *Bund Deutsch Jüdischer*, what was the--

IW: *Jugend*, J-u--

JF: *Jugend*, right. Okay.

IW: BDJJ. That's where we then spent our free time, in the Jewish sports club and in the youth group.

JF: You mentioned something interesting before. You said in '33, your family didn't have a Seder, but in '34, they went back to it.

IW: Yeah, because we were so lost not having that, and it was terrible. My father decided he's not going to do that again.

JF: Was there a feeling that Hitler would just be a passing fancy, that he'd voted out?

IW: Yeah, well the -- you know, in youth, and you listen to your parents and the adults talking, you know, they said, that'll be -- he won't last long. But it got worse all the time. In '35, then came the Nuremberg Laws. And '36, it was a little bit easier because of the Olympic Games in Berlin. In fact, I went.

JF: You did?

IW: Oh, yeah.

JF: Tell me about that.

IW: Oh, it was so exciting. I was able -- my sister, Eva, and she was the second oldest, she was married in Berlin. I went to Berlin and not knowing whether I would get tickets. But I did get tickets, and I saw Jesse Owens setting his world record. It was just so exciting.

JF: Why did things get easier during the Olympics?

IW: Because of the foreign visitors. There were some Jewish -- Jews on the German team.

JF: Really? I didn't know that. Which team?

IW: Well, they had one in the -- I don't think she -- whether she participated, I don't know, but she was training with -- what's her name? Bergmann. I can't think of her first name right now. She was in the broad jump, she was very good -- broad jump or high jump, I'm not sure anymore. Then there was fencing. Helene Meyer, I think -- I don't know if she was full Jewish or whether there was, you know, a Jewish father, Jewish mother -- or the grandmother. Who knows? But she was definitely in it. She participated. She was very good at fencing. So yeah, that was very exciting. I saw some swimming, and then I saw the hockey. I think I saw the Indians who were very good in hockey. And so -- (laughs).

JF: So, what happened after that? Did it appear that things were going to get easier at that point, or --

IW: Mmm, no. It was just during the Olympics.

JF: Oh, just during the Olympics.

IW: Yeah, yeah. But then, you know, gradually things became worse, and people did start to leave. The problem was still find a place, a country which would take you.

JF: Right.

IW: So, what did your family do?

IW: Well, actually -- let's see, I had to leave school in -- our school year started always around Easter. Then Easter, '37, I couldn't continue anymore in the school I was.

JF: Because Jews couldn't go?

IW: Yeah. My brothers, they had been kicked out already. They were in private school already. So then, they needed teachers for the Jewish schools. There was a special course in Stuttgart for Physical Ed. So, I signed up for that.

JF: This is through the Jewish community?

IW: Yeah, I guess so. It was a sports school in Stuttgart, which was a school beforehand, a gym, and so forth. But this became the official place where people could be taking this special course. The *Examen* (examination) actually was supervised by the State of Württemberg. It was -- it gave it a kind of official something (laughs) --

JF: How strange.

IW: Yeah, it was -- of course, in one year, you cannot make somebody a teacher, which at the university it takes about four, you know. Besides, I would have had three more -- should have had three more years of schooling before you can go to university now. So, anyway, I took that course. I roomed together with another girl from Leipzig. She also had been in the sport club. We knew each other already, also in the youth group and so forth. We took that course and passed the *Examen*. When I got back home -- it was Easter of '38. I did get a job as assistant teacher in Physical Ed. I was teaching all

grades, both in public school and in high school.

JF: So, you were teaching, and was this in a Jewish school?

IW: In a Jewish school, yeah.

JF: So, things were very, very divided at this point?

IW: Oh, yeah, at this point, it was already (makes vibrating sound with lips) -- you really couldn't go anymore to German schools. You could see the end (laughs) coming. I actually had students who were older than I was. I felt kind of strange (laughs) with all these adults and grownup teachers, but anyway -- but that ended. In October of '38, the Nazis started to deport the Polish Jews to Poland. We had quite a number of Polish Jews in Leipzig. The fur trade was there. Of course, it was very difficult to become a German citizen. Even if you were born there, if your parents weren't German, you didn't become a German citizen. I think they've changed it now, I believe, yeah. They were sent to Poland. After, I don't know, a couple days, the Poles didn't accept them anymore. They came back, and I remember my father, who had a car, that we went to the railroad station in Leipzig to pick up these Poles who were coming back, Polish Jews, and take them to, I guess -- I don't know if he took them to their apartments or -- I don't remember where we took them -- to the school. Because what the Nazis did, as soon as they picked them up, they sealed their apartments. There were a few who managed to save themselves because there was a Polish Consulate in Leipzig, and they went to the Consulate. The ground, of course, the Nazis couldn't get in because that was considered of Poland. In fact, I have a friend in New York who managed to avoid deportation at that time by being on the ground of the Consulate.

JF: How long could they stay at the Consulate?

IW: Well, they stayed until they -- you know, it stopped, and the Poles wouldn't accept any more, of course. Then, of course, this Polish deportation, that resulted in

Kristallnacht because this Grynszpan who shot this von Rath in Paris, his friends were among the group who was, you know, deported from Germany. In his rage, he shot that guy. That is when -- what started Kristallnacht, which was the most horrendous thing. I mean, then you--

JF: Do you remember that?

IW: Oh, yes.

JF: Can you tell me what your memories are?

IW: Oh, first of all, that I -- well, what happened, I think downstairs at the entrance from our house where we lived, there was a night bell for patients, you know, in case they needed my father. I think about five o'clock in the morning, the bell rang, and one of his patients came upstairs. He said he just came from town, and the synagogue is burning -- he told my father. People were being picked up. That's how we found out what was happening in town. Fortunately, my father was not picked up. I don't think they could have.

JF: Did the townspeople protect him?

IW: I don't -- they could have gotten away with it, so he was not picked up. But I remember a lot of people, my uncle, was picked up and sent to Buchenwald, the concentration camp. Any male from the age of eighteen, really, that they could find.

They came -- I was going with my boyfriend, who later became my husband. He had just been released from the hospital because he had polio. He was still under medical care. He had a non-Jewish physician. They came to their apartment, and his father had been very sick already (inaudible). So, they really came to pick up his father. They took one look at him and said, "Well, you're going to croak soon anyway." That's how they talked. They were ready to leave, and they saw my husband's picture there -- my boyfriend's

picture. They asked his mother, "Who is that? We'll take him." She said, "That's my son."

So, they came to his room. He told them, he said, "You better -- don't come in." He said, "I just was released, you know, from the hospital where I was in isolation for six weeks." But they called his doctor at six o'clock -- I don't know -- it was in the morning, and they asked him whether the Jew Weinberger was one of his patients -- he said, yes -- and whether they could pick him up. He said, "Well, it depends. If you leave him just in a cell, you know." They didn't pick him up. Then, during the day, he used to hide out in the doctor's office. He'd stay there all day; he let him stay all day.

JF: The doctor took quite a risk, didn't he?

IW: Yeah. In fact, we -- my husband searched for him after the war, and it took quite a while to locate him because he had left Leipzig. He was, I think, in Frankfurt. Through the German Medical Association or whatever it is, he did find him, and we saw him. In fact, he came to the states, was here. He died a few years ago, a very nice man, a very nice, wonderful man. We visited him in Frankfurt. So, I mean, there were some decent people (laughs). Because they -- it was so scary because you knew that anybody could maybe do with you whatever they wanted. Nobody would have protected you.

That fear, it was just unbelievable. There was no place you could turn to, really. So that was -- Then, of course, then -- well, in October, even before, my father had to turn in his license. He could no longer practice.

JF: This is October of '38.

IW: '38, yeah, it was before. Of course, his livelihood.

JF: So, what did you do? What did he do?

IW: What did he do? Well, my sister in Berlin and brother-in-law, they had gotten papers for Bolivia. Then my brother-in-law suggested to my father; he said that our (inaudible), because he was thinking he had some -- my father had some connections in France from World War I. So, thank God we didn't go there (laughs).

JF: Why Bolivia?

IW: Bolivia? You went any place where you could get a visa. You didn't care. I mean, that certainly wasn't a choice to go. It was so primitive and -- anyway, we did get visas for Bolivia.

JF: The whole family, all of you?

IW: Well, no. Let me see. My sister, Ruth, she was the one before me (laughs). She was a nurse at the Jewish Hospital in Berlin. My sister, Irene, she was number three (laughs), she went to England, I think in '37 already, yeah. You could get jobs in households. She had some friends who had gone to England. My oldest sister, Gerda, she was an ardent Communist, and she had to leave Germany already in; I guess it was '35. She was at the university. She was studying at the time. They would have locked her up. So, she went to Prague with her boyfriend, non-Jewish boyfriend. Actually, at home, there were just my two brothers and I. But my sister Ruth was also supposed to go with us to Bolivia. But she wanted to stay until the last minute because her boyfriend -- one of the doctors was her boyfriend. She wouldn't leave. So, unfortunately, she -- after an infectious ear operation, she pricked her finger, and she was dead within twenty-four hours.

JF: Oh, my God.

IW: Which was just a couple of days before we were leaving. So, my parents went to Berlin, but by the time they got there, she had died already. Then we had to leave for Hamburg. We were leaving March first. From Hamburg, I went with my parents to Berlin

for the funeral. Then we went back, and we left.

JF: What was it like to leave? What kind of feelings did you have about leaving Germany?

IW: Well, not knowing really where you were going, it's -- if you leave everything behind which was familiar to you -- we had started taking Spanish lessons. It was strange. It wasn't easy. But I imagine it was -- and of course, and with my sister passing away and -- which was also very sad. My father wrote his doctor's thesis about the kind of infection that she died from. They didn't have any penicillin, no sulfa, nothing, at that time, which probably may have saved her. Then my sister from London, she came to -- I think to Antwerp, where our boat stopped. We had to break the news to her.

JF: Oh, how awful.

IW: It was one day that Irene was with us, what happened. She went back to London.

JF: When was this? I'm trying to get--

IW: '39. We left Germany March first, '39.

JF: Wow.

IW: We just -- lucky when we left.

JF: So, you went to Antwerp and got the boat from there?

IW: No, we got the boat from Hamburg. We left from Hamburg. But the boat that was a Chilean -- Chile ship was a half freighter. It had about 150 passengers who were all refugees going to various South American countries. My boyfriend had immigrated to the States. He had left, I guess, in February, '39. Of course, we were corresponding. We thought maybe that we'd get together in two years, it would take us two years. In fact, we

both had sheets where we're crossing off the days (inaudible) until we're – (laughs).

JF: (laughs) That's very romantic.

IW: Yeah, yeah. So, our ship was directed to Baltimore. My boyfriend (laughs), he was in Richmond. I sent a cable from the ship that we were going to be in Baltimore. Of course, I had no idea if he was going to come or not. We got into Baltimore, and the -- I guess from Immigration or -- they come on the ship with a pilot or something to get into the harbor. One of these guys was talking to one of the passengers. My father happened to be standing nearby, and he said, "Oh, there's going to be a wedding on the ship; I don't know when. A Mr. Weinberger is getting married." So, my father pricked up his ears. He said, "Weinberger?" He said, "Boyfriend of my daughter? We have no idea." After we get into the harbor, then they call all the passengers in the dining room. They take my passport away right away, and they don't -- they said, "You know, you're getting married." I said, "I have no idea. I don't even know if he's going to be here."

Anyway, so we docked, and Hans climbs up the ladder. While he was waiting for the ship to come in, he was talking to one of the Immigration people. And he said, "Who are you meeting?" So, he told them. He said, "So why don't you get married? You know, because then she can come in on a preference." Because the German quota was so oversubscribed, you know, it would have been a waiting time, God knows how long. So anyway (laughs)--

JF: Even if you were immediate family -- even if you were husband and wife, you still had to go through the quota?

IW: Oh, yeah. It's just a preference -- a second preference. Anyway, the boat was met also by members of the National Council of Jewish Women, the president, and somebody else, and they came on the ship. One of them was Flora Dashew, she was the president at that time. The other one was Mrs. Soboloff, whose husband was Judge

Simon Soboloff. He was a very prominent judge.

There was a forty-eight-hour waiting time to take out the license. So, these two women, Flora Dashew and Mrs. Soboloff, they took Hans in tow, and they went to see Judge Soboloff. He went to the other judge who could change it, and they changed the law so he could take out the license before that. He didn't have to wait. I think we got in -- I don't know, on a Thursday. So anyway, then we got married on March 17th, 1939, on the ship.

JF: Who performed the marriage?

IW: Rabbi Shaw. He was assistant rabbi of Oheb Shalom at the time.

JF: He came on the ship?

IW: On the ship. There were some other ladies whose names I have on the back of my (laughs) marriage license. I can't seem to remember them, their names anyway. But they wouldn't let me off the ship. I could not go off because they were afraid I was going to stay (laughs), disappear. Well, everybody else, my parents, my brothers, and all the other refugees on the ship, they were wined and dined by the Jewish community. They had a wonderful time.

JF: How did you feel getting married in this way?

IW: Well, it was kind of (laughs) crazy, unusual, because it really -- it was the -- strictly to get the preference visa, which was the only smart thing to do under the circumstances, because otherwise, it would have taken a very long time for me to get a visa because I wasn't registered with the U.S., with -- I had no number. And God knows how long it would have taken.

JF: Let me get your husband's full name?

IW: Yeah. It's Hans Emanuel Weinberger.

JF: Okay. So, you had this shipboard wedding.

IW: Yeah.

JF: Then you harbored at Baltimore.

IW: Yeah.

JF: That's your first experience with Baltimore?

IW: Right. That was the first experience. I only saw it from the ship (laughs). We were in the -- I think in Sparrows Point, they were loading steel or something, and in Locust Point, and moved around in the harbor. But that's all I saw while, as I said, my parents and my brothers, they really -- there was--

JF: They were able to get off the ship?

IW: Oh, yeah. They really were taken around. I think they went to Chizuk Amuno, the congregation, because Rabbi Koblenz -- I think he was the rabbi at that time -- I think he spoke German, probably -- yeah, so anyway -- We were here -- I think we were here a couple days before we left. Of course, I didn't know how long it would take (laughs) for the paperwork to get going. And I was off to Bolivia.

JF: Oh, so tell me about that.

IW: Oh, Bolivia, yeah. Well, we went through the Panama Canal. I guess the -- it gave us a little bit of time to -- a break between the getting away from Germany, under the circumstances where you had to give up everything. You had to turn in all the silver, and God knows what. You could only take enough for what you need, you know, for the number of persons. The rest you had to turn in.

JF: Were you able to take any mementos or family heirlooms or--

IW: Yeah. Well, pictures. My father had books and stuff. I still have the books and so forth. Of course, in money, you could take, I think, ten marks, I think it was. About four dollars or something roughly per person. It wasn't much (laughs). Most of -- the furniture and stuff everything was left behind. It was much worse for my parents than it was for us. We were young then. Still -- so we made a few stops, I think, I remember, in Ecuador, I think, and Guayaquil. We arrived in Arica, Chile. That's where we got off the ship. I remember first thing (laughs) getting off the ship we -- I see these tremendous *cucarachas* (cockroaches), you know (laughs). It was awful, bugs.

JF: I just want to make sure we're still recording. Yeah, we're still recording. Sorry, I just heard a strange noise on the recorder. I just wanted to check it out.

IW: Oh, yeah (inaudible).

JF: We are still recording. Okay. So, you saw the *cucarachas*.

IW: Oh, yeah, God. We stayed there overnight, and the next day we went by train to Bolivia, to La Paz. La Paz is about -- is it 12,000 feet high? Yeah. And overnight, we stayed somewhere on the Alto -- I mean, really someplace very high up. I remember my father was busy (Laughs) treating people who was -- they got sick from the altitude.

In fact, when we arrived in La Paz, I mean, I would say for about the first two, three months, I was not okay. I could feel the altitude, and I was starting to have trouble with my sinuses, which I still have (laughs), thanks to that.

My first job in Bolivia, they had started -- in fact, there was also a girl -- woman from Leipzig started a kindergarten or something because the new immigrants, you know, we didn't know what to do with the children. You know, they tried to find a place to live and everything. We had children there overnight, who stayed in this, and I worked there. I

said, at first, I really suffered from the altitude. To get acclimated to that thin air, it took a while.

JF: What were the living conditions like?

IW: It was so primitive; it was unbelievable. We saw the Indians with their llamas, and the women had these wide skirts. They would sit on the side of the street to relieve themselves. All of a sudden, you saw the water running.

JF: Wow (laughs).

IW: (laughs) I don't think they wore pants. They just had these tremendous bunch of skirts. Of course, they did not speak Spanish; they spoke Aymara, a different language. Yeah, it was -- so actually, the contact you had was really with other refugees, more or less.

JF: Did you live in a certain part of town with other refugees?

IW: No. I lived -- the first few months -- I lived at the children's home. I worked there. Then I got a job with the French Commercial Attaché -- they had a little girl who was about two years old, three years old -- to take care of her. The first thing I did was try to get her clean because she was not housebroken (laughs).

JF: (laughs).

IW: I was tired of cleaning her up all the time. Her mother was pregnant, and she was throwing up all over the place in the morning. I had to take care of the child and then, you know, serve the meals and stuff like that. In the kitchen, they had an Indian cook.

But then, when the war broke out September first, '39, they were planning to go back to France. So, I stopped, and I got another job with a Bolivian family who had three children. The mother was of German background. I think her parents were Germans. I

don't remember whether she was stillborn in Germany or not.

JF: So, they spoke German, or did they speak Spanish?

IW: They spoke Spanish. But a nice, nice family. The kids were nice, nice. I worked there taking care of the children. You just did anything you could, and, in the meantime, Hans had started the procedure, the immigration procedure.

JF: Let me just pause one minute to check on something on the machine. Sorry about this.

(INTERRUPTION IN RECORDING)

JF: Okay. Everything is fine with the machine. So, you mentioned at this point, Hans is getting the paperwork together.

IW: Yeah, yeah. So, he sent an affidavit, but his was not, you know, strong enough. The Dashews also made out papers for me. Unfortunately, the first one got lost, which is typical for South American mail (laughs). So, they had to do it all over again. My father, the only way he could practice was by being accepted in the Bolivian Army as a physician. That did it, only he had to get his German military papers because I guess the Bolivian doctors probably were afraid of the competition. So anyway, he did join the Bolivian Army as a physician. They sent him somewhere in the Bolivian jungles, (laughs) in Bolivia.

JF: Wow. For how long?

IW: He was there quite a while.

JF: Did your mother go with him?

IW: No. My mother stayed in La Paz. You know, my sister was there.

JF: Which sister?

IW: Eva, with her husband and son, Claus. My two brothers, you know, were also in La Paz.

JF: How old were your brothers at this point?

IW: Let's see, the older one, in '39, he was seventeen, yeah, and the other one, he was fifteen.

JF: What were they doing? Were they in school?

IW: No, no. My youngest brother, Fritz, Fred, he -- in Germany where we lived in the house, there was a bakery. There was a store downstairs, and the bakery was in the back. My youngest brother, he used to help in the bakery. He was a little kid, and he -- but he learned a lot (laughs). So, anyway, when he came to La Paz, he started working for a bakery. Eventually, they had their own bakery. My brother Uli, he had -- I think he started learning in the fur trade, but then he switched to auto mechanic. But eventually, both boys, they had a bakery together in La Paz.

JF: Fritz, and what was the other name?

IW: Uli.

JF: So, they had their own bakery in La Paz?

IW: Yeah, in La Paz for a while, yeah. That was later. So, anyway, I got my visa for the U. S. in November '39. But I was hoping I could see my father before I left, but it didn't work out. So, the visa was only good, what's that three or four months, I don't remember. I left in February '40, and I got here the beginning of March 1940. I got to Baltimore. At that time, the Dashews also had offered my husband, a job in Baltimore. His job in Richmond wasn't that great, and so he accepted. That's how we landed in Baltimore.

JF: What was the job?

IW: Jay Dashew, he had, on Baltimore Street, a store or a business. They had sewing machines. There was a lot of needle trade in Baltimore at that time, you know, all kind of clothing industry and ties and shirts and whatnot. He had commercial machines. And they were taking care of selling the machines and also repairing. Hans was, I guess, a salesman for them.

JF: So, you came to Baltimore in March of 1940.

IW: '40, yes.

JF: So, what was that like?

IW: Well, Hans had gotten an apartment on Rockrose Avenue, which was -- actually, we had two rooms there, where we stayed. This was a family which was off of Reisterstown Road. We were near Park Circle (Laughs). So, Flora Dashew was very active in the Jewish community. The first thing she did she took me to see Harry Greenstein, who was the executive director of the Associated Jewish Charities. And so, with the help of Harry, I got a job at the JCC.

It was called "Y" at that time (laughs), on Monument Street, which was right next door to the Associated building -- and in the cafeteria, as a waitress. Of course, my husband was beside himself. His wife, you know, in Germany, they didn't have to waitress. I mean, it was not exactly the best kind of job. But it was a job (laughs). And I worked there for a while. Also, I had learned massaging at the course I took in Stuttgart. They set up a table in the "Y," I guess in the shower room or dressing room for the ladies. And I would give massages. I also did some exercises and so forth. But I was kind of disappointed at that time. Women didn't go in much for exercise (laughs) in 1940, you know. They were afraid of getting muscles.

JF: Not like now. (laughs).

IW: No, no. It was nothing like it. That I couldn't understand (laughs). Also, I did some massages going to people's homes. But it's very hard, very strenuous. Of course, the beds, they give. I did that for a while. Then I also -- yeah, then I got a job at the May Company as a salesgirl, selling in the infants' wear, you know, layettes. Also, in the wintertime, I hated that -- we had to try on these leggings, the children, which was (laughs) torture (laughs).

JF: (laughs).

IW: Let's see, what -- then I got a job which I really liked. It was at Hopkins Hospital, in the Harriet Lane Home, in the -- there was a private ward of the children's section. I did the charts, which was extremely interesting. I got very much involved also with the patients. In fact, there were some parents they wanted to hire me to take care of -- their daughter who was there. She had, I don't know, rheumatic fever or something. I couldn't get along with the girl very well, so of course, I didn't do that.

But it was interesting. For quite a while, I still -- they started having, at May Company evening hours on Thursdays or something. I used to do some selling in the evening, just to make some -- but I think I did that when my husband was drafted, I think, which was in '43.

JF: So, what happened then?

IW: Then the job at Hopkins didn't pay enough, so I had to quit that. I got a job at the Comfy Manufacturing -- they manufacture -- in the office -- slipcovers. Because one of the people, I guess, was drafted in the Army, so I got a job there (laughs).

JF: So where was your husband drafted to?

IW: Well, he was first in Meade, and then he was sent to Texas, Camp Fannin, Texas. So, I visited him in Fannin. But I didn't like Texas. It was such a -- Tyler, it was this awful town (laughs). I just didn't like the Army life with the -- the women were worse than the men when it came to rank.

JF: Oh, really?

IW: Oh, it was terrible.

JF: What would they do?

IW: Well, they outrank -- if the husband out -- they really would pull it, and I didn't like that.

JF: So, how long were you in Texas?

IW: Just a couple of weeks, actually, and came back to Baltimore. By that time, we had, you know, our own apartment on Park Avenue.

JF: What were your impressions of--

IW: Oh, I forgot something. Because the first summer in 1940, I got a job at Camp Woodland, which was the Jewish camp out in Catonsville, which really was -- the campers -- there was a free camp, I believe. It was from the Associated, I'm pretty sure -- as a counselor. It was very nice because we -- for two months or as long as the camp was, we didn't need any rent, because Hans could also stay there. In the morning, he would go to work with the husband of the -- Ferdinand Roten. His wife, Mary Roten, she was the -- she led the camp. She had a nursery school at the Jewish Educational Alliance on East Baltimore Street.

There somewhere she was in charge of the Camp Woodland. It was a nice summer. It was very relaxing. We used to play tennis at Spring Grove because the director of

Spring Grove was Dr. Turk -- he would invite us. He was also Jewish (laughs). Often, we went to their apartment. It was a very nice summer.

JF: What were your impressions of Baltimore as a place to live?

IW: Well, Baltimore -- I guess we were very lucky because the Dashews really -- we were really made part of their family, which was wonderful. I remember she used to tell us, because Jay Dashew came from Russia, and they -- in Baltimore, they had quite -- the eastern Jews and the German Jews, there was a difference. Flora used to tell us about it. I guess it still was. It was getting less and less by that time already. But I know the Suburban Club was strictly the German Jews, and the Woodholme was by the eastern Jews. But I think now it's really finished (laughs), I think. Yeah, I think.

JF: Right. But in those days, it was still very strong.

IW: In those days, it still was, yeah. I mean, because she -- I know she told us about it. It's hard to believe. Also, I found very difficult in Baltimore, that was such a ghetto, the Jewish population -- was so concentrated in the one area, northwest. Maybe at that time, maybe not as bad as later on when it – the whole Park Heights section. Also, I did find out that if you were not born in Baltimore (laughs), and you didn't go to high school together, I mean, to crash that society was impossible.

JF: Tell me about that. So how did that affect you, coming from another country?

IW: Well, I was very upset. For instance, I saw the Mount Washington Swimming Pool had a sign, "No Jews Allowed." I thought I was back in Germany. That really was a shocker. Yeah, there really was not too much contact between the Jews and the gentile.

JF: Really.

IW: Well, you know, Baltimore was -- you had restricted neighborhoods. You could not move into Roland Park or certain areas. I mean, that's something I didn't know from Germany. You could really, before Hitler or even afterward -- until towards the end, you know, where they put people in the ghetto or made them wear the star and stuff like that -- but before that, you could live any place you wanted. I mean, it just didn't exist.

JF: That's a scary comment on Baltimore.

IW: Yeah. But that's the way it was.

JF: Right, right.

IW: Uh-huh. Also, too, if you were not born here, it was very hard to make any friends.

JF: Amongst the Jews?

IW: Amongst the Jews, too, yeah, yeah.

JF: So, what did you do?

IW: Well, as I said, we were fortunate with Flora Dashew. She took us to temple and so forth, and we really became part of her family. But what happened that -- the refugees, they formed their own -- well, the first organization I think, was the Chevra, which is actually a burial society. I don't know if somebody didn't have money or why they formed -- I don't remember now. But they had -- We have our own cemetery, and they go strictly -- the burial is strictly Orthodox, so it's not everybody's -- But we became members, and ever since -- I guess since it first came in existence. Then there were two clubs. There was the Cosmopolitan Club, which was formed by German refugees, and the Social Club.

JF: Was the Social Club also formed by refugees?

IW: Yeah.

JF: What was the difference between the two?

IW: The Social Club they also had, I think, soccer team. They were playing soccer (Laughs). Maybe they were younger, possibly a younger group. But we belonged to the Cosmopolitan Club. They had social activities. In summer, they would rent a beach. We would go out to the beach on Sundays, which was quite a deal because nobody had cars. So, we had to take the streetcar, and then you had to -- there was a truck or a bus to get you to the beach. You really had to be strong. Later, I think they -- we started to have -- they started to hire trucks. I remember we used to meet there when -- it wasn't Levinson, it was -- Jack Lewis was -- (inaudible) used to be two burial -- Jewish burial (Laughs) organizations. Jack Lewis doesn't exist anymore. But they were on North Avenue and Eutaw Place. We used to meet there to go out to the beach on the truck. But it was very nice, on Sundays, to get away. That's really where we made our friends then, you know.

JF: Did you join a synagogue?

IW: No. We used to go a lot to Baltimore Hebrew, which -- well, at that time, I guess it was on Madison Avenue.

CD ONE/THREE ENDS

JF: This is disc number two, interview with Inge Weinberger. It's May 20th, 2001. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. I'm Jean Freedman, recording for the Jewish Women's Archive, Weaving Women's Words Project. Okay. When the last disc clicked off, I had just asked you if you belonged to a synagogue, if you joined the synagogue when you first were living in Baltimore.

IW: We actually did not. But we did go to services, either at Eutaw Place Temple or at the Madison Temple, which the Dashews belonged to the Baltimore Hebrew. We went a lot with them to all kinds of things. I did become a ticket holder for the holidays on Eutaw Place Temple, Oheb Shalom. I think it was when Hans was in the Army, yeah.

JF: How long was he in the Army?

IW: He was inducted in '43, and he was released in '46. I don't know exact date. It must have been probably in spring '46, I think. He was -- well, he was first in Camp Fannin, Texas. I went there to see him, and also -- but I was not enthused about life, and I came back home. But the allotment, which I got, for fifty dollars a month, it went mostly for telephone (laughs) calls, I think, long-distance calls. I went down to see him again in Texas, I think. I don't know when it was, in '44, or -- and the trains in those days were really something -- unbelievable, what was going on on these trains, really.

JF: What were they like?

IW: They were packed. And there was -- you had the GIs, and the women -- and plenty going on. Yeah, I came down to Camp Fannin, and only to find out that Hans was being transferred to Camp Ritchie in Maryland (Laughs).

JF: Well, that was good news.

IW: Yeah. See, I think that may have been in '44, '45. I'm not sure. I know it was in Camp Fannin when he became a citizen. He was sworn in -- they made him -- he was not a citizen when he was inducted. He became a citizen while he was in the Army. And I don't know how many were sworn in at that time.

JF: Did that speed up the process, being in Army?

IW: Yeah, I think so -- well, though, he would have been -- it was -- he came here in '39 -- not too much. Not too much, yeah. But they did make him a citizen when they were in the Army. Because the crazy thing was, we were considered enemy aliens, as Germans, even though we were Jewish. I mean, it was nuts, really, crazy.

JF: How did that affect your life?

IW: How did it affect -- yeah, well, you had to turn in cameras and, I think, field glasses. If you had short-wave radios and stuff like that, they had to be turned in to the attorney general in Baltimore. Also, you could not travel without permission. So, if I wanted to visit Hans in Texas, I had to go to the DA's office to get permission to go and visit him in the Army. It was crazy (laughs). But anyway -- yeah, I was considered an enemy alien. (laughs) It was weird. The funny part was that Austrians, Jewish -- you know, the Austrians were not considered enemy aliens. They were not--

JF: How weird. Why not? That's strange.

IW: Yeah. It was really crazy (laughs). Anyway, well, politics (laughs). So, yeah, I was not too enamored with the Army (Laughs).

JF: Well, when he came back to Camp Ritchie, that's--

IW: Well, so anyway, I was in Camp Fannin, and he got orders to go to Camp Ritchie. We were on the same train going back to Maryland -- except that the boys going to Camp Ritchie they were in sleepers while I was sitting up (laughs). I couldn't afford a sleeper. It was funny.

So that was a little bit closer. He came home then on the weekends. I spent some time up there, at Camp Ritchie, which was very nice. It's a nice area, the Blue Ridge -- Maryland. Camp Louise was right around the corner (Laughs). It wasn't that far, so that was nice. But, of course, nobody had a car, so you had to go by train (laughs) or bus.

JF: Now, where were you working at this point? Were you working?

IW: I was working for Comfy Manufacturing Company. Yeah, I was working for them until, I think, probably '45, when the boys started coming back home. Because then they replaced us (laughs) who were hired during the war. I got a job -- I think it was in '45 or '46 -- I'm not sure anymore -- at the Jewish Welfare Fund. At that time, the Associated Campaign was for the local agencies. Jewish Welfare Fund was for overseas agencies. They joined, and so forth. I worked in the office there doing -- well, involved in campaigns and so forth; money raising, and the office work connected with it. I worked for them until '46.

Because when Hans was discharged from the Army, he -- later, from Ritchie, he then -- they were interrogating prisoners of war, the German chiefs of staff personnel, they were interrogating. Then he worked at the Pentagon. When he was discharged from the Pentagon, that's where he got hired for the trials in Nuremberg as an interpreter.

JF: Okay. He was an interpreter.

IW: Interpreter, translator, yeah.

JF: For the Nuremberg trials?

IW: Yeah. In fact, he became the personal interpreter for Telford Taylor, who was chief of counsel, you know (laughs).

JF: Okay. Tell me about that.

IW: Yeah. Anyway, so he got a job. Of course, in '46, dependents couldn't go to Germany. I got myself a job. I got a job with the Civilian Censorship Division. I had to take a language test in New York, I remember, in German, English. I followed a few months later, going on an Army transport ship (laughs) to Bremen. The closest I could

get to Nuremberg was Munich. So, my first job was in Munich with the Censorship.

JF: What were you doing?

IW: We were listening to telephone -- telephone censorship.

JF: I see. Listening to telephone calls.

IW: Yeah, trying to -- Nazis, black market, and all kinds of stuff. We had to report and record some of.

JF: Did you find anything interesting?

IW: It was quite interesting too.

JF: Catching Nazis in Munich to--

IW: Yeah, too. I don't remember what we caught. A lot of black market going on, especially the GIs were doing a lot of black market.

JF: Oh, really?

IW: (laughs) Of course. You know, cigarettes were really the currency. You know this Meissen bowl which you see behind you? I got this for two cartons of cigarettes in Munich.

JF: It's beautiful!

IW: Yeah, it's gorgeous.

JF: It must be worth a fortune.

IW: Yeah, I priced it once when I was in East Germany at the Meissen there -- a store on Unter den Linden. I went in there to get an idea. At that time, it was quite a few years

ago; it was about $300.

JF: I think it would be worth a lot more now.

IW: Yeah, probably.

JF: It's beautiful.

IW: Yeah. I got it for two cartons of cigarettes.

JF: You got a good deal.

IW: Yeah, I think so (laughs). Anyway, after a couple months, I got a transfer to Nuremberg. It was funny (laughs). I moved in with Hans. He was in bachelor quarters, and there were some other guys living there with their girlfriends. Until (laughs) it came out that a married couple was living in bachelors' quarters and this woman who was in charge for the trials for the personnel -- that couldn't be. The girlfriends were okay, but wife?

JF: Not (laughs).

IW: But we got a very nice place then. Friends of ours who were in the bachelor quarters, he was from Vienna, and he was actually there with his girlfriend. They moved into the apartment we had. We were in a house, which was very nice. I went to the court, I saw it. Of course, by the time I got there -- I got there on October '46, to Germany -- they were just -- just being hanged, the first -- Goering, who, unfortunately, got away. He (laughs) took some poison with the help of some GI guard, gave it to him, he smuggled in to him. But I saw some of the trials and the things -- the doctors' trials. In fact, I had two of my clients later, whose claims was processing in Baltimore -- they were witnesses at the doctors' trials because they were both castrated, two brothers. They -- but it was just -- Yeah.

My husband, in Nuremberg, he was -- as I said, he was the interpreter for Telford Taylor. Also, they translated the interrogations and summarized the interrogations. That was his job there. I continued to do the telephone censorship in Nuremberg.

JF: What was it like being back in Germany?

IW: I tell you, when I first came back, it was kind of satisfaction because, in '46, it was just -- everything was smashed to pieces, and they had nothing. They were really bad off, but I figured they deserved it (laughs). I didn't feel too bad.

The only time I really felt bad, I saw a train of POWs that were returning from Siberia from Russia. They looked like the people who came out of concentration camps. They didn't look any better. And that was -- it was kind of rough. But, of course, the Germans -- I'm still suspicious. Anybody my age or older (inaudible), wonder where -- what they had done and where they were. Of course, nobody was a Nazi in '46 (Laughs).

I remember I smoked at that time. If you smoked -- well, the cigarette really was the currency until the conversion in '48, when the new D-marks came out. We left two cigarettes as tips in the Grand Hotel where we used to eat in Nuremberg. Or, if you smoked a cigarette on the street, they were follow you until you would throw the butt away, and they'd pick it up.

JF: Wow.

IW: Yeah. That's how bad -- and what was going on on the stations, that was unbelievable -- on the railroad stations, the people in Nuremberg and also in Munich, sleeping there. It was bad.

JF: Did you still have family in Germany at that point?

IW: I didn't, no. I, unfortunately, lost cousins and uncles, and my mother-in-law. We had everything ready, all the papers ready for her, and Pearl Harbor came, and she couldn't get out anymore. She was -- in '42, she was deported to Riga, and she perished. Yeah, it's --

JF: Now, how long were you in Nuremberg?

IW: In Nuremberg, we were until the beginning of '48.

JF: So, quite a long time.

IW: Yeah. Then my husband got a job with MIS, with Military Intelligence in Vienna, Austria, and we went to Vienna. I got a job there with the -- also the Department of Army with the Budget and Fiscal, for the Vienna Military Post. Vienna was very interesting too, had four powers, you know.

JF: Tell me about that.

IW: Yeah. The first district in Vienna was -- they would change -- you know, whoever was in charge of the first district with -- they would change the Americans -- I think the Americans and Russians, British and French. At the end of -- or the beginning of every new month, they used to have a big thing there at the -- I think it was at the *Rathaus*, or City Hall, in Vienna, where they would change -- the powers would take over from each other for the first district. They had, you know, jeeps in the first district, where all four would be in there, patrolling. I thought the Austrians -- I always -- I didn't like the Austrians; I think they were worse Nazis than the Germans.

JF: Really?

IW: Yeah. I always -- more antisemitic, I think, because they were much worse right away when they -- when the Germans came in in '38.

JF: How did you find living there? Did you find that difficult, or did you just associate with the Americans?

IW: Well, the thing is this: Also, in Germany, you really did not associate much with Germans or with the Austrians, except maybe the people you met at work, who -- they had indigenous employees. But otherwise, you really didn't have -- it was strictly with other Americans mostly.

JF: Were you an American citizen at this point?

IW: Oh, yeah, yeah.

JF: When did you become a citizen?

IW: I became a citizen in '45, yeah. I think it was November of '45, yeah. Actually, we had trouble in Maryland with people couldn't become citizens. It was a crazy thing here.

JF: Why was that?

IW: I don't remember, really. But there was some problem. I don't know if it had something to do with the enemy alien or whatever it was. But in '45, I finally -- I had to be a citizen in order to go over there.

JF: I see. That makes sense.

IW: Yeah, yeah.

JF: Okay. So, you were in Austria, and your husband was working for Military Intelligence.

IW: Yeah.

JF: Were you doing translating still?

IW: No, no. I was strictly, accounting, and you know, budget work, fiscal work, accounting work. What he did was they were interrogating POWs -- by that time, it was the Cold War -- who were returning from Russia. Then also there people were getting out of Hungary, the Jewish people getting out of Hungary, and so forth. So, they were interrogating these people, trying to get information about the Soviet Union. It was a different story, and we were in Vienna until '53.

JF: Wow, again, quite a long time?

IW: Yeah, a long time. So, we did quite a bit of traveling within Europe. I know we went to Hungary, to Budapest, because my husband had relatives there. We drove and, unfortunately, had a very bad accident coming back.

JF: Oh, what happened?

IW: A horse got shy, you know. We were still in Hungary, on the highway. In order -- it started rearing up, it would have come down on our hood. So, in order to avoid it, my -- he swerved, and we hit a cherry tree. I'll never forget it. We heard all these cherries coming down on the roof (Laughs). Unfortunately--

JF: Were you hurt?

IW: Yeah, I was hurt here, in fact.

JF: On your chin.

IW: Yeah, yeah. Actually, I was hurt there once before, when -- it's a crazy thing. I think it was in Stuttgart, when I went to sport school there (laughs). We were throwing discus; we were across from each other. It was crazy. And the discus came down, and it hit me right here. I got a few stitches, then. But there I got more.

They took us to a -- I guess to a hospital or something in Hungary and fixed us up. We had to get out because we had a pass. In order to go through the Russian zone, you got -- you needed a pass, and that would expire. We did get a ride with some Austrian people who took us to Vienna.

But then we still had to -- my husband had to -- it was really an international incident (laughs) to get this arranged, to get his car back into Vienna, you know. We needed a wrecker from the Army and permission from the Russians to go through -- oh, all kind of stuff, so, anyway. But we made it (laughs), got back. But Budapest is a beautiful city.

JF: What was Europe like at this point, recovering from the war?

IW: Well, we were in -- well, Switzerland was, of course, okay, pretty good. But well, Germany was very bad (laughs). Austria wasn't too much better. I don't know what other countries I went to at the time -- Italy, I think. Yeah, we were in Venice, and you know, at the beach, which was very nice.

I remember we got a German shepherd we had acquired, a puppy, in Vienna. Of course, he traveled with us in the car. We come -- I think it was in Italy, at the beach. We went to register in a hotel and tried not to show that we have a dog (laughs). He was there at the front desk, and all of a sudden, the dog jumps (laughs) up, his paws up there. The guy nearly passed out, you know.

JF: Did he let you stay?

IW: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, he would guard the place (laughs) because it was his domain. The only thing, when he was pretty young, he used to -- just about made it home, and he would throw up in the car. So, it wasn't so good. Yeah, we used to travel within Austria, too, to the French zone. We liked the British zone, which was nice, in southern Austria, near the Yugoslav border, and then it was very nice, so --

JF: So, you were in Vienna until '53?

IW: '53.

JF: Then what happened?

IW: We came back to Baltimore. My husband left a little bit before I did, and we bought a house -- I mean, it was being built. By the time I got there, it was finished, and we moved in.

JF: Where was the house?

IW: On Berkeley Avenue. It was very nice, up the hill. It was a corner house, and we lived there for thirty-one years.

JF: So, what did you do when you got back?

IW: When I got back, I did -- let's see, what did I do? Yeah, I helped during two campaigns of the Associated, in the Women's Division. Just --

JF: Is this paid work or volunteer?

IW: No, it was paid work.

JF: It was fundraising?

IW: Yeah, it was the annual campaign. I worked in the office. At that time, things were -- we still used to go out to -- from house to house to collect. The men used to drive us and drop us off at certain corners. Then we had the cards for maybe a street, and we'd collect. We'd get a dollar, two dollars. It's not like today (laughs). Yeah, it used to be, I think, from the Fifth Regiment Armory, and then later it was from Pikesville with the cars.

I also helped a friend of mine who was Sadie Ginsburg. She was actually a daughter of Jay Dashew. She was active in -- I guess with children's projects, nursery schools, and so forth. She was trying to establish a -- I guess a school for children, I guess handicapped or something. I don't know, I forgot. She had a fundraising campaign. We worked out of -- I think it was a pediatrician's office on Eutaw Place, Dr. Debusky's office. That was volunteer. I helped her with that campaign. Actually, this children's agency is now under the -- what is it -- United -- what is the campaign?

JF: United Way?

IW: United Way, Children's Guild, yeah. She -- that was the start of it. So, I had a hand in that (laughs) --

JF: That's great.

IW: -- getting some money.

JF: What was your husband doing? What was his--

IW: He was a salesman, yeah. Yeah, he became a salesman. He was always a very good salesman (laughs). He could sell you anything. I remember, I guess in Nuremberg, they all started trading, and so forth. I think he picked up a single shoe.

Apparently -- I was told he put it in the safe there in the office in Nuremberg. He said, "Oh, I'll find somebody, you know, somebody who had lost a leg and," (laughs) -- I mean, he was a good salesman. Yeah, he became a salesman for Lamm & Company. They actually -- they had a store, but the salesmen went out to homes to sell. What is that you call it?

JF: Door-to-door?

IW: Door-to-door, yeah. But they had their regular clientele. So, they sold furniture and clothing and whatever. Let's see, what did I do then? I'm trying to think.

JF: What year are we up to?

IW: '54, '55. Yeah, then in '55, I had again helped during the campaign, Women's Division. I got a ride home with Eugene Kaufmann, who was the director of the HIAS of Baltimore.

JF: What is HIAS?

IW: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. And he had a part-time job, and he asked me if I wanted to work. Well, all right. So, I started working for HIAS part-time. We were involved with immigration and citizenship. Also, we represented the survivors in their claims against the German government because Eugene Kaufmann had been an attorney in Germany. He also was from Germany -- or he -- I think he worked actually in Germany. Anybody who studied law -- he first went into government service. Before they could go into private practice -- and I guess when he was in Germany, that's what he was, because eventually, he was getting a pension, like a civil service pension from Germany.

JF: Oh, really?

IW: Yeah, because of his job, you know, before he immigrated. They have a pretty good deal, these people who have -- had gotten out of law school and just started their government service, because what the Germans did, you know, they kind of upped their rank to what they would have been if they would still be there. They got a very high title, you know, and a pension to match. I got involved in this kind of work, which I found very interesting and fascinating.

First of all, having been an immigrant, refugee myself, going through that. The first refugees that I met was the -- when they had the Hungarian Revolution, '56. A lot of Jews got out. They got into Austria. Then they -- through HIAS, which had their headquarters in New York, and they had offices in Vienna, and they still have offices like in Geneva and so forth -- Italy, at that time.

So, I got involved in this kind of work, which really is, it's fascinating work because, for a while, you just work with a name and a birthday, and you have a folder. Eventually, you go to the airport, and you pick them up and meet them, so it's great.

JF: Are there any particular memories about this work that stands out?

IW: Oh, God, there's so many. I mean, some unforgettable stories, you know, how to--

JF: Can you share a few?

IW: -- to get people out. Eventually, this part-time work became full-time because there was just too much to do. In '64, the director died. At that time, Harry Greenstein was still executive at the Associated; he asked me if I wanted to take over. But I really wasn't too anxious. It was the board, and the budget, and whatnot. But then I was acting director for quite a while, so I might as well get the pay of the director. So, in beginning of '67, I think, I became the executive director of HIAS. There were some memorable stories. For instance, in '62 -- I think it was '62, we got a lot of Romanians coming out.

Then in the '67 war, the Egyptians. I was working with the Red Cross -- because then some of them were -- the Egyptians imprisoned them -- to get them out, and all this kind of stuff. But I remember, which was later, there was the niece of a family in Baltimore. She was in Czechoslovakia, and she just couldn't get out. So, her cousins and with some other friends, they went into Czechoslovakia, and they smuggled the girl out on an American passport. I still don't know how they did it. They got her out. She got her to France, and we got her to the States. It was just -- these things like this, you can't

forget. Or there was another one, also a survivor. I think he went to Poland. I think he met somebody, and we got the girl out, and they got married. I remember I was invited to the bris of the children. These are great stories.

There are many, many stories, also from the claims. Some are so horrible. We had to take their statements, too, and see what happened to them during the war. There's some unbelievable things.

JF: Again, are there any particular ones that stand out in your memory?

IW: Yeah, there's one. It was an execution, and she was shot and left for dead. But she wasn't, and somebody found her and took her in. Her breast was shot away, and how did she make it? I don't know.

JF: She made it here sometime.

IW: Made it here. Married and had children. She's still alive. I haven't seen her for a while. I don't know how she is. Her husband passed away. That's the trouble now. We're losing a lot of people in age.

JF: Were many of these claims successful?

IW: Oh, yeah.

JF: Really?

IW: Right, yeah. By now, it's really thousands that I filed, yeah. Well, it's been forty-five years that I was involved with it. Although I retired in December 1990 as director, I continued, and I still do, work on the claims. I still have the little office at the Jewish Family Service, and I have files.

Well, you know, some of the people I know forty-five years, and they have recurring claims. The people who get pensions, so once a year they have to be certified that they're still alive. So, they come in, and we always say goodbye and say I hope we'll see each other next year (laughs). That goes for me too. I'm not getting any younger. I was eighty in November, so --

JF: Are there still claims going on?

IW: Yeah, yeah. There's still claims. Well, right now, it's been involved with that slave labor. You probably read about it. So, I hope they're going to get paid now. I think they -- something was changed on that. The Swiss litigation and insurance. Then there's the hardship fund claims with the Claims Conference. It's a one-time payment. There also is the Article II Fund.

JF: What is that?

IW: It's also from the Claims Conference, where they can get pension of 500 marks a month. They have to prove six months in a concentration camp, or, I think, eighteen months in a ghetto, or living in hiding illegally, and so on.

JF: How do you prove that?

IW: Well, the problem is (laughs) that they do not accept witness statements, so we really have to get documentary proof, which isn't so easy all the time. The majority of these claims are really for Russians who came. It's getting less. I used to have a tremendous waiting list. But less people are coming out. Of course, the age factor has (laughs) something to do with it too. But I find it very gratifying.

I also had non-Jews. I'm very proud about one case, which happened only a couple years ago. The man was referred to me by Jack's on Lombard Street the delicatessen, Jewish delicatessen. I guess the guy is Jewish, he knows of me (laughs), so he sent this

man to me. He told me he was born in Baltimore, non-Jewish. His parents came originally from Poland. In the '30s, the parents took the children back to Poland because the schools are better in Poland, which is probably true (laughs) -- maybe. The war broke out. He got picked up and was sent to work. I think he tried to escape, so they sent him to a concentration camp, to Stutthof, for a while. He worked again, I think for a shipbuilder somewhere in Danzig, up there. Then, at the end of the war, he went back to Poland. Eventually, he could prove that he was an American citizen, and they came back to Baltimore. I think two of his brothers, he never knew what happened to them, they just disappeared.

This man came to me. So, I first tried German Social Security. It didn't work. Then I tried something else, and it didn't work. Then a couple years ago, there was a lawyer in Washington -- I forgot his name -- who got a large amount of money for also an American citizen, Jewish, name was Prince, for being -- he was, you know, arrested, you know, in Hungary or wherever it was and put in concentration camp. And he got a lot of money for him. I contacted the Foreign Claims Commission in Washington. We filled out papers. And about two years ago, I got over $300,000 for this man.

JF: Wow.

IW: It was the biggest amount ever.

JF: That's fantastic.

IW: So, of course, he was very happy, the man (laughs). In fact, I saw him not too long ago because I've been trying to get this slave labor money for him too. So, I helped him, you know, fill out the papers and so forth. I also had another non-Jew. I think he passed -- also from Poland, and I got money for him. So--

JF: Well, the people that you deal with in HIAS, are these all people who live in Baltimore, or are these people from a certain area?

IW: Well, the majority lives in the Baltimore, and some from Maryland areas that -- we're spreading, you know, all around. Somehow, some people who moved away. I have people who moved to Florida and who moved to Brooklyn. Maybe some moved at least thirty years ago. I never lost them. They still come to me because there are a lot of recurring things. If they get a health claim pension, they can get reimbursement of medical expenses, or they can go for spa treatment. You have continued stuff going on. Somehow, I don't lose them (laughs). So, I like it very much. I find it very gratifying work and very satisfying.

JF: What's the best part of the work? What do you find the most interesting, gratifying?

IW: Well, I enjoy very much the immigration part when you're really -- sometimes years and years to get somebody over here, and then you finally greet them. You go to the airport and greet them, it's great.

I remember one case where a man had remarried because he thought his -- what happened, the husband and wife, they came from -- I think from Lithuania or somewhere up there, which then became Russia. They survived, and I think one son. Then they found out that another son is alive, but he was in the East. So, the wife went back, and she was never able to get back to the DP camp in Germany.

Eventually, after a while, he didn't hear from her. He thought she died, and he remarried. Then after quite a few years, he found out that she's alive. He had to divorce the second wife, and we brought her over. She came.

JF: What about the son?

IW: Yeah, the son came also.

JF: Wow.

IW: I mean, you see happening some unbelievable stories. I mean, you could write a book, actually (Laughs).

JF: You could.

IW: No, it's too late.

JF: No, not at all.

IW: No. But it's very gratifying if you have an immigration case, and you settle. Oh, then we had a lot -- we had some immigration cases where we asked for asylum. People who got out on a visit, and then you're trying to make it permanent and prove--

JF: Are they successful?

IW: Yeah. Yeah, it was great. In some instances, I used -- one of my presidents was also a lawyer. Sometimes it was important to have somebody really (laughs) -- a lawyer knows all the angles (laughs). Although, you learn a lot, but still -- So, it's very nice. There was a lot of the clients -- you start to know their families. They brought their children when they were little.

Now, they show me the picture of the grandchildren and so forth. So, it's nice, I guess. It really helped me when my husband passed away then because he died in '89. I worked another year and retired in December of 1990 as director. This working, it really helped tremendously, and it still does. I don't mind so much coming home (laughs) to an empty place because you have the contact.

I work four days -- I give a little bit consideration to my age (laughs). I start at eleven o'clock. I work from 11:00 to 4:00, Monday to Thursday, and Friday, Saturday, Sunday, I take off. I'm still trying to exercise. I go swimming three mornings a week, at seven o'clock I'm usually in the pool. I swim half a mile, and then I go home.

JF: Half a mile, my word!

IW: Yes. It's thirty-six laps.

JF: That's quite a long way.

IW: Yeah, well -- and then the other days I walk. I used to go to a -- I still go on Saturday mornings to Gilman School, which is a private boys' school in Baltimore, on Roland Avenue. They have a track. I started to go out there. I read in the paper about it -- I guess 1970s, so I went thirty years. You walk or jog, and then they have exercises for about fifteen, twenty minutes.

Now, I only go out on Saturdays because a couple years ago, they broke into our cars. We could see these guys, you know. Screamed our heads off but -- So I had my wallet. They were after money. The money was gone, but fortunately, my -- the rest of the -- the credit cards and the driver's license were still there. But that kind of cooled me off.

Then I just started to go back, and then something happened again there. Now I go on Saturday mornings still. The other days when I don't go swimming, I go walk in the neighborhood and sometimes do some exercises by myself, yeah. I also have that. I enjoy the physical exercise.

JF: The sports.

IW: Yeah, I still like it.

JF: Well, we talked a lot about your life here in terms of work. I'd like to ask you some questions about your life outside of work.

IW: Okay.

JF: Obviously, there's a good deal of time spent outside of work.

IW: Yeah.

JF: How about family life?

IW: Well, of course, we -- unfortunately, we didn't have any children. My two brothers eventually ended up in Baltimore.

JF: From Bolivia?

IW: Well, the older brother, Uli, he came, I guess, in '53. He came shortly after -- no, he came before we got back to the States because he stayed with somebody else until he moved in with us for a while. And my younger brother, they went from Bolivia -- his wife is also from Germany. They went to Germany, actually. Because I saw them before I came back to the States in '53. They were in Frankfurt. My brother thought, you thought, thought they could do it there, but it didn't work out.

Then they eventually -- yeah, also they came in '54, I think, they came to Baltimore. My older brother, he's been retired now. The younger brother, he has established a bakery, which his son is now doing, Goldman's Bakery. It's just a kosher bakery (Laughs).

JF: Well, that's wonderful. Where is it?

IW: It is on Reisterstown Road, (Inaudible) in a little shopping center there past the plaza, yeah. Goldman's Kosher Bakery.

JF: What Goldman -- not Cohn's?

IW: No, because he bought this bakery from Goldman, who also was a client of mine laughs). They used to be on Rogers Avenue, and then they moved to this spot where they are now. Now I'm trying to convince my brother to stop working. But he insists on getting up at three o'clock in the morning and starting to work, although he has a lot of trouble with his knees. But his son is really in charge now, yeah.

JF: So, do you see your brothers a lot?

IW: I used to see my youngest brother quite a bit, actually, because of the kids, when the kids were small, usually on Saturdays. But they moved out to Reisterstown, which is quite a stretch (laughs). We see each other occasionally. But my other brother, he lives a little closer, and we see each other. Right now, they're in Europe. They just recently moved to Park Heights Avenue, from a house into an apartment. My sister in Brazil used to some quite frequently to the States. She loved it here.

JF: This is your older sister?

IW: She's older. The oldest one was the one who went back to Germany, Gerda. She died about four years ago. She lived in Berlin. She had gone back to Germany. She has one daughter. The daughter is also in Berlin. The daughter has five children. In fact, we are in constant touch. We call each other. Then three of her kids were here last -- no, two years ago already, I think.

JF: But your other sister moved from Bolivia to Brazil?

IW: To Brazil, yes. I really wanted her to come to the States. In '72, she lost her husband. He was killed instantly in a car accident. She was hurt too, but she survived. I really wanted her to come then. Actually, they could have come earlier, but they had the one son, and at that time, it was the Korean War, and he would have been ready for the draft. They didn't want to do that. They went to Brazil. But she didn't want to come, you know, the grandchildren and this, that, so --

Anyway, so now she lives with her grandson because she just couldn't be by herself anymore. In fact, I'm planning -- I want to go, probably this summer. I really wanted to go already in February and then got pretty busy in the office. Also, they were telling me when I called her or e-mailed, it's in the 90s, you know, degrees, a lot of storms (inaudible). So, who needs that? I don't need that! (laughs).

But I want to go because, unfortunately, with my sister in London, I was a little too late. She became ill with Lou Gehrig's disease. Unfortunately, with her, it went very fast. I had planned to -- I had everything scheduled to leave. The day before I was leaving, my nephew called me and said she had passed away. I was in time for the funeral -- our family is -- out of seven, we're just four left.

JF: You say your parents went to Brazil as well.

IW: Yeah, my parents followed -- she took them over there. My father died in '54. He had a cerebral hemorrhage. My mother died in '67. I saw my father the last time in 1950 when I went for the bar mitzvah.

I flew from -- you know, I went from Vienna, I went Vienna to Rome. It was my first flight ever.

We were in the air. We took off from Rome. We were in the air ten minutes and went back. There was motor trouble. These are like the prop planes. I'm sitting in the airport. Then, a few hours later, back into the same plane. You can imagine how I felt; we had to cross that big ocean (laughs).

JF: In a prop plane?

IW: Yeah, it was like a -- what's it? B-29s are what they had in World War II, I don't know (inaudible). From Rome we flew to -- I think Lisbon. We got down there, and then we went to Dakar, in Africa. It was in October. I was dressed in a corduroy suit, and we land in Africa. Dakar had just had one of these tropical rainstorms. It was hot as blazes. I was -- the water was running down.

From Dakar, then we crossed the ocean to Recife and Brazil, and then to Rio. In Rio, I changed -- yeah, in Rio, we had -- my mother had a cousin in Rio, and I think -- I don't know if on the way back I was with them, I believe.

Then I had to take a plane from Rio to Bolivia. We spent overnight somewhere, still in Brazil. Then we had to cross the jungles (laughs) of Brazil. We hit very bad weather, you know. I thought, we'll never make it. I thought, God forbid, we have to go down in the jungle somewhere and never --

Then we came to Roboré, where -- that's where my father was stationed, and that's where he joined me. We went -- flew together. I think we had to stay somewhere else, in Santa Cruz, I believe, yeah -- overnight, and then we went to Cochabamba, so the -- where my sister and my mother was.

JF: This is your nephew's bar mitzvah?

IW: Yeah.

JF: What was that like? It sounds kind of marvelous.

IW: Oh, it was very nice. It was just like any bar mitzvah (laughs).

JF: (laughs) In Portuguese?

IW: Well, Hebrew and Portuguese, yeah. Portuguese, I never knew. I was not very great in Spanish, either. But I really had forgotten all my Spanish. I can still -- when I read it printed, I can see a little bit better, just not very good at it.

But that was very nice, you know, to see the family and people I had known from before. Because by that time, a lot of people had moved to Cochabamba rather than staying in La Paz. Which I went to La Paz too because my brothers were still in La Paz.

JF: Was Cochabamba more cosmopolitan?

IW: No, except you know, the climate was better. It was lower. It actually was a smaller place than La Paz, but very primitive country (laughs).

JF: I'd like to ask you some more questions about your life here in Baltimore. We've talked about work, we've talked about family.

IW: Yeah.

JF: I asked you if you had joined a synagogue when you first got here, and you said no, but you eventually did, right?

IW: Yeah, we did join Oheb Shalom, I guess in the '60s.

JF: What made you decide to do that?

IW: Well, I tell you, I just didn't like the idea that I really didn't have a place to go, I mean, where I belonged. On High Holidays I wanted to go to service. Hoping you get in, it's -- I didn't like. We joined at -- Rabbi Shaw was still the rabbi then, the one who married us. He never forgot this wedding (laughs).

JF: I'll bet (laughs).

IW: So, a number of my friends -- there were quite a number of Germans who belonged. Also, at Baltimore Hebrew, there are quite a few Germans, also, who joined there. And--

JF: Were you active in the synagogue?

IW: I was -- lately, I was a little more. I belong to -- I was on a Social Action Committee. I guess I'm still on Social Action Committee.

JF: What is that?

IW: Well, when I first got in Social Action Committee, we had -- what was it called -- the Corner House, which was a home for battered women where they could stay. It was -- I think, in Reisterstown -- and which we kind of supplied and had all kinds of programs going there. Then we were very much involved with the gun control thing when Reagan

got shot. We had what's her name -- Sarah--

JF: Brady. Sarah Brady?

IW: Brady, yeah. She spoke on Friday night. We had gun lobby (laughs). Then we have -- what do you call -- the Mitzvah Day. We do all kinds of things in one day. One day, collect clothing, and they go to the old age home, and they collect magazines, and clean up -- take children to the zoo, and all kinds of different things. I just started a new thing -- we're just kind of working on the program, what they want to do (laughs).

JF: You mentioned that, in Germany, you had had these huge Seders and celebrated the holidays.

IW: Oh, yeah.

JF: How about in Baltimore, did you--

IW: Well, for seder, we actually always stayed with friends of ours. Unfortunately, now, it's gotten -- my husband passed away, and my friend's husband passed away, so it's getting very small. In fact, this year, we didn't even have it because we used to take turns. Because from my friend's married daughter, her daughter is just in college, and she couldn't come home for seder -- they had finals or something. They decided not to have it. So, we just went to temple for second-night seder.

That was the first night I was at the -- some other friends' kids invited me. In fact, these are very close friends of ours. In fact, they also live here in this building on the floor below on the other end (laughs). This couple, we were the witnesses at their wedding when they got married in Austria. Of course, we know all their children since before they were born. The children always called us aunt and uncle.

They're really almost closer than my own nieces and nephews, really. It's a very close relationship. One of the sons lives just practically around the corner from here. Unfortunately, my friend is -- they just discovered that she -- she had found a lump in her breast. They excised the lump, but the lump was -- I think not malignant, but they found in there a material -- I don't know how they do that. Anyway, she has a growth in one of her kidneys, which is malignant, also in her lungs.

That's the problem when you get older; your circle gets smaller all the time, and you hear so much of sickness. I consider myself very fortunate because the only medication I'm taking are eye drops because of a little pressure on my eyes.

But when I see others, and they have a whole array of pills and stuff they take, I guess I'm lucky (laughs). So yeah, that's the bad part about growing older, that your circle of friends is really getting smaller, and you're really very much aware of it.

But I'm in touch with my sister. We talk on the phone. Unfortunately, my niece in Berlin, too there, she had a brain tumor, which also was not malignant, but they could not take everything out because it was in areas which they can't touch. So, now she's supposed to get some radiation treatment. I think they have to fashion a -- like a cap to protect the areas which shouldn't get the radiation. There's always something to worry about (laughs).

JF: Well, it sounds like you've made some very close friends here in Baltimore.

IW: Oh, yeah, yeah. Uh-huh. I guess most of them are really Germans (Laughs).

JF: Are these people that you've known for a long time?

IW: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like this couple, the husband we met -- I guess in 1940. We used to play ping-pong in their parents' basement (inaudible) from one of the clubs, the German clubs.

JF: So, you knew them back in Germany?

IW: Huh?

JF: You knew them back in Germany?

IW: No, met them here in Baltimore. But they also came from Germany. In fact, Henry, where we played the ping-pong, he went -- he helped me get the job with the Civilian Censorship Division in '46 because he was also trying to go back to Germany because he had gotten a "Dear John" letter from his girlfriend in Baltimore. She had found somebody else. And he had met a girl, which his present wife now, the other one -- it was (inaudible) cancel(?). He met her in Germany after the war. She was from Finland originally. So, he was anxious to get back (laughs).

JF: Yes.

IW: He ended up in Nuremberg, and I got the job with the Censorship. Anyway, so everything is intertwined (Laughs).

JF: Yes. Well, we've talked about work. We've talked about family. We've talked about the synagogue. Were you involved with community organizations, anything like that?

IW: Let's see, community organizations. Yeah, I was -- well, I was on the Board of the Chevra Kadisha -- you know, the Chevra, this German burial society.

JF: Right.

IW: We had a women's division. I was on the women's board for a while. Now they have a combined board (Laughs). I was -- let's see, involved -- let's see, I was in -- sometimes my memory gets me (Laughs). Yeah. I was thinking of something, I know I did, too. Well, at Gilman School, I also was involved in leading the exercises there in the morning. I mean, we would take turns, some of the people. Let's see --

JF: Did you stay involved in sports?

IW: Fair. I mean, I always -- you know, swimming and stuff like that. Yeah, I used to go to the "Y." In fact, I used to do it on my lunch hour (laughs). But I got a little too tired then to go back to the office (inaudible). Although now, I fall asleep in the chair at night (laughs).

But yeah, I was in -- well, I was on, you know, the AIDS Walk, which was also something we did from the Social Action Committee. But I continued on my own to do that. It was last year -- we had the one for the breast cancer. I think it was Hadassah and so forth, that was involved in that. Let's see, yeah, I was on the board of Central Scholarship Bureau, automatically as a director of HIAS. I was on the board.

JF: What is Central Scholarship Bureau?

IW: That is an organization -- I guess it really was founded by, I'm sure, Jewish -- I think the money is, I would say, all Jewish, although they help others also. In fact, my board -- I think when I was director, I think for twenty years or twenty-five, I forget -- they established a fund in my name at the Central Scholarship, which was strictly helping just immigrants. After my husband passed away, I also established a fund then in his name. But now they combined it in both our names.

JF: That's lovely.

IW: They're a great organization. In fact, a couple weeks ago, they sponsored a trip to New York, day trip. We went to see "The Full Monty," which was a delightful show. One of the actors was the beneficiary of the Central Scholarship.

JF: Oh, that's lovely.

IW: He's a Black man. He was a Baltimorean. In the '60s, he got this scholarship. After the show, he joined us for dinner. We had dinner at one of the -- the Hilton, I think, one of the restaurants there. It was very nice. He spoke.

It was very nice trip. In fact, they made a video of this. I was just at their biannual meeting last week, which they had at the Suburban. They showed this video (laughs).

They had the new -- what's her name, Carmen something -- for the school, Baltimore school -- she came from Florida. Oh, it's Carmen Russo, I think is her name. She addressed this meeting and telling about her success in raising the results.

That's something I don't understand, with the American schools, for I don't know how many years, kids don't learn how to read. I mean, what's wrong? It must be the teachers, not the children, I think.

JF: Now, that is the big question: What's wrong?

IW: I mean, they're forever changing the -- you know, how --

CD TWO/THREE ENDS

JF: This is disc three, the interview with Inge Weinberger. It's May 20th, 2001. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. and I'm Jean Freedman, recording for the Jewish Women's Archive, Weaving Women's Words Project.

Okay. Well, I have just a few more questions. One of the things that I should have asked earlier is, when did you move from your house into this apartment?

IW: We moved in -- I think it was November 1985.

JF: Was that a big change, moving from a house to an apartment?

IW: Yes, yes (laughs).

JF: Tell me about that. What were some of the changes?

IW: Well, we were in the house for thirty-one years. My husband's health was really deteriorating. He no longer could do things on the outside. He was in and out of the hospital very frequently. So, we decided -- actually, we already had heard about it, this condo, in 1983, when our good friends Henry and Rita when they sold their house out in Randallstown and moved in here. They told us about it. Hans also wanted to get involved. But at that time, this house was not in good shape, and I just couldn't see myself moving. As a matter of fact, he needed to have another bypass, which was the second one. He had one years before.

So anyway, so we did finally move in '85. We had to get rid of a lot of things you accumulate in the basement (laughs). It's quite a job to move, too, and you know, get -- we had this condo, you know, we just -- you see the cement floor and the bare walls, and you had to do everything before you could move in. But then we settled in, and it was comfortable and okay.

JF: What about the difference in the neighborhoods, the neighborhood where your house was, and this neighborhood?

IW: We were in the city, not too far away from here, really not far. I mean, maybe, I guess the most, it couldn't be more than two miles, I don't think. It isn't much. I mean, I was closer to the office from the house. I practically could fall out of bed and be in the office. But otherwise, I really don't think -- I mean, I miss some of the neighbors.

We were very close to one of the neighbors across the street from us who had lived there ever since -- more or less since we had moved in. But the others really were all more recent. Of course, I miss the garden really. That's what I really miss. Now I have a substitute on the balcony. I still have two tomato plants (laughs).

JF: Very good.

IW: Yeah, which usually the tomatoes get ripe when I go on vacation every time, you know. But nothing tastes like your own homegrown tomato.

JF: That's very true.

IW: Yeah. I enjoy the flowers. That's one thing, really, was the main difference. Because otherwise, we were in a ranch. It was all one level except to go down to the basement for laundry and so forth. Space-wise, we pretty much have the same amount of space.

I don't get involved too much with the neighbors in the condo, because I don't like -- I don't want to know other people's business, and I don't want them to know my business. I mean, (laughs) except, you have to have somebody -- I have two parties who have keys in case something happens.

But I find it's very convenient, and the neighborhood is okay. It's not too much traffic. Of course, it's a dead end where we live. So far, I mean, of course, I go out at night (laughs), go to meetings, and so forth. I hope, it's my wish that I die the day before I have to turn in my driver's license because that's the end of freedom, I think, when you can't drive anymore (laughs), especially--

JF: Sad, but true.

IW: Especially where you live. It's not too far to get a bus, but it's not ideal (laughs). Otherwise, the neighborhood is okay. And --

JF: I want to ask you about the changes you've seen in Baltimore. You've been here quite a while.

IW: Oh, yeah.

JF: You must have seen--

IW: One thing really shocked me. I really got terribly upset. In Germany, when they started to really separate the Jews from the rest of the population, they started to have yellow park benches and stuff like that, where you couldn't go to the movies anymore. When I saw a yellow bench in the Suburban Club on the golf course, I nearly dropped dead. It was so shocking to me that they should have that in a Jewish club. It--

JF: What was it for?

IW: I guess for people to rest. But why do they have to paint it yellow? I thought it was -- it was terrible! It really was a shock. I don't know if it's still there, but anyway, I couldn't believe it (laughs). It's something -- things come back.

But yeah, I think Baltimore has changed. You have Jews living in Towson and in Roland Park, in areas where they never used to be (laughs). In fact, you have a -- I think you have a synagogue now in Roland Park. Isn't that one of the congregations shares -- I don't know if it was a church or something, on Roland Avenue, or somewhere around--

JF: That could be. I don't -- that's really interesting.

IW: Yeah, you're not that familiar. It's things like that. Then they have -- what's this organization, Jewish Christian, which I support. I think they're doing a good job, and where they have lectures. Yeah, I think -- of course, the city has changed too, which is almost now ninety-nine percent Black, I would say.

JF: Really?

IW: -- almost, this city is, yeah, yeah. I was surprised when they elected a white mayor (laughs). But yeah, it -- actually, the downtown has changed, with the inner harbor and all that. I must say, I voted against these pavilions(?) when it came up for voting on it because I liked to have this open, not blocked in by these (laughs) -- well, I didn't win -- maybe it was good, I don't know. But it has changed. I think there is more contact

between Jews and non-Jews in Baltimore than there used to be. I believe there is.

JF: How about the German/Russian thing? Is that still around?

IW: There were Germans -- no, I don't think that's -- no, that's not around. Although, we have new Russian immigrants. Of course, a lot of them do not speak well of the new Russians. In fact, there is one section where, really, I think it's predominantly Russian in the area where they live.

There are quite a few around where our offices, Jewish Family Services, on Park Heights Avenue. There's the JCC, and then there's the Greenstein Building, where the Jewish Family Services. Then comes the Hebrew University. They're all in -- right next to each other. Across the street, there are some buildings, and there are a lot of Russians -- older Russians in the neighborhood, yeah. The funny part is the ones who complain about them are usually earlier waves of immigrants.

They get much more! We didn't get that, and so forth (laughs). But I have a hard time remembering the Russian names, those words. I really never learned any Russian, although I had a lot of dealings with them. It was exciting when the first Russians came in in the '70s. I guess the first one that came from Russia was that woman whose husband had remarried. She really was -- you know--

JF: That's quite a story.

IW: Yeah. She was -- of course, that was longer before, but it was -- now I think a lot of them, I believe, really don't come so much because they are persecuted as Jews, but the economic reasons, I believe, is really the -- And also family reunion, also, because a lot of parents of children will come.

I must say, the people who came in the '70s and '80s who've been here maybe twenty years, they've done very well, and their children have done well. It's really very gratifying

to see them. I like it to have had, you know, something (laughs) -- contributed something to that. It's very satisfying.

JF: Well, we've talked about how Baltimore has changed, and how being Jewish in Baltimore has changed, and how being Jewish has affected your life. We've talked relatively little about how things have changed for women and how that has affected your life. I was wondering if you'd care to comment on that.

IW: Oh, for women, yeah, of course, it has changed. I don't know if it really has completely -- well, there are more women in executive positions than there used to be.

JF: Was that unusual? For example, when you became executive director in '67, was that an unusual to have a woman as an executive director?

IW: I think it still was. Yeah, in the '60s, it still was. I mean, you had it -- but I remember I used to attend the meetings of the Jewish Communal Service. I'm still a member of it, and we used to meet every year. When I first started, it used to be in Atlantic City very frequently at that time (laughs). Then it just moves around. It was great because this way, I learned to know a lot of American cities. This way, I came to LA, and I saw Minneapolis and Chicago and Boston, and then Montreal. It was all over because Canada was also part of it. So, that was interesting. You had -- I guess maybe in Communal Service, you had maybe more women, although not as many either. I mean, the directors were usually men of the federation. I think they still are, really, the federations; I don't think any woman is -- of a federation, not that I know of.

JF: Did you ever experience any discrimination because you're a woman, or anyone surprised that you were an executive director because you were a woman?

IW: I don't think so, no. I really don't think so. The only thing, of course, I was aware that men probably would -- even for the government would have a higher rating and a higher GS (laughs) rating. I guess women weren't offered these jobs either. You didn't stand a

chance. Well, women were kind of relegated to certain professions, to social workers, where a majority were women (laughs). But when it came to the directors -- of course, I also think, you know, the federations have changed.

When I compare Harry Greenstein, who was a director of the Associated -- which is now the Associated Jewish Federation of Baltimore or whatever they call themselves -- he was a different caliber of person. Because Harry, during the war, he worked for the UNRA in North Africa. Later, he was Jewish Adviser to Clay in Germany, you know, after the war. Compared with Darrell Freedman, he's just like any corporate executive. It's not the same. The heart is missing, I feel.

JF: Interesting.

IW: That's my personal opinion (laughs).

JF: Well, we were talking briefly before about your trips to Israel.

IW: Oh.

JF: Were they -- now, some of them were to visit relatives. Were some of them also on business?

IW: One, yeah, one trip was. The second time I went to Israel, that was the International Conference of Jewish Communal Services, which would take place in Jerusalem, I think, every five years, I believe. Then somebody else from Baltimore went, Conrad Nathan. He was the executive of the Jewish Big Brother and Big Sister League. The Associated paid for the airfare, which, of course, was the big chunk. The rest I paid. Which was very interesting because, first of all, Golda Meir addressed the whole group.

You met people, really, from all over the world, you know, in the same kind of work. We, of course, were shown around in Jerusalem, lived in King David, which was a beautiful

place (laughs). Let's see -- I think we went to the Israel Museum there. There was a reception at the Knesset was the reception. Also, we had a meal there, too. Really, it offered a lot. It was really nice.

Of course, additionally, I visited my *mishpachah* [family] too. I had four cousins at that time still -- one who was of my father's, he was from Leipzig, and the other three were brothers. They were on my mother's side of the family. They all lived in different places, so I really got around. It was nice to see them and meet their families and children, and so forth. But unfortunately, now I only have one cousin left. I saw him last September. Yeah, that was a nice trip in Israel.

JF: Okay. Well, I've about reached the end of my questions. I was wondering if there's anything that I haven't asked that I should have asked. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

IW: (laughs) I really don't know. I'll just think about it. I think we've probably covered pretty well everything, more or less. Probably after you leave, I'll think of a lot of other things too.

JF: Well, then you can call me up.

IW: Yeah (laughs).

JF: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

IW: Yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW]