Reva Twersky Transcript

RB: Hi, this is Roz Bornstein, and I am in Seattle, Washington, at the home of Reva Twersky. I'm meeting with Reva this morning, the date is June 19, 2001, and we are meeting this morning to gather Reva's oral history for the Weaving Women's Words project of the Jewish Women's Archive. Reva, do I have your permission to interview and tape you?

RT: Yes, you do.

RB: Thank you so much. Reva, your family roots in Seattle go back to your grandparents, or I believe your grandparents, and why don't you start by telling me about them?

RT: My mother and my grandparents came from a little village in Russia. It was called Shamke, and it was organized by eight Jewish couples that had permission for some reason that they could establish their own community. It was in the province of Minsk, but it was close to Borisov. They lived in a log cabin, and they were surrounded by family. They were surrounded by all their relatives. They were very Orthodox from generations and generations, and they lived off of the land. They raised their own crops and they raised geese. And in the wintertime, the ground was so cold, they put the geese into the ground and it was like a freezer. It was a freezer. And when they had to wash clothes, there was a little river, so they would take their big basket with clothes to the river to wash the clothes. Once a week – they didn't have indoor plumbing, they had a big stove with banks on either side. And in the wintertime, everybody wanted to lie on those banks for warmth. It was all a very open architectural design and that, when a child would be born, they added on a little piece to the log house. I have pictures of that in my memoirs because a cousin of ours went back years later and wanted to see

Shamke. Shamke was an all-Jewish community. They had a Shabbos goy and somebody who not only would put on the lights and turn off the lights but also milk the cows because the cows had to be milked. Anyway, life was very simple but they were very happy. They had to go to the neighboring community to buy things like flour, salt and, I think, sugar. But everything else they raised their own. The whole family worked on the farm. My mother was the oldest, and she would sew clothes. They made clothes for their own clothes, so they would also buy material in a neighboring community and my mother would make the clothes for the family.

RB: Could you tell us the names of your grandparents?

RT: Yes, my grandfather was Chaim Leib Steinberg, and my grandmother was Chaya Tzivia Steinberg. But my grandfather, when he came to America, there was a city mayor by the name of Hiram Gill, and so he took the name, instead of Chaim, Hiram Steinberg. But he never liked the name Hiram, so his signature was always H. Steinberg. My grandmother was Chaya Tzivia, and she took the name of Annie. But everybody knew them as Chaya Tzivia and Chaim Leib. They lived right across the street from Rabbi Wohlgelernter. They had an open house, a really open house. They had people – well, first of all they had roomers and boarders. But then anybody that came to town, there was no [inaudible] then. They would have them stay there. They had this big house. It was a great big house on the corner of 28th and Washington, where I was born in the downstairs bedroom. They always had houseguests. Once they had a Rabbi (Auerbach?) and came with his own driver. They stayed for a whole week. She always fed them. One of the chief items on the menu was herring and potatoes. [laughter] And that was cheap. And then my grandmother shopped in Kaminoff's Grocery, which is – the little grocery is still – Mr. Kaminoff – it's on 26th and Yesler Way. He had a big barrel with herring, and so they would pick out the herring, and potatoes were very cheap. Bread was five cents a loaf.

RB: It would be wonderful to hear some of those stories from Seattle. If we could take a step back though, just for a moment, it would be great to hear how your grandparents came to Seattle and why they came to Seattle.

RT: They came to Seattle – first of all, my grandfather had a brother who was the first shochet in Seattle. He said to my grandfather, “It's too far.” He was the first shochet I think maybe on the West Coast. Anyway, he said to my grandfather, “It's too far for my wife and little boy to travel by themselves. Please take them.” So they had difficulty crossing borders and whatnot. Anyway, they finally got to Seattle by way of Scotland. My grandfather, his sister-in-law and nephew didn't come through Ellis Island. They came through Nova Scotia, I believe. There was family in Canada, in Montreal. Anyway, they came to Seattle by train, and in Seattle, my grandfather saw that life was very difficult and because he's a Sabbath observer he didn't know if he could get a job anywhere. Went back to Russia. My grandmother was very disappointed. She said our oldest son, Zalman Schmuel, Sam, is fifteen years old – and the Russian Army, when they grab you, sometimes there's a lot of antisemitism, you never see your child again. So take Sam, he's strong, and you'll find something. They bought a horse and a wagon and they peddled. They went from house to house, buying up rags and things like that and then they went as far as Cle Elum and anyway then they would sell the rags and then –

RB: Excuse me. What year did your grandfather first come over?

RT: He came over the first time in 1905. Solomon Reuven, his brother, came in 1903. Solomon Reuven came by way of overland through Siberia and I think that's how my father came too. So anyway Solomon Reuven was a very highly respected, a real Talmid Chakham. He didn't want any comforts for himself. So as a result, his wife didn't have any comforts. But when my mother read about Aryeh Levin, a Tzadik in our times, she said just like Solomon Reuven. And I was privileged to meet Reb Aryeh Levin in

Israel. My father used to correspond with him and he used to write these little, tiny letters and write by hand, and so my son David has those. At any rate, so the family – my grandmother went with the rest of the family. First, they were in Scotland and then my Uncle Reuben got lost for a while and didn't know the language but anyway, they traveled the cheapest way, in their ship, and they got to Nova Scotia and then they went to Montreal where my grandmother had a sister living. Later on, when my grandparents came to Seattle, my grandmother wrote to her sister and said it's much nicer to live in Seattle than in Montreal. So the Lawson family came.

RB: I see. Now how many children did your grandparents have, and what were their names?

RT: Okay. My grandparents had five children. When my grandmother was pregnant, the first two died, and although my family were Misnagedim, he went to a Hasidic rabbi to get a special prayer because my grandmother was pregnant again. So, my mother lived. [laughter] And I have on the back wall a picture of my father-in-law who was known as the Tolner Rebbe in Philadelphia, and his brother, Dovid Tolner, was one of the first Hasidic rabbis in America. I have a picture of the family too when my husband was very young. But anyway, one of the brothers –one settled in New York, one settled in Boston, and that's where – Yitzchak Isadore Twersky is from the Boston family. Anyway, some Seattle boys went to study at Harvard, and they took classes from him. He was the head of Judaic Studies, I guess.

RB: Isn't that something? So there was your mother and two brothers?

RT: Two brothers. Sam – (Zalman Shmuel?) – and Reuben And then she had a sister, Goldie, and then she had another sister, Rashe – Rose. And she became Rose Treiger. To this day, I'm very close with all the first cousins and their families, their offspring.

RB: That's wonderful.

RT: Anyway, what I like to do is to entertain because I have had so many wonderful functions at my house. The table was bigger, we had additional tables. I've had parties for my father's eightieth birthday. I had eighty people. When Family Medicine – when I retired, I had all the faculty, the staff, the residents here and the weather was nice and we were out on the lawn. All the time, I was very active in the community. See, my father was not only active in the Jewish community but he was also very active as – during World War II, he was a war warden. He was active in the – we had a little store at 2311 Jackson Street, and he was very active in the Mount Baker Business Club. I want to talk about Jackson, where I moved – we moved to Jackson Street when I was five years old, and what happened was my father was tired of being a traveling salesman. He saw that they were excavating land for – and this Burkheimer built all the Piggly Wiggly Stores – the forerunner of Safeway. So there was going to be a Piggly Wiggly store on the corner. And our store – oh, my father wanted to have a little department store and to have living quarters built right in the back, attached to the store. There was a fire door between. And from that place – so when I was five years old, that's where we moved, and up until that time, we were very poor, so I slept in a six-year crib. But when we had our own place on Jackson Street, we had twin beds. My brother had one – he's twenty months older than I am – (Nachum?), Norman – and I had one. And it became the dressing room for our store because [laughter] we sold women's dresses from a small size up to size 52. We had one customer, and we had a lot – it was sort of an international district. So we had one customer, and she used to want a dress smaller than she needed. She would say, “What's the matter? (Mi no fiche?).” It doesn't fit her. So we always referred to her, “Minofiche is coming today.” We had a customer who owned the Mount Baker Fuel Company. So they would give us – okay. We bought fuel from them for our coal stoker, and they would take it out in trade. And Mrs. (Newsham?) had – one daughter was Violet, and one daughter was Rose, and one daughter was Lily. When she used to come and shop, boy, she used to pile on the merchandise for her family. But also, across the street from us was a wooden structure, and Schreiber and Volotin started a

little furniture store. Mr. Volotin, who later became the President of our Synagogue, inherited some money. He came from Poland to collect his inheritance. Mr. Schreiber came from Spokane, where his family was in the furniture business, so they were a good partnership. So then they moved to – rented from the new building, the corner. There was also across from Piggly Wiggly another furniture store. Jews were in the furniture business and still are. That was Mount Baker Furniture, the Roitbords, that Schrieber and Volotin called Arcade Furniture. And next to the Roitbords, there was also a Jewish store. Okay. There was the (Grinspan's?) and two brothers separated, so one had a store there and one had a store on the other side of 23rd and Jackson. Also if you went down Jackson, there were the Jewish cleaner. There was a wonderful Jewish bakery, a kosher bakery, Egger Brothers, and old Mrs. Egger used to serve us. They had the most delicious bread and pastry. What happened years ago – we never looked to have hashgacha on anything, the certification by an OU [Orthodox Union] or an OK [Organized Kashrut] or whatever. So, there was the Jewish bakery. So we all shopped at the Jewish bakery and used the Jewish cleaner. And also, later where the Jewish cleaner was, Reverend Scharhon and his children opened a grocery store. They also barbecued little chickens, and that was a treat to us because we didn't used to eat out.

RB: Now Reva, in many ways, if one traces the different neighborhoods and homes you live in, then they would learn about the history of the Ashkenazic Orthodox Jewish community in Seattle. So let's see if we can sort of put this in context for people outside of Seattle. Your grandparents came over in about 1911, is that right?

RT: The family came in 1911.

RB: And then your parents – when did they meet and marry?

RT: When did my parents meet and marry? Well, there was a Young Men's Hebrew Association where Jewish young men came. My father arrived in San Francisco from China, and he went to the Young Men's Hebrew Association. My mother used to serve

there. They were very staunch Zionists from the very beginning. So, there were Zionist functions, and they went to that. Oh, and they became engaged from the Young Men's Hebrew Association. And then they became engaged, and they went to these Zionist functions. I've donated a lot of pictures to the Washington State Jewish Archives.

RB: What were your parents' names?

RT: My father was Yichiel Michel Ketzlach, and my mother was (Sima?) Esther Steinberg. My father had one relative here. He had two aunts in New York and their offspring, but he had a first cousin named Beryl [Ben] Stein, and they later went into partnership in the insurance business, Stein and Ketzlach. Anyway, now with the Sephardic community, initially we didn't even – my grandmother didn't even think they were Jewish. In fact, a lot of the Sephardim wanted to become Americanized, just like a lot of Jews, second generation, they wanted to become Americanized. So, my grandmother would walk from 28th and Washington to 28th and Yesler, down Yesler Way to go to our Synagogue at 17th and Yesler Way. There was a Sephardic woman waiting for a trolley, the Yesler trolley. So she looked at my grandmother, feeling rather guilty, and she says, "America." Well, in America, you have to do things like that. So the Russian Jews ¬– and also, they wanted to be Americanized. So, I had Sephardic friends in my Rainier Grade School, and we became very good friends. Nowadays, we used to think, "Oh my goodness, one of the Ashkenazic kids was marrying a Sephardic." We thought that wasn't right because we thought that they were ignorant around Jewish laws because some of them. They were fishermen. They came from the Island of Rhodes and later on from Constantinople, and Rabbi Maimon was a Sephardic rabbi. Well he was brought over by the Sephardic community because his father had been regarded as a Haham. So, Rabbi Maimon worked as a high school boy and I remember Reverend Scharhon brought him into our store and bought him some tennis shoes. Then he very quickly learned the language and went to Garfield High School. Anyway, my aunt used to worry that her son was going out with the Sephardic kids. Nowadays, they're very

close. They all go to the Seattle Hebrew Academy and Northwest Yeshiva High School, and the Orthodox congregations are very, very close. They all are members of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis and the Rabbinical Council of America. One of our Sephardic boys who went to the Seattle Hebrew Day School, Mark Israel, became the President of the Rabbinical Council of America, and he's written a lot of books. My husband and I met Mark Israel and his wife in the State of Israel when they were on their honeymoon. And she has written a lot of, well she's written a cookbook on Sephardic recipes. Anyway, Mark Israel felt also that the time he went to the day school, there was discrimination against the Sephardics. Now they have classes, and they have a Sephardic Minyan and an Ashkenazic Minyan, and now they're all very close. And I belong to, there are two Sephardic congregations in Seward Park. Seattle is the third largest Sephardic community in America. So there's SBH, Sephardic Bikur Holim, and Ezra Bessaroth. So, they both have senior luncheon clubs. They have a lot of volunteers. Their men volunteer as well as women, and our men were used to being served, so we don't have that many volunteers. I used to go to both luncheon clubs, but I go to SBH. Now the Kline Galland Home has – every Tuesday, they have an open door for seniors at a very nominal fee. Every Tuesday, you can go, and they have tremendous – it's like a banquet. First, they have a good soup and then all the wonderful things. We live very close to the Kline Galland home, and my husband was on the Board for many years, and an officer and I go there visiting very often. I know a lot of people there. I was there yesterday. I have a wonderful cousin, Bert Steinberg – Beryl Steinberg – who was the mainstay of the Capitol Hill Minyan. Our shul has a branch on Capitol Hill. He was the hazzan, and he has a beautiful voice. He and his brother, Morrie Steinberg, both have beautiful voices. Their father, (Avraham Miche?) was a cantor. Anyway, he leyned from the Torah. He did everything. So what happened ultimately with Beryl is that he became wheelchair-dependent, so now he's at the Kline Galland home. They have a minyan there, and it's kosher and everything that Beryl likes. Now Beryl has – every Wednesday, his close relatives, male relatives, and friends bring lunch, and they have a lunch with

him in the conference room. Then, also he has – every Thursday he conducts a shiur, a lecture, and a discussion group on the coming parsha of the week. So, people from the outside come [and] from the daycare come. He's very active there. So I went to see him, and I have also an elderly cousin, (Delores Cohen Landsberg?), and so I see her. And there's Sybil Baronsky. Her husband and my father started the Capitol Hill Minyan because they lived in an apartment – after they sold their homes, they lived in apartments on Capitol Hill. My father went to – at first it was a part of Temple De Hirsch, the Temple Center. Temple De Hirsch had an adjoining building called the Temple Center, where they had classes. My father went to the President of Temple and got permission to use Temple Center. Well, later, that was torn down, and Council House was built. So they got permission to have it at Council House. They had a room there where (Beryl Steinberg?) would visit, his wife wanted to live on Bellevue, wanted to build a house in Bellevue, so he said “All right, Gloria, if you want to build Bellevue, we'll build in Bellevue. But I won't be home for Shabbosim or holidays,” and that was fine with Gloria. She wanted her home in Bellevue. She had friends there. Anyway, he did everything. His mother had an apartment on Capitol Hill, so at first, he lived with his mother, and then his mother became very forgetful. They were afraid she was turning on a burner and would leave it on. So, he and his brother used to go there every day for lunch and instruct their mother that if there's anything that needs to be warmed, they'll warm it. So they were there every day for lunch. Wonderful family.

RB: Wonderful family. You know you are a fountain of knowledge about history in Seattle and organizations that were formed in Seattle for the Jewish community. It's really remarkable. And I wonder if we could start with where and when you were born, and that would help us kind of pull in a sense of what the timeframe is that we're talking about, and that would be great.

RT: Okay, I'm seventy-eight. I was born May 8, 1923, in the downstairs bedroom of my grandmother's spacious home. I never realized that my grandmother lived in a mansion.

I knew that her house was bigger than most houses, but years later, when I went to some function that was at an old mansion on Capitol Hill and the Green Mansion. I saw these great big fireplaces that you could walk into that I saw at Versailles. My grandmother had those big fireplaces – marble. And one in the living room, and it was mahogany built over it with the mirror and everything. And one in the dining room, and there was a third one upstairs. Initially, that's how the house was heated, by the fireplaces.

RB: What was the address of this home?

RT: 2765 Washington Street.

RB: Was this a Jewish neighborhood that they lived in? Describe it.

RT: Well, it was walking distance to our Shul and there were a lot of Jews, Sephardim included. I know on the corner across the street was a Sephardic family, and the (Berkmans?) were a block away on Yesler Way, on 28th and Yesler Way. And there were the (Winikoffs?) on the next block and the (Feinbergs?), and there were a lot – it was quite a Jewish neighborhood.

RB: Now, for those outside of Seattle who don't know the area, was your grandparent's house near Jackson Street that you were referring to before that had a lot of Jewish businesses?

RT: Yes. Okay. My grandmother was very energetic. She used to visit all the grandchildren every day, five or six days a week. So she used to come to our store all the time. In fact, our store was sort of a congregating place Saturday night. We closed before sundown Friday. Opened Saturday night after sundown. Even though the days could be long and we'd open late for two hours, we always had a sign on the window there what time we would open. There would be people waiting by the door. We had a very loyal clientele. So anyway, 28th and Washington – and our store was between 23rd

and 24th and Jackson. The people in the immediate area would shop mostly on Jackson Street or if they wanted to have something that the Scharhons had, but Yesler Way was the main Jewish neighborhood.

RB: For Jews of all backgrounds or the Orthodox Jews? What was the mix of Jews?

RT: The stores were owned by Orthodox Jews, but the Sephardim lived in their neighborhood, and so they shopped there too. There was no going to get public assistance or any charity. When a woman became a widow, she would have a little room built onto her house, and she would start a little grocery store. So my mother's aunt, (Mumme Merah?), whose husband was the first Shochet, Solomon Reuven – she had this little store, and not only did she have some groceries, including fruit, but she had all kinds of Jewish items. She had Sunshine crackers that had Hebrew writing on the boxes. She had little talleisim. Then she even had some phylacteries because when my brother was going to be bar mitzvah, she gave him a little tallis and a siddur from her stock and phylacteries, which now are very, very costly. Also, the Seattle Talmud Torah was not far away. They didn't sell any books or anything. She would have the books that they needed for the different classes. She also had a machberet with the different lines for the Hebrew writing. So every way, the kids – Sephardic and Ashkenazic would buy there. Now, in the Talmud Torah, we had Sephardic children too.

RB: For those outside of Seattle, could you tell us what the Talmud Torah is.

RT: The Talmud Torah started out as after-school Hebrew classes. Now it was started in our Synagogue, but it later was adopted by the total community. We first had wooden buildings on 17th and Alder, and on one side was the office. My cousin Bettie Steinberg Hirsch was the secretary and taught first grade. Then there was an auditorium, and then there were classes downstairs and upstairs, downstairs and upstairs. Everybody lived in the neighborhood. So we also had classes Saturday afternoon. They were like an Oneg Shabbat. So, we had – there was an old – well, we regarded him as being old – Herman

“Pop” Kessler, who sort of became the grandfather to all the children that went to the Hebrew school. He would give us credit points if we went to synagogue, on holidays, and whatever. And then he would give us prizes. We'd have an assembly, and he'd give out the prizes. At any rate, later on, he would pick us up in his car and take us to – he had a son, a dentist, who had a summer home on a lake, and he would take us fishing. He would bait our hooks for us. He would give us our lunches. Pop Kessler was wonderful. Also, the Talmud Torah had this big, when they built on 25th and Columbia, they had a big auditorium which initially was a big fundraiser for them – weddings, bar mitzvahs, whatever celebration. I was married [there]. I went to school there, and I was married in that auditorium. My son David’s bar mitzvah was there. Meyer and I were active in every organization in the Jewish community. Everybody we saw, we'd say, “Come to our son's bar mitzvah.” We even had in the transcript, “No cards have been issued. Everybody's welcome.” So we didn't know if we'd have between four or six hundred people, but we had five hundred people. At that time, there wasn't this emphasis on you have to have a kosher symbol. So my mother and my aunts each roasted huge turkeys. My cousin Sylvia Lawson made fried rice for everybody. They made kishka. They made everything.

RB: So the women in your extended family cooked and prepared for five hundred people.

RT: Right.

RB: Before Shabbat.

RT: Before Shabbat. Oh you bet, you bet. We ordered a lot of pickled meats from Chicago and they came by air. We had waitresses and they fixed everything very nicely. And then David's grandfather came from Philadelphia, and you know he's a Hasidic rabbi with a long silk coat, and for Saturdays and holidays, he wore his shtreimel. Anyway, he wanted to visit his grandchildren's classes at the Talmud Torah, and so one

of David's Sephardic friends said, “Oh, he's the real McCoy.” [laughter] At any rate, David's bar mitzvah was in November – late October or November. His birthday is November 9th. My mother-in-law didn't want her husband to travel in the wintertime – too worried about the weather and snow and whatnot. So, she was at a Mizrachi convention she organized. From her sisterhood, she made a women's Mizrachi in her Synagogue. So she was at a Mizrachi Women's convention in Atlantic City. So her husband called her, and he said, “Well, he's in Seattle for David's bar mitzvah, and she says I don't believe you.” Anyway, he said, “I'll let you talk to Meyer. He's right here.” [laughter] Anyway, she was very angry with him [about] traveling in the winter, so he changed planes, and he stopped in Chicago, and he bought her a bracelet at the airport as compensation.

RB: What year was this?

RT: We got married in 1946.

RB: Oh, so he came out for your wedding or for the bar mitzvah.

RT: They all were here for our wedding. I have here a wedding picture that you can have if you want. My parents borrowed $1,500 to marry me off. So I have two of these because my mother’s got two. So this is our wedding party, and when they traveled by car – it was interesting that my brother-in-law, (Mutt?) – his name was (Muttel?), but we called him (Mutt?) – Martin in English when he became a high school teacher. But (Mutt?) had just learned how to drive and he was the second driver to his brother Dave. And we would get cards from the way that they signed “The six peppy travelers.” On the way back, their car broke down in Denver. Anyway, before that, they called from Seattle, the long-distance operator in Denver, and said, “Is there a Rabbi Twersky in Denver? We're the Twerskys in from Philadelphia. We would like to talk to him.” So they did talk to him, and they said we're coming to Denver for Shabbat. Anyway, they took care of them for Shabbat. At any rate, my little flower girl is now a grandmother. I think I took

out the picture from here. So at any rate, we were married there, and David's bar mitzvah was there. David was very good friends with (Allan?) Frand, who became Rabbi Yissocher Frand, who is the head maggid shiur at Yeshiva Ner Yisroel in Baltimore, where my fourteen-year-old grandson (Morty?) goes now. So (Allan?) Frand was the valedictorian, and David was the salutatorian at the Seattle Hebrew School. Well, in those days, Rabbi Graudenz had – the graduation was so boring – they had big classes, and everybody had to say something, and there was a Hebrew Valedictorian and an English Valedictorian. Nobody understood the Hebrew. There was a lot of Hebrew speeches and whatnot. At any rate, I just went recently to a graduation of my first cousin, Irwin Treiger's grandson, Mordechai Treiger. It was the most beautiful ceremony. Everything was well planned, the kids were rehearsed, and the principal of the day school – Seattle Hebrew Academy – Rabbi Kay said, “This graduating class of 2001 have to remember two things. Two important things happen in their lives. The earthquake of February 28.” A couple of [months] ago. I'm telling you, that really shook us up. I was in QFC in the fruit department, hanging onto the counter, and it rocked. It rocked. All the glass breakage and everything. At any rate, the Hebrew Academy was demolished. Not demolished, but it became unsafe for the children to go into.

RB: You're referring to the earthquake that happened in February of 2001. This past February.

RT: Yes.

RB: This past year.

RT: It seemed like a long time ago.

RB: I know.

RT: It was a major, major earthquake. I had very little – a couple of things fell down but not much.

RB: But it was devastating for the Seattle Hebrew Academy, which was the Talmud Torah originally.

RT: Yes, the original Talmud Torah.

RB: And now the Seattle Hebrew Academy.

RT: Right. So they recently had their graduation and our synagogue. Here's the class, and the main speaker was Howard Schultz. Now Howard Schultz is a founder of Starbucks Coffee. So Howard Schultz was a friend of Irwin Treiger, the grandfather of Mordechai Treiger. So he asked him if he would speak at the graduation, and he says, “Everything is timed. You'll have ten to twelve minutes to speak. So he came, and Victor Alhadeff, who is very active and very generous in the community, was sort of his guide. So when he was invited to speak, first of all, he said he felt privileged to be in our sanctuary and to address this class of 2001, graduates of 2001. He especially congratulated the valedictorian. Mordechai Treiger was one of them, and Abby Hyman was the other one. He had a little stone that he took out of his pocket. He said, “This stone has changed my life.” He said, “First of all, wherever I go, the first thing I always say is I'm Jewish. I'm very proud of being Jewish. I was born in Brooklyn, and my parents were from the other side of the track.” Starbucks was expanding in Europe, so he was in Germany. He said. “I was so close to Auschwitz. I'm going to Auschwitz.” He went to Auschwitz. He spent four hours there, and that's where he picked up the little stone. He said the tears were running down his face. He was crying. He said to the guide, “Where is the Jewish community of Krakow? It's supposed to be close by.” And she said, “It's no more.” He said, “But there are a lot of synagogues there.” She said, “Well, there's still one. I don't know if it's in use.” He said, “It's Friday night. I want to go to shul. Take me to the synagogue.” So he came to the synagogue, and there were fifteen old men there. One of them had the numbers – the one that he sat next to had numbers on his arm – an old man – and he was sitting there crying. The old man didn't

know him from Adam or what, so he put his arm around him to comfort him. He said that experience has changed his life. But he's always felt like giving back to the community. He's given the Black community half a million dollars for their own school, and he is totally generous. He believes in giving back. He didn't say that but he really, truly does. He's been very fortunate. He gives back. At any rate, that graduation was very memorable. My husband was president of the Hebrew Academy. I was president of the PTA. My husband was president of our synagogue. I was vice president of the Sisterhood. I'm a life member of the Sisterhood, but now there is no longer a Sisterhood. What's different now is that the young women all go to work. They all have jobs. When I started out as a social worker – well I wanted to go into social work. I had a couple of ego ideals. One was Lena Farber Treiger, a social worker. And then came Dorothy Farber Epstein. And they were all very wonderful, very, very wonderful people. So I decided I wanted to be a social worker too. And so that was – the year after I graduated, I worked in the Garfield library for fifty-six dollars a month. I graduated from Garfield High School.

RB: And in what year was that that you graduated?

RT: I graduated in 1940 because we had our sixtieth anniversary. And Althea Stroum was in my graduating class, and she came to our fiftieth anniversary and to our sixtieth anniversary, and she told a funny little story about herself at our sixtieth anniversary. She wore her Garfield badge. We had our badges from the fiftieth anniversary. She wore hers. She saved that. At any rate, I went to school also with Becky Benoun Benaroya. Then, also we had a Catholic girl, Catherine Mayer. She was a devout Catholic, but she went to Garfield High School because she lived in a Jewish neighborhood, and all her friends were going to Garfield High School. So Catherine Mayer Voiland. So she was at the sixtieth anniversary. She came from – I don't know where they live now, but for years they lived in Richland, Washington, [and] were neighbors of my brother. So Catherine wanted to sit at the table where I was sitting. She

still looked like a little girl, except she had wrinkles. But she was trim like a little girl, and she had thirteen children. Had a special award from the Pope. [laughter] Her husband was an engineer and traveled. When she came to Richland she was about to deliver the thirteenth child. But anyway, she was a wonderful, wonderful – she still is a very wonderful person. So people came for the fiftieth anniversary; they came from all over the country. I have a very good friend, Shirley Kaufman, married to – her husband's last name is Daleski. He was a war hero in Israel. So Shirley Pincus – no, she goes by the name of Shirley Kaufman. She's a poet. She was in our graduating class. Well, she said she planned to come, but Israel has always been threatened, and her husband was going to be in the service and all that, so she couldn't come. But she's been here since then, and I bought her books of poetry. Oh, she gave me a couple because there's one book that was out of print called Claims. She writes about visiting her grandmother in the balcony of Bikur Cholim. Her grandfather was the president of Hachnosas Orchim.

RB: Which is?

RT: Hachnosas Orchim – they always, for holidays and whatnot, served the poor in our Synagogue on 17th and Yesler Way. Whoever didn't have a place to eat for holidays, for Passover, the Hachnosas Orchim served there. There was this wonderful lady, Mrs. (Borich?), who always was there serving – she and her sister. She lived around the corner from the Synagogue. Anyway, her granddaughter belongs to the Jewish Archives, and in fact, they're starting to have – in her basement, they're collecting items for a Jewish museum.

RB: Reva, could you describe what it was like going to high school during those years? You went to school – you were at Garfield between –

RT: 1936 and 1940, and I worked there until ’41.

RB: Yes, what was it like at that time for you as a young Jewish woman?

RT: Well, most of the Jews lived in zip code 22 or zip code 44, which is the Mount Baker area. But most of them lived in zip code 22. So we had a lot of Jewish kids at Garfield. Boy, on Jewish holidays, there was a heavy absenteeism.

RB: Isn't that great?

RT: At any rate, had a lot of Jewish friends and a lot of Japanese friends and a lot of – there were some Black friends that were friends from Rainer School. At any rate, when the Japanese were being evacuated, I was heartbroken.

RB: How so?

RT: Well, because I grew up with them; they felt they were Americans. They felt they were Americans. I belonged to Hillel – was very active in Hillel. In fact, I've written a couple of articles for the Jewish Archives at the university about Hillel. So we used to have a luncheon club, and we used to eat Wednesdays in the Commons at the University. Now, the Home Economics building. There's no longer a lunchroom there, but we used to pick up what everyone – cafeteria – and come reserve a room. And we had Gordon Hirabayashi speak. Now Gordon Hirabayashi was born in Spokane, Washington. He said, “I am an American, and I refuse to be evacuated.” He was put into prison for four years because he refused to be evacuated. He was so angry at the United States that he moved to Canada. He became a professor in Canada. Anyway, he was very active in the American Friends [Service Committee], and I think he married somebody that was also from the American Friends society at the university. Well, Hillel occupied the Japanese Student House for a number of years, and we used to bring our lunch, and Edith Cohen Patashnik and I were very active in Hillel. She became the President, and I was vice president, and we headed all the committees. We used to go and buy a quart of milk on the avenue for thirteen cents. When I went to grade school, I used to buy milk for three cents; it was subsidized. But anyway, buy a quart of milk for thirteen cents, and we would have paper cups, and we'd have our lunches. Later on, we

used to eat in Clark Hall, and we had very good Black friends – in fact, I have a letter from one of them because later on, we became very good friends when I was active in the Seattle King County Association. We worked on behalf of the elderly. So, Kay was a secretary there, and so we had kind of a reunion. But the organization was made up of representatives from Seattle, from King County, and from United Way. I was selected from United Way, went through the offices, and was chairman. It was very active. We went to visit different sites where they had lunch programs for the elderly. And one site was at Bikur Cholim. Our synagogue later was sold to the Blacks.

RB: Excuse me. Is this the Bikur Cholim on 17th and Yesler? Is that the one that was sold?

RT: Yes. Anyway, we had a beautiful social hall that had walnut paneling – beautiful, beautiful. Well, when they opened it, they added the classes there for the Black kids who used to come there with their families to eat, and they would put graffiti on, so they had to take all that down because it's easier to paint over graffiti.

RB: What year was it sold?

RT: What year was it sold? Well, let's see, it was sold over thirty years ago.

RB: Approximately 1968 or 69?

RT: Yes, something like that.

RB: Why did that synagogue close? And where did it move to?

RT: Then they built a little place in Seward Park and they named it Yavneh and now it's for youth activities. But later on, they built the new Synagogue, and they have the same Aron Kodesh that we had at the old Synagogue. They had to take the tiles off, row by row of tiles. Initially, we were going to have a modern synagogue, but a young boy by

the name of Meyer Etkin circulated a petition that we ought to have the same Aron Kodesh and the same Tish where the Torah was put. So anyway they adopted that and so they made a new cement form exactly, they brought the chandelier from the old synagogue, which we had a big dome, it was a beautiful synagogue. We used to have for Kol Nidre, I remember we had 1,500 seats, and extra seats were put up, and there was standing room only. Since that time, a lot of the younger generation went to Herzl or to Temple De Hirsch.

RB: For those outside of Seattle, could you say what Herzl and Temple De Hirsch are?

RT: Herzl is a very large Conservative Synagogue. They used to be walking distance to Bikur Cholim on 20th and Spruce. During the high holy days, we kids used to – Yom Kippur is a long day, so we would walk to Herzl and then we would walk to Temple De Hirsch. [laughter] They used to say that the Orthodox are very noisy. If you walk into our synagogue now, it's very quiet, if the Rabbi hears any noise, there's a junior minyan downstairs, he gets up on the pulpit, and all of a sudden, silence. You go to shul to daven. Anyway, Herzl was a Conservative synagogue. Why is it named Herzl? Rabbi Shapiro's congregation was always a little envious of Bikur Cholim, so they wanted to have a big edifice with columns, a beautiful building, so they could not afford to, just by their own followers, by the members of Machzikay-Hadath. So, what did they do? They had to take in a lot of other members. Now P. Allen Rickles was a member of our synagogue, and he got up at a board meeting; he wanted to make it men and women sitting together. Well, old man Mr. Genauer got up and said, “Out.” So he went to Herzl, where they made it Conservative, and so Rabbi Shapiro's group left.

RB: I see.

RT: So then they first had their prayers in a house, and then they built on 26th and Alder.

RB: Excuse me, Reva, approximately what time frame are you talking about? When did this split happen?

RT: When did this happen? This happened about fifty years ago. About fifty years ago, sixty years ago. About sixty years ago.

RB: So about 1940? Something like that?

RT: Yes. Yes. Because when I was I guess, a pre-teen girl, Ben Genauer brought Jean Gross Genauer to Seattle, his bride. They had been first cousins and had cared about each other for a long time. Jean, as a young woman, started this group called B'noth Jeshurun from our synagogue, the Orthodox girls.

RB: And what was the group for?

RT: When was it started? 1936.

RB: What was it for? Was it a social group?

RT: It was for Orthodox girls, and we would have recreational activities. We would go to different beaches. In those days, they didn't have separation of the women from – so anyway, we used to go to different beaches. We used to have a little study group. She would teach us about the parsha of the week. Later on, Jack Genauer, her brother-in-law, used to also give us classes on Saturday afternoon. So anyway, that was B'noth Jeshurun. So, I go back in activities to our synagogue. When we lived on 24th and Jackson, our apartment, my father and I used to go to Synagogue every Friday night. I used to love it. Saturday morning downstairs, we had a Young Israel Minyan and boys under thirteen were learning how to be the cantor or read from the Torah or whatever. We girls were there, and they weren't as rigid as they are now about a lot of things. We used to buy ice cream cones for a nickel. Well, we used to look at ingredients, and that was enough. But now you have to have the symbol. First of all, when I go shopping in

the grocery, I look at the symbol, if it's under Hashgacha. Certain things don't have to be like vegetables and canned fruit – that stuff doesn't. The other thing is I look to see the sodium content [laughter] because I have high blood pressure. Interestingly enough, the president of our Synagogue is my doctor. [laughter] He used to be the president of a conservative synagogue in the North End. He's very good friends with Karen Treiger's husband Shlomo Goldberg, who is a medical oncologist. They have offices together. I think they conduct a little class together one night a week. Anyway, he urged him to become a member of our Synagogue, and his wife was a social worker at the Kline Galland home. She also was a nurse so she later went on to update her nursing skills because ultimately they will make aliyah. Their children live in Israel. He makes a lot of trips there. They're there now – and their grandchildren. We had a very wonderful man, Mel Wolf, and he was always the head of the nominating committee. So, he said to my doctor, Scott Pollock, "I'm going to nominate you for second vice president." He said, "No, no, because I never intend to be president." So he said, "But Jimmy Pollock is first vice president, and so he'll be president, and you'll never have to be president. There will be other nominating committees." What happened? Jimmy Pollock made aliyah. [laughter] So, he became president. He makes a lot of trips to Israel. He's there now for two weeks. We had our annual meeting, and so I saw him in the parking lot, and he said, "I'm leaving in the morning for two weeks in Israel." I said, "Oh, I better be healthy for two weeks." He said, "And then some."

RB: So you were describing how at a certain point, there was a branch of people that broke off and started Herzl. At that point, the Bikur Cholim was still at 17th and Yesler in 1940. Why did they leave that neighborhood?

RT: Because the neighborhood became more Black than white. It was frightening because after Martin Luther King died, they would crash all the windows of Jewish stores. We had a police escort. The last Kol Nidre that we were in that shul – Kol Nidre night – a police escort followed us all the way to Madrona, but they left us on the corner of 33rd,

and we lived on Spring, and this was the block before. They left us on that corner because they said the head of the Black Panthers live on this block, and they'll say it's police harassment if they see a police car.

RB: So in the late ’60s, then, Orthodox families started to move South to the Seward Park neighborhood?

RT: Right. The Sephardic people moved first because they told their people before World War II was over that they bought land in Seward Park. Ezra Bessaroth were the first ones. The Sephardic moved to Seward Park area first. Now we had some pioneers that also left the Madrona area and had first a little minyan at Kline Galland Home, and then they had it in a rented house. For holidays, they would rent the social hall of Ezra Bessaroth. In fact, when we moved to Seward Park over thirty years ago, for high holy days, our main sanctuary wasn't built yet so we used to have our services for the high holy days in the social hall at Ezra Bessaroth. But the two congregations became – SBH and Bikur Cholim – very, very close. Simchas Torah – they go back and forth, and they have celebrations back and forth. So Rabbi Maimon, who went to Yeshiva University – Rabbi Maimon learned Yiddish by having all these Yiddish people shopping on 24th and Yesler at the grocery store because – my grandmother even taught her Star grocery clerk Bubbles some Jewish words. Of course, she could see the prices, but she would call it by the Yiddish names, and so they learned some Yiddish from my grandmother. At any rate, we had a wonderful childhood. We didn't know we were poor. Everybody else was. I know that my parents worked very hard. When we had our little kitchen in the back of the store, we would take off the sideboard from one of the sinks and there was a place to wash clothes. It was easier than bending over a tub, so that's where my mother used to wash clothes until when we moved to 34th between Cherry and Columbia, 728 34th Avenue, my grandmother bought us a washing machine. It was easier to use a wringer than to have to wring out the clothes so that was sheer luxury. And that house – I loved every home we had. That house at 728 34th Avenue – my parents bought it for $2,750,

and it already had a stove, a refrigerator, and a furnace.

RB: You were born in your grandparents' home, and then when you were about five, you moved to the store, that was Thrifty Department Store. And then at what age did you move to the house on 33rd?

RT: 34th.

RB: 34th, I'm sorry.

RT: I was eighteen years old. After classes at Garfield High School on Fridays, I would go to my grandparent's house, and she always made the most wonderful potato kugel. I'd have real fresh, hot potato kugel and visit with my grandparents. My grandmother was a terrific baker, and she shared with everybody. She shared with everybody.

RB: What did she bake?

RT: She baked with yeast. She baked pletzlach and babka.

RB: You'll have to forgive my ignorance here, but could you describe what those are? What's pletzlach?

RT: Pletzlach are like little cakes, but it's made with yeast so it's not too sweet, but you would have – in between, she would put in sugar and cinnamon and fold them over. Babka is more like a cake, and so she would make those. And my mother used to make those things too.

RB: So, those were for Shabbat or for other –?

RT: Okay. She would make it on Thursday, or if the day was long, on Friday – she would make it on Friday. So she would make a lot.

[END OF CD 1]

RB: Hi, this is Roz Bornstein, and I'm back with Reva Twersky. The date is still Tuesday, June 19, 2001. We're continuing to gather Reva's oral history for the Weaving Women's Words project of the Jewish Women's Archive. Reva, do I have your permission to continue taping and interviewing you?

RT: Yes, you do.

RB: Thank you. We were talking about your grandmother.

RT: My grandmother used to cook and bake so much, and her kugel. We would go there after shul, like a kiddush, and my grandmother – there was an old man that lived by himself, and he would come, and she would give him a lot of the things that she made to take, whatever, any time he came. And then, on Sundays, every two weeks, she would go to collect rent from the tenants that she used to have where the Steinbergs used to live before they bought that house on 28th. They used to live on 16th avenue. It was divided into a two-family home, and she used to collect rent. The Angel family, a Sephardic family, had a lot of children, so she used to go with two big shopping bags, and they would wait for her with all the stuff that she baked that didn't get eaten up over the weekend because she always baked a lot. And oh, the kids loved it. So we always called [them] my grandmother's Angels, Bubbe's Angels. So she would collect – every two weeks, she would collect ten dollars rent. But sometimes, even if she missed a week or so, she would still collect ten dollars rent. Anyway, she was a landlady. Pretty nice landlady. At any rate, our family was always attached to my grandmother. Saturday afternoon, the women were always there. And later on, it was my mother who used to have everybody come on to our house, 728 34th, and she used to make the most terrific

lemon pies and apple pies. My grandmother would have sponge cake and Kichlach, that kind of thing. Anyway, my aunts always used to come there – and my cousins. We congregated. So, later on, Irwin Treiger, who is a first cousin, said, “Reva, you're the glue that held the family together,” because on different occasions in the summer, I'd have a barbecue with all the cousins and for Hanukah. [laughter] I feel very close with all of them, with their children. At any rate, Bayla and Louis Treiger – that's Irwin's son – are my closest relatives. They live a little block from here. Now, my daughter-in-law Tzippy went to Israel to help take care of Ashira Esther, my third great-grandchild, but she's the first great-granddaughter. She went for two weeks. For Sabbath, David and I are invited for lunch to the Treigers. They were here last Sabbath, in honor of Mordecai's graduation.

RB: So the tradition really has continued on through each generation of extended family getting together for Shabbat. Is it for Friday night and Saturday? How does it work usually?

RT: Well, sometimes it's for Friday night, but most of the time, it's for Saturday. Now David and Tzippy live four blocks from here, up the hill. Because of my arthritis and bursitis, I go the long way around a little longer. They would like me to stay over Friday night, but I prefer my own bed. And people say, “What do you need such a big house for?” Well, I used to have a lot of – people would come in the summertime to Seattle. It's a good time to visit. Our shul was always great for hospitality. They assigned different families. We used to have a lot of people stay here. But later on, because it was harder for me, I just have relatives or friends of relatives, and people came for a bat mitzvah or a bar mitzvah, I'd have them stay here. My daughter Marya and her husband and little girl Ora – you probably see pictures of Ora all over the place. Ora is now three years old, and they live in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, where my [daughter]-in-law's brother is a Rabbi. Rabbi Benji Yudin. When I visited Marya, I walk to Shul with my son-in-law Michael, and he would introduce me as his mother-in-law from Seattle. “Oh, you're from Seattle.

Rabbi Yudin has a sister there. Do you know her?" "Slightly, she's only married to my son." Anyway, David is here every day after work to see if he can do something for me. If I want to consult with him on something, if I want him to change a lightbulb or do something that's more difficult, he's always here. And Tzippy is an absolute angel. She's an absolute angel.

RB: You're very close to your children. You have three children, is that right?

RT: I have three children. Now Judy comes – she was here last year between Christmas and New Year's. That's when she's not busy. She has her own public relations firm, and she is very successful. Marya used to work for a company that was connected with the Amalgamated Clothing Union. She used to put out a little health bulletin each week, and she would gather information from other health sources and from the computer. But then after Ora was born, she became a full-time mom and does charitable work. Ora is smart and beautiful. Unfortunately, she has diabetes. But they've adapted. You have to adapt to all these things. So, it's a little difficult. Now Ora is so smart, and if she doesn't want to go to bed, she'll have all kinds of excuses. She has to go make, or she has to do this, she hasn't put away these things. And her father would say, "Ora, are you acting because you don't want to go to bed?" She'd say, "Yes." She's a good little actress too. So, at any rate, my daughters live far away. Oh we get together for Passover. My grandchildren in Israel usually come for Passover. Tzippy has all her children come for Passover. This past Passover, Moshe and his wife couldn't come because she was pregnant, but otherwise, all of the children come – her daughters and sons-in-law from back East and her mother from New York – and she houses them all. She houses them all. I go away. I usually see them before I go away or after I come back, and they're still here for a while. But every Passover in recent years, I go away with my Treiger family, and I bring my girls from back East so I get to spend time with Ora, and Ora is very friendly. I take her walking through the hall. The Genauer family also had a table. Anyway, Irwin conducts beautiful seders, and Sheldon Steinberg said,

“It's just like our grandfather used to conduct.” Irwin was the chief executive officer of Bogle and Gates. He's now in a different law firm. But he was also the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. He was president of the Seattle Hebrew Academy, vice president of our Synagogue, very active in the symphony, [and] very good friends with Gerard Schwartz. His wife grew up in the temple. At any rate, Betty Lou is exceedingly gracious and lovely, and whoever has married into our family has become very close. Meyer never used to say, “Reva's cousin Sheldon or Reva's cousin Shim or Reva's cousin Irving.” It was “Our cousins.”

RB: Is that right? Very, very close extended family, and so many of you have been very instrumental in founding different organizations in Seattle or contributing to them.

RT: Right. Well, my father used to get mail addressed to just Mizrachi, Seattle. Used to be delivered to my father. [laughter]

RB: Isn't that something?

RT: Mizrachi, Seattle. At any rate, he started a number of – we used to have wonderful – what did they call them? Melaveh Malkah. Saturday night at our shul, we used to have different speakers come. I remember when we had Gedaliah Bublick, who was the founder of National Mizrachi. When they were breaking ground for the Talmud Torah, the Hebrew Academy on 25th and Columbia, Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan happened to be coming on behalf of Mizrachi or something, and we had all these top speakers. We had an old, old lady, Goldie Schulkin, who was so active in everything Jewish. You can name any Jewish institution, and she was very active.

RB: How did your parents and grandparents' volunteerism shape your values?

RT: Well, first of all, my grandmother was exceedingly – first of all, she joined every Jewish organization. She joined every Jewish organization. One of the Jewish organizations that later was very wonderful was the Ladies Hebrew Free Loan

Association. And I became –

RB: Treasurer?

RT: – a treasurer of it. Right. The Hebrew Free Loan Association, you had to guarantee – people would borrow money. This is in the Depression. They would borrow money, and they could borrow $250. If a man and wife would borrow it, it would be five hundred dollars, and you had to have two guarantors for each one. So I used to have to all call the guarantors to see if they were willing in case they default on the loan, but they never did.

RB: It's a big job.

RT: Anyway, the Seattle Hebrew Ladies Free Loan used to have monthly meetings. This was a wonderful thing that these older women – I used to chauffeur a lot of them. Everybody volunteered to chauffeur. They would also feel that they were doing something good for the Seattle Hebrew Ladies Free Loan, and they would have a good lunch and socialization and transportation was a very important thing. When I was working, I still was active in a lot of organizations. The Jewish Federation had different committees. They had a Senior Services Committee, and then I was on sub-committees. I used to have a wonderful thing at work because [laughter] the manager of the clinic said, “Reva, you're very political.” I was buddies with all the faculty and the head of the department.

RB: Excuse me, tell us –

RT: In Family Medicine.

RB: Family Medicine at –?

RT: At the University of Washington.

RB: During what time frame are you referring to?

RT: Okay. I first started working there in 1972. I was on the ground floor when Family Medicine started. They hired a chairman, Dr. Ted Phillips, who later was Acting Dean of the Medical School and a wonderful, wonderful person. We still keep in touch. We still keep in touch, we exchange annual newsletters about what's been going on in our families for the year. When he's read about a sad occasion in my life or whatever, or happy occasion – and the university puts out news rounds. So, he would call me. Wonderful, wonderful man – he and his wife. When I had the retirement party, they were here. So Family Medicine, I was there full-time for eleven years.

RB: You were saying that you were political and that you would know different people.

RT: [laughter] Right. Oh, I was political. See, I used to collaborate with them with the different doctors on writing articles for publication. Anyway, we were always on a first-name basis. One of the faculty, Kent Smith, who is now at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, but a very good friend still – he came in for Marya's wedding. He comes in for special occasions, he and his wife. Anyway, Family Medicine, when we first opened up, we just had six new residents for interns/first year, and we had two second-year residents whom I knew when I worked in the hospital. We didn't have a lot of patients. First, I worked with Dr. Phillips, with Ted, in Pediatric Clinic, to start collecting for our clinic. Anyway, I was always very reality-oriented, goal-oriented. One day, a Black woman and her little baby came in, and that baby was not gaining any weight, so Dr. Phillips said to me, “Well, if the baby doesn't gain any weight by the next visit, I'm going to have to hospitalize that baby.” So I said, “Well, let me interview the mother.” The mother tells me that she would drop off the baby. The baby would have a bottle, and then she would drop off the baby at a daycare for nursery. Then she would pick up the baby at 5:00 and then take the baby home and the baby would drain another bottle. So, I said, “May I have your permission to visit the daycare?” I went to visit the daycare,

and it was in charge of a Black RN, and they had a lot of – every two hours, they would have different caretakers to keep the babies from crying, giving them a bottle or keep them from crying. So, this baby was held a lot and did not cry. They said this baby never wanted to drink anything. I said, “Let me try the nipple.” It was plugged. The baby was not getting anything. So that gave me a name in Family Medicine. [laughter] Initially, we weren't too busy in Family Medicine, but they all wanted to know a lot more about Orthodox Jews and our practices.

RB: Were you the only Orthodox woman working there?

RT: In Family Medicine, there were some Orthodox Residents – I mean they weren't Orthodox; they were residents. There was one resident that [was] visiting different residencies. He was a graduate doctor, say, and he was visiting different residencies. He came through our Family Medicine, and he was wearing a kippah. So, I said to him, “Gee, I like your kippah.” Anyway, then I said, “Would you like to come to my house for dinner?” We became very good friends. Well, later on, he was accepted by Providence Hospital, a Catholic hospital. They respect religious people. When they would have celebrations for their staff, they always had kosher cheese and kosher wine for him in the refrigerator, and they would go to have – he lived right across the street from a kosher caterer. They would say, “Pick up your meals and bring them here, we'll refrigerate them, and we want you to stick – we respect you.” When he went for a rotation to Israel, he was gone for two months, and they paid him his residency salary all that time. So Zev Young had it pretty nice working in a Catholic Residency.

RB: But you were the only Jewish Orthodox woman at the time.

RT: Right.

RB: What was that like?

RT: Well, I'll tell you. I had, next to my office was Bill Cole. A wonderful Doctor. He and his wife were in the Peace Corps in South Africa. They lived near a Jewish family, the Etkin family, when they lived in Madrona. And Bill Cole would say at 3:30 on Friday afternoons when the day is short, “Reva, it's getting late. You'll be late for candle lighting. Go home,” Anyway, I made wonderful friendships with all these people in Family Medicine. I sometimes go to the University Retirement Association – well, I'm on their Health Affairs Committee, but sometimes the Retirement Association – they do have annual luncheons. So I see Sally Flaherty, who was the head nurse, and I see people from the School of Social Work. I see people that were volunteering in the hospital or worked in the hospital. I got acquainted with so many people [and] made good friends. Now, see this Hall of Fame? When I worked in the hospital as a medical social worker, I also worked a lot with the nurses. I gave them classes on how to deal with patients, and be very sensitive to their needs, their wishes, their feelings. So, one of those nurses also went to Garfield with me. We were big G girls together.

RB: I'm sorry, Big G girls?

RT: Garfield High School, if you earn a letter – I had a Big G sweater. So we were Big G – we used to have after-school sports. [laughter] I was athletic. Not very good, but I was athletic. Anyway, this wonderful nurse became a professor of nursing, and she nominated me to the Garfield Golden Grads Hall of Fame. If you graduated from Garfield fifty years ago, at least fifty years ago, and you paid your annual dues, you were a member of the Garfield Golden Grads. Now they always had a luncheon. Their luncheon is on Saturday – annual luncheon reunions – in June. Always on a Saturday. Anyway, when I was nominated, they sent me a letter very early on that I was going to be honored and that I was entitled to a free lunch and I could have a friend for a free lunch. Also, they said, “I know you're Orthodox, and you don't come because you don't – this year, we're going to have it on Sunday.” That's the only time they had it on Sunday. Anyway, I was among those Garfield Golden Girls Grad Hall of Fame with Quincy Jones

and one of the vice presidents of the Boeing company. Anyway, it was very exciting. I had a table of ten. Mendel and Ruth Genauer, among my best friends, said – well, in the bulletin that we get for the Garfield Golden Grads, you have your choice – you can have fruit. You had choices. So he said, “Being it's on Sunday, why don't we make a table, David and Tzippy will go, and you can get your neighbors and your friends to go, and we'll have a fruit plate.” So that's what we did. There were so many people from the other classes that we knew. It was very nice. So Deo Little, Delores Little, this nurse that I worked with, nominated me. And she said, “Oh, you should have been nominated.” I said, “I didn't deserve it.” And she says, “Oh, you should have been nominated years ago for the Garfield Grads Hall of Fame.” [laughter]

RB: Now when was this that you were honored?

RT: It was last year.

RB: So, in 2000.

RT: This year, they want to honor my brother. But he let them know that this year it's on a Sabbath, and so he won't be able to go. Anyway, he'll probably get a plaque and a little booklet that tells you about you, all your accomplishments. My brother is very accomplished. Very brilliant. So Garfield played a very important part in my life.

RB: Yes, yes. But I wanted to just go back to your role as an Orthodox woman. It sounds that your co-workers had a lot of respect for your faith and faithfulness.

RT: Right.

RB: And what were the rewards and challenges of –?

RT: Well, the challenges were that I sometimes would miss out seeing some of the patients that I would have liked to see. Sometimes we could schedule them at another

time during the week when I could see them. But one of the challenges was also working with social work students. I had seventeen social work students as well in Family Medicine. I also had a joint appointment for the School of Social Work. I had one of my social work students that I couldn't give a good review to – a good final grade or whatever because she was not very ethical. So, that was painful for me, probably the most painful thing. But I got to work with such wonderful, wonderful people. Now one of the people I worked with is a doctor by the name of Gary Okamoto, and he was a pediatrician. We still communicate. He lives in Hawaii now. Anyway, it was rewarding, all these good friends that I've made and some of them that I can still communicate with. That was rewarding. It was also very exciting for me. loved it. I loved it. Meyer used to say, "Maybe you should pay Dr. Phillips for letting you work there." So I loved it, and I worked through lunchtime. I used to bring my lunch, so I worked through lunchtime, so sometimes I was the only social worker available at lunchtime. So, I'd get called by the people on the psychiatry floor and all over. I got to be very well known. The nurses loved me. So I had an office on Four South, that's the surgical floor. All the head nurses wrote letters of commendation, how wonderful I was. So it's good to be loved, you know. I loved them, and they loved me. Anyway, it was an enriching experience. At the same time, I kept active in Jewish organizations.

RB: How did you manage to have paid work, very important volunteer work, and you were married and were raising three children? How did you manage to do all that? That's incredible.

RT: I don't know. When I read about Louis Treiger or Karen Treiger, all the things that they do and they're raising a family and they're working and this and that, somehow I thrived on having a busy life. The reason? Family Medicine – I had a lot of freedom. If there was a meeting of the Senior Services Committee [or] Jewish Federation, I would let them know that I was leaving, and I might be back at a certain time or I might not come back, and I was able to do that. I was able to do that. That's why they thought I was very

political because then if there was a meeting of the Seattle King County Division on Aging, I was on – they had committees for healthcare, for the aging, and I used to be at those meetings. One of the committees from Federation used to meet at the Jewish Community Center in the evening, and I would go to those in the evening. I would fly into my kitchen – I'd fly out of here early in the morning. I still get up at 6:00 in the morning because to be at rounds in the hospital – sit-down rounds and grand rounds. And then I would fly in after 5:00, sometimes it would be late, and have things prepared ahead of time, and I'd have it on the table in short order, fifteen minutes after I got home. And sometimes Meyer would worry I'd be late. I'd have a family conference, and I just couldn't leave. Anyway, he was quite a worrier, and I'm a worrier too. David's a worrier, too. It runs in the family.

RB: So, excuse me, so you would come home and prepare a dinner meal –?

RT: I would have it prepared the night before, mostly. And it maybe just needed to be warmed up or something. I was very speedy in those days, and I just loved being busy. Well, my mother used to say – finally, she went to the Kline Galland home. She didn't like it. I used to bring her here for weekends. But she said, “You're so busy,” She said, “You're so busy.” I would see that she had her food in the morning and help in the afternoon and was ready in the refrigerator, and I'd give her her dinner. She didn't like that I worked so hard, and she said she envied me that I was so busy. So she decided to go to the Kline Galland home, and she said it was like a resort. She got served and beautiful grounds and all that. At any rate I used to come home, have dinner, and go visit her. First thing in the morning before I'd go to work. I'd go there. [laughter]

RB: You're amazing. [laughter]

RT: And then, when she passed away and when Meyer passed away, they were so kind at Family Medicine. They wanted to know what they could do for me. We had residents that – Joe Shamseldin, who comes from – his background is from Syria and all that –

they were all so loving and caring. We had an Indian resident. They were all wonderful. Once in a while, when I had my mastectomy and my medical oncologist at the medical center – so, once in a while, if I would run into somebody that I used to know that was a very dependent kind of a person and was on welfare, they would greet me. They'd recognize me – they still recognize me – and tell me how well they are doing. I used to enjoy that, and I used to go and see and stop at Family Medicine, see the faculty. I'm still very good friends with Dr. Schneeweis and his wife with whom I recently interviewed here about for the Jewish Archives because they are from South Africa, and we didn't have any archival material of anybody from South Africa.

RB: This is for the Washington State –

RT: Yes, Jewish Archives. Right.

RB: Now, Reva, can we take a step back in time again just a bit? Since we're talking about your social work, you went to the university in 1941. Is that right? You enrolled?

RT: I went in ’41, and I went for two years. Then I went to work for my father in his insurance office. No, I went for one year, and I had field work at the Children's Home Society of Washington. And then when I left, and then I got married and moved to Philadelphia, and I worked for a convalescent home in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. When I came back to the School of Social Work many years later, the coursework had changed so much, the curriculum had changed so much, [that] I didn't get any credits for the first year. So I had to go back for two years, which was good. Then I worked at the Welfare Society. Oh, when I started out looking for a field placement, the Jewish Welfare Board – now called Jewish Family Service – asked me if I would do my fieldwork there. At first, I said, “Oh, that sounds good.” But when I talked to the director of the School of Social Work she said, “You're so involved in the Jewish community, I think you need to spread yourself out a little bit.” So, I did. But I still kept up with these activities. If there was a meeting at shul – well, some meetings were at night. Some meetings were at

night. The shul had a liaison committee to the Rabbi, and I was on that committee. Now, the Sisterhood was sort of becoming less and less active, although they met monthly or evenings. I was a life member of the Sisterhood. I tried to keep up with – well, the Ladies Hebrew Free Loan Society, when the women were getting older and they felt that they couldn't function as much about the loans and whatnot, they transferred it to the Jewish Family Service, and now they have that for loans.

RB: Excuse me, Reva, I'm wondering, how common was it for Orthodox Jewish women to go to college when you enrolled at the University?

RT: Well, my family ¬– one thing that I feel very close to all the Jewish women in the Jewish Archives is that family always was a priority, but education, learning – especially my mother felt that this is so important. And also, you have to know how to earn a living. You have to be responsible, dependable. So it was very important. I have a cousin who is very capable and lead the Jewish organizations back in New York in Far Rockaway, and she was envious because she had to go to work. They could not afford it. Tuition was $32.50. The first year it was like ninety dollars a year for three quarters. So my parents made sure that I went to the university. I had to know how to earn a living. So, they took a lot of pride in encouraging. My brother took a lot of chemistry, and he had to have breakage tickets; you pay for your little tubes and the chemicals that you use. So, every now and then, he had to ask my mother for five dollars for breakage tickets, which bothered him a lot because my parents didn't have – so summers, he went to work. He worked for the gas company for one summer. He worked for a clothing store on University Way – Jewish business [inaudible] clothing business. He worked on University Way. We tried to earn our keep.

RB: What is your brother's name?

RT: My brother's name is Norman Ketzlach.

RB: And he's about twenty months older than you?

RT: He's twenty months older than I am.

RB: And you also had a younger sister.

RT: Yes, Evie.

RB: And her last name was?

RT: Evie's last name was Oremland. Evie was a professor at Mills College for twenty years. Her husband is a psychoanalyst. I keep in touch with Jerry and with my sister's children. So, Evie was very, very prominent in her field. She was an officer or secretary of – let's see – for professionals that take care of children. Then it became – her specialty was taking care of children in hospitals, and she wrote a book on that. She's written a couple of books. She's written tons of articles. Evie lived in Sausalito, California. Her husband Jerry came from Rock Springs, Wyoming. His older brother – the father or the mother took him to Denver to go to learn. They had relatives in Denver. But Jerry knew very little about his Yiddish background. There were soldiers, Jewish soldiers, and his father used to conduct minyans for them, but Jerry was already off. He went to Stanford, and then he was in the Navy, so he was away a lot. Evie used to take her children to a Conservative Synagogue for the High Holidays. They had a menorah – Jerry did not want a mezuzah on the door because there was this Jewish psychiatrist that was a successor to Spock, was a good friend of theirs, and he knew Evie was Jewish, but he said her husband isn't. I said, “Of course he's Jewish. His name is Jerome David Oremland, and he's named after a prominent Jewish ancestor with the name of Dovid.” Anyway, his daughter Cici – two children married out of the faith. Cici is married [and] lives in Saratoga. We're half-cousins – Marsha Joy Ratner. Now Evie, at least when she was dying – I was there when she was dying, and she said she wants to be sure that she's taken to the Jewish people that take care of burials, that she should be properly

prepared. Now she wanted to be buried in San Jose, where there's a Jewish cemetery where Jerry's mother is buried. He said, “No, Evie, it's so grim.” He said, “It's so grim.” He said, “I bought a family plot in the cemetery in Saratoga. It's nondenominational.” So that broke my heart.

RB: How so? Can you describe that?

RT: Well, when I go to the Synagogue and I look at the Aron Kodesh, and Evie and Jerry were married in front of that Aron Kodesh, the tears would flow. Evie did everything. She was brilliant, but she did everything to please Jerry. I went to a memorial – there's a memorial grove, the Evelyn K. Oremland memorial grove, at Mills College. So I went to that first year of memorial there, and the president of Mills College spoke, and all these people spoke – former students of hers, other professors, and her children spoke, Jerry spoke. Then, one of our cousins became a cantor in a Conservative or Reform Synagogue, and she also said a prayer. Jerry made a comment to me about the one thing he couldn't knock out of Evie was her devotion to her Jewishness. He wanted her to be – well, he was very involved. They had a lot of Jewish friends, but none of them were observant. But they had just as many non-Jewish friends. Annalisa is not married, and she's an attorney. But the two that are married intermarried. Now Noah, who when it was his bar mitzvah, Evie had an Israeli from Berkeley teach him the maftir. So for Jerry to have a bar mitzvah he said, “We'll go on a mountain; we'll be close to God.” And so Evie said, “That's not a bar mitzvah.” So, Noah had a bar mitzvah. So Evie's children became – Cici studied in France. She can speak French. She became an editor of a magazine in the United States. She has a family now. She has two children and her children according to the Halacha are Jewish. Now, Noah went off to Paris, and he became an electrical engineer and designed programs for electrical engineers and has his own company with three engineers working for him. He became very attracted to Kate who is Catholic. So, what was heartbreaking to me – I mean she's lovely, she's smart, she's wonderful, she's loving, she's caring, but her parents insisted on a Catholic

marriage ceremony. So, that was very upsetting to me. Noah is the most loving and] caring of Evie's three children. He's in touch even when he and Kate are on vacation or he's on vacation with his father. He always sends me cards from his vacations. Always communicates with me. So, Norman and Esther were not at the ceremony, but they were at a reception afterward. Their son lives back East close by, so they were at a reception there, and they see Annalisa. She comes from time to time for something in the Los Angeles area. She lives in San Francisco. Anyway, I did see the nieces, Evie's children – Cici and Analisa – when a few years ago I went to a wedding in San Francisco, and Cici came and got me. We met Annalisa at Hershey's. Cici had two of her children with her. Cici is very interesting. When Cici's little girl, Marley, and she's named for a Jewish grandmother – Marley was in first grade or second grade or third grade, they wanted the kids to write about their roots. So Cici called me [and] wanted to know about Shamke. I sent her the material on Shamke because Marley was interested in Shamke. She knows she comes from Jews.

RB: It's fortunate that you have those records and history to give her.

RT: Right, right.

RB: You were very close to your sister.

RT: So, Evie was nine years younger, and I took care of her. My mother worked in the store, and I took care of Evie. She was a cute little girl with curls and so sweet and good, and she remained sweet and good all her life. But the fact is that she had a very good friend from childhood, Dorothea Deutsch Gordon. So Jerry and Evie – they were going together – came to Seattle for Dorothea's wedding. And Evie remained for a while, and she said, "Well, it's very serious between Jerry and me. We're in love." So I said, "But Evie, you can be in charge of the kitchen, and you can have it kosher." She said, "No, Jerry likes to cook too." Okay. So, it was non-kosher, and two of their children intermarried, and they say that's what's happening with a lot of the Russians that came

over. Years ago, when the Ashkenazim looked down on the Sephardim, they didn't want their daughters to marry Sephardic boys, so a lot of Sephardim at that time married shiksas. But now there's a rejuvenation, and a lot of people have come back.

RB: To Orthodoxy?

RT: To Orthodoxy. In fact, to very Orthodox. [laughter] To very Orthodox. And it's interesting when – and Tzippy knows everybody. My daughter-in-law Tzippy. First of all, they have a lot of Sephardic friends, and when she first came to Seattle, they had a little luncheon club, seventeen young women, newlyweds, some of whom were Sephardic. She has a lot of Sephardic friends. Also, she works for the mikveh.

RB: She does?

RT: Yes, Tzippy works for the mikveh. Tzippy and David work very hard to give their children a Jewish education through all the Jewish schools from the cradle on.

RB: And I'm imagining that they learned many of those values from you and your husband, Meyer.

RT: Well, I think that's right, yes. And so education is very, very important. All the children have bachelor's degrees, but their daughters have I think both of them have master's degrees in Jewish Studies.

RB: How many children do they have and what are their names? Just for the record here?

RT: The oldest one, Moshe, who just became a father, now Moshe is twenty-five, and he's married to this beautiful little Tzippy, same name as his mother. And Tzippy – she is a very gifted artist. So Tzippy and I have – when you walk down my steps you have – this has the blessing for lighting the candles. But the other one is the prayer for

Kabbalah Shabbas. First, she had to make a pattern. Every time they would come for Pesach, she would bring something for her mother-in-law, when I was seventy years old, I said, “When I'm seventy-five, I'd like you to make one for me.” So the next year, she made it for me. She said, “We weren't going to wait until you're seventy-five.” She’s darling. They're just a very happy, very loving couple. So David and Tzippy were married back East, and his cousin Isadore Twersky – we call him Yitzhak – who is now buried in Israel – and Moshe and the others in Israel were at his funeral. He was the chair of Judaic Studies at Harvard. His father was a Hasidic rabbi in Brookline. Later on, he undertook to keep his father's Synagogue going. Well, he married Atarah Soloveitchik, the daughter of Rabbi Soloveitchik, who is the head of Yeshiva University. Then, he also was teaching at Yeshiva University. So anyway, Atarah is still living. When I was in Israel, I went to visit the different Amit Mizrachi women's institutions, and they're wonderful. They do the most wonderful work of any organization; it's all volunteers. I met somebody there from Boston, and they used to hold Atarah on their lap, they said. And so my daughter Becky has met Atarah. And David used to – when he went to YU and then when he went to get his master's degree, he used to be very close with Yitzhak and his family. One of the sons goes to the same Yeshiva in Israel that David's son goes to. So anyway, from both sides of the family, I told my kids and grandchildren, you have wonderful genes. [laughter] Because Tzippy's family – they were raised in Brooklyn, and also, they admired education of all levels. I mean, she studied in a Hebrew Day School. She went at night to Brooklyn College because you have to learn to be independent and you have to know how to earn a living.

RB: Now, at what point in time did the roles switch for women where they were predominantly in the home and then they started to move out of the home? When did that start to happen for Orthodox women?

RT: When did that happen for Orthodox women? Well, Tzippy has her friends – a number of her friends, Eva Genauer and Esther Friend – Eva Genauer thought it was

very important – a lot of older people get all these bills, and they don't know what they owe or what insurance will pay, so she started this business, and later her husband joined her because she bought another business that was also doing the same thing. You pay monthly, and you never have to worry about when the bills come. You shift them to Eva. The kids all strictly go to Yeshivas and whatnot, but secular education is still rated very important because you have to know how to earn a living.

RB: Were you among the first women to go to college? Or were there women before you?

RT: Probably among the early ones. Because most of them got jobs and went to work. Some of them married early; their husbands were in the service. So, a lot of my friends went to work. Now some of them say you were so lucky that you had that privilege. But see, my parents were the ones that really felt this is what you need to do. You enjoyed working in the Garfield Library for a year, and you loved being a librarian – loved library work – you loved helping the kids with all their needs, and you got to read all the new books that came out. But I had in mind I was going to be a social worker.

RB: Why is that? How did you know you were going to be a social worker?

RT: Because I loved Lena Farber Treiger, who was a social worker. She later made aliyah and moved to Israel. Now her cousin, I have a cousin, Freida Steinberg, and her sister Dorothy Epstein was also a social worker. Wonderful, wonderful women. I decided I was going to be a social worker. So I tried to encourage my girls to do that. Marya did take psychology, but no. Judy went into communications, and when I would talk to her in a certain way, she'd say, “Don't social work me.” [laughter] But my father-in-law, [inaudible]Moshe Tzvi Twersky – I think he was a social worker. People would come [to] him [with] all kinds of troubles. He had an office in the downstairs of where he lived, where his shul was, and people would come to him with all kinds of troubles. They would be so upset, and so he would listen to all of them pour out. He would get them to relax

and give them a blessing. They had such faith in the rabbi. He would give them a silver dollar. Anyway, I said he was a social worker. He was a good social worker. Because they had such faith in him – there is one woman who couldn't find her diamond ring. So he listened to her, and he said, “You know it's someplace in the house. Right now, you don't remember where you put it.” He said, “You'll come across it. Don't worry about it. It's in the house. It's safe.” And when she found it, she sent him a contribution. It's the Rabbi's blessing. [laughter] And somebody who couldn't get pregnant got the Rabbi's blessing, and then she became pregnant.

RB: Isn’t that something?

RT: My daughter Judy still believes in those kinds of things. Now Moshe was married for three years.

RB: Moshe is –?

RT: Moshe in Israel. My oldest grandson, Moshe Tzvi. He's twenty-five. His wife didn't get pregnant. So Judy went to some rabbi in New York that gives blessings.

RB: Moshe's Aunt Judy.

RT: Moshe's Aunt Judy, my daughter. And this rebbe gave a blessing. Moshe believes it’s some other thing. But anyway, she put it on her calendar, and she said nine months later, Moshe's wife delivered a baby. [laughter] So she still believes in those things. This very active woman who is very successful in public relations – one of her clients – was it the women of the Jewish Agency in New York, and they had wonderful things in their gift shop, in a secondhand – oh, it was Hadassah. They had very wealthy women that gave beautiful things. She said she met with them, and she said it was through United Jewish Appeal that she finally met with them, and she said, “Do you know that people don't know about your wonderful things.” So, she got a lot of publicity for them. She has contacts with the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, Time – whatever. So,

she got stories about them, and they started doing good business.

RB: Are your daughters back East also observant?

RT: Marya is. Judy is not. Her house is strictly kosher. She won't eat any treif or meat or anything like that out, but she has a lot of friends and authors that she has promoted. She has these wonderful Jewish friends that have written books. Anyway, they're Jewish, and they know they're Jewish. Now, Judy is a little darker-skinned. Well, Meyer's very light-skinned, and I'm dark-skinned. Marya's light-skinned. Judy is dark-skinned, but she's a sun worshipper, so she gets black. So she had Black clients and Black organizations, and they assumed she was Black. They said to her, “Well, you're one of us.” And she said, “No, I'm not, I'm Jewish.” They all dropped her.

RB: Oh, you're kidding. Oh no.

RT: They all dropped her. There's still a lot of antisemitism with Blacks. Even in Seattle, Washington. Even in Seattle, Washington. We had a Black minister that passed away not terribly long ago, but he used to give speeches about how the Jewish merchants rob the Blacks, and he doesn't realize that Jewish workers worked hard for where they are and he won't want more to be given to them. In fact, here Howard Schultz gave half a million dollars to their Black school. They picketed his store on 23rd and Jackson, where a Black had been shot by the police because he was running away and had a record. He was dragging a policeman. Because it's the corporation that's robbing the Blacks. So, there's plenty of antisemitism among the Blacks.

RB: Have you found that has happened among the white population as well? Have you experienced antisemitism?

RT: I have found out that the white population has been, for the most part, okay. Not altogether. Not altogether. Now kitty-corner from the Sephardic synagogue, there was a house and a lot around it. So Rebecca Almo, who is a wonderful person. She's

President of the Hebrew Academy now [and] has been president of the High School. She wanted to build – older people cannot take all the hills to go to shul. She wanted to throw down that house and build a facility where small apartments – I don't know – four or six small apartments, and if they still had a car, there would be parking underneath. Well, the neighbors protested. “They've got already the Kline Galland home in the neighborhood. They have synagogues. They don't need another [building.” The white neighbors protested. So antisemitism is still alive. In the Jewish Archives, they have a number of people that were interviewed about antisemitism at the University and antisemitism here or there. I personally didn't feel it. When I was in grade school, a little girl, six years old or so, said, “You killed Jesus.” I said, “No, I didn't.” A little Black girl. “No, I didn't. I'm innocent.” But to this day, unfortunately, I don't feel it. When I walk the Seward Park loop, I walk one mile in one direction and one mile back, and there are a number of Blacks that walk. They either live here or drive from Mt. Baker or whatever, and they're just as nice as can be. There's a committee for preparing for earthquake, which we are expecting to have another big one. The last one didn't kill anybody, which was very lucky. When David was five months old, and we were in Philadelphia, there was one where bricks fell. Even this time, in Pioneer Square, a lot of bricks fell. So, on this committee for earthquake preparation, we were meeting at somebody's house, and there's some Blacks on the committee. This person has two grand pianos in her house and all that. But the people I work with from these committees are very, very nice. They're highly intelligent. The head of our social work library was a Black. They go by the colors too, light-colored. Judy has this wonderful friend from The New York Times. Anyway, she and Judy are very, very close. She and Judy go on vacations together and whatnot. Anyway, she wrote a book, and she had focus groups for Blacks and whites all over the country. And a lot of them are concerned about hair and also about the color. So, Blacks can discriminate against other Blacks, too. And they do. Those that are successful are not helping enough those that aren't. You can have close friendships and whatnot, but as a whole, the population is not that good. I belong to the Senior Center

down here on Holly and Rainer. I was going to the fitness class. I'm not in the fitness class anymore, but I still go there for foot care. It's very convenient and very nice. A lot of Jewish people from the neighborhood [go] there, and I went there for – they have these AARP [American Association of Retired Persons] classes – 55 Alive. So, we had lunch there. It's two days. So we had lunch there. The woman in charge of the kitchen – I said, “I'm kosher, that's why I can't eat this.” She said, “Oh, next time, let us know. If you let us know a week ahead of time, we'll get the kosher lunch from Kline Galland Home [which] has meals-on-wheels with kosher [food], and we would take care of it properly.” So, I said, “Oh, that's good to know.” [laughter] So there is a lot of interchange. Now, there are Jews, who come from – I don't know where they come from – the South. They wound up in Seattle, but they have a lot of Black aides and Black nurses.

RB: At the Kline Galland home?

RT: At Kline Galland Home.

RB: Which for people outside of Seattle, why don't you describe just briefly?

RT: The Kline Galland Home is a wonderful facility for older people. Now originally – the little structure originally, the Kline Galland fund put up the structure for indigent Jews. Later on, the demand was that more Jews are needing it, and not just for indigent Jews but for Jews that need care and want to have a kosher facility. So they now are, I think, they cashed out from the Kline Galland Fund, and they are getting – they get money from Medicaid that at least half or more of their people – if you pay out so much a month to Kline Galland Home, which can be eight thousand dollars a month now or something – when my mother was there it was like four thousand dollars a month – if you wind down all your resources, then you can apply down to a certain amount; you can apply for Medicaid.

RB: So it's accessible to more of the population.

RT: Yes, so there are some very wealthy people there as well as very poor people or people that are paid for by Medicaid. And Medicaid sees that they get thirty-five dollars in cash. Their social security goes to pay, and then it's subsidized, and then they get thirty-five dollars cash to spend on little things.

RB: And Kline Galland Home, the main facility, is in Seward Park as well.

RT: It is what?

RB: In Seward Park.

RT: It is in Seward Park. Yes, it is in Seward Park. And the Caucasians are very much interested that we've got enough Jewish institutions in Seward Park.

RB: You know our time is running out on this tape, so I need to stop this tape, unfortunately, and we'll pick up with another tape. Okay?

RT: Okay, very good.

[END OF CD 2]

RB: This is Roz Bornstein, and I am back with Reva Twersky. This is tape three. And the date is still June 19, 2001. We are still at Reva's house in Seward Park in Seattle, Washington. We're completing Reva's oral history for the Weaving Women's Words project of the Jewish Women's Archive. Reva, do I have your permission to continue taping and interviewing you?

RT: Yes, you do.

RB: Thank you. We would love to hear about your courtship with Meyer.

RT: Well, I met Meyer when he was in the service. He was very attentive, and my parents took to him right away, the son of the Tolner Rebbe and all that. But anyway, I

told him certain nights, I had a couple of classes at the University School of Social Work. I was pretty busy, and he was staying at Ben and Jean Genauer's house. That's who first told him about me. I said, “I'm really quite busy.” I was not that interested. So my mother reminded me that I was going to a Junior Hadassah theater party in the University District. My mother says, “Why don't you take him with you?” So I called back. My mother took care of me. I called back, and I said, “Oh, may I speak to Meyer?” I said, “Would you like to go to a Junior Hadassah theater party with me?” He'd love to. I didn't know him from Adam, but when we were at this theater party, there were other soldiers from New York, and they said, “Oh, you're the son of the Tolner Rebbe in Philadelphia.” My parents were really impressed by all of that. [laughter] So at any rate, I had a lot of very close Jewish friends like Edith Cohen Patashnik from Garfield High School, and we used to meet for lunch in Clark Hall at the University. There were a couple of non-Jewish friends that we were very close to. Janet Thomas was one of them. Janet and her friends were going to have a New Year's Eve party, and Janet invited Meyer and me, and of course Edith and Mac would be there. At any rate, I went. Gee, it got very romantic. [laughter] And then the next day, we went for a long walk along Lake Washington. In those days, we could run through the woods, and we'd be down from 35th avenue, 36th avenue, and run through the woods, and we'd be down at Seward Park. We had a long walk along the lake and back, and he said he told his parents about me. He said they are very happy about it. His father had said to his mother that – he didn't say that Meyer came to him, but he told her a soldier came to me, and he said he fell in love with a very nice Jewish girl, but she has the same name as his mother. And so Meyer's mother said, “Oh, I hope you told him that he should marry her.” He said, “I did, that was your son.” So, at any rate, Meyer had to – okay, he was discharged. He worked a lot on the West Coast. He was an accountant – a CPA. There was a lot of contract termination work after the war, so he was still in the Service. One of his bases was San Francisco, and he always came up here, and we had good times. We went to basketball games at the university. I would go in the students' entrance, ASUW [Associated Students of the

University of Washington], and he would go in the other entrance; the soldiers were free. Then we would meet inside. Anyway, we had a lot of good times, and then I didn't hear from him for a while. I didn't know he had gotten pneumonia, and he was in a hospital in the Presidio near San Francisco, and then he went home on convalescent leave. So when he came back, he called up, and my mother said, “Meyer is on the phone.” I said, “Oh, I haven't heard from you for so long.” He said, “I'd like to come over.” I said, “Well, I don't care if you do or don't.” [laughter]

RB: How long had it been since you had seen him?

RT: Well, it had been about two months. Then, at that time – before that, when it came Valentine's Day –now they think it's terrible – St. Valentine – he brought me a big heart, a box of candy. When I got my bachelor's degree, I guess he brought me a locket or a necklace. But I was disappointed that we weren't really engaged until I saw a ring. When he came back from being discharged in California, at the PX, he bought a little diamond ring. So, he said, “I brought you a box of candy.” I said, “Oh?” He said, “Take that one. I think that's a good one.” I picked it up, and underneath it was the ring. [laughter] So we were engaged. Then my parents had a couple of parties. One party was for family, and one party was for my friends from the University, which included two Black women, and one of them was married. (Kay Shaw?) was married at that time to Mickey. The other one was a very beautiful Black girl who later married an African diplomat. We were at her home. We used to go to different homes. We were at her home. Her father was a dentist, and we had been at her home for one of our gatherings because we used to have very good times together. Anyway, that is how I met Meyer. And then he went back – he said, “I'm a CPA, and I have clients that I had from before the war, and I've been told that they want me to check their records while I was gone because maybe some of them didn't get their full benefit of tax relief or whatever.” He went back to Philadelphia. Meanwhile, I was going to the University Hall Health Student Union Center, where I was getting injections for hay fever. The campus was terrible for

people with hay fever. Anyway, this doctor said he came from Philadelphia – Dr. Weinstein. He came from Philadelphia, and he said, “Oh, it's such an awful place.” [laughter] He said, “The town is so filthy,” he says. “The subways and everything and the streets, the horses drop manure into the streets, and they deliver bread and milk by horse and wagons. Ugh,” he said. I wrote that to Meyer. He didn't appreciate that. [laughter] So, we were getting married in Seattle, so his family came, and his siblings and Frances's husband, Baruch Trachtman. They drove from Philadelphia. They used to send me postcards from the road signed “The six peppy travelers.” [laughter] My sister-in-law Jean sent me a little paperback cookbook. She says, “You're going to have to learn how to cook.” [laughter] At any rate, they were all here for the wedding, and we got married at the Seattle Talmud Torah building, the hall there. That was the only place that we really could have at that time, we could have a kosher meal. Later on, when my sister got married, Norway Center was the only place to get a kosher catered meal. They had long tables, and we went to a number of functions at Norway Center. Now the hotels are very happy to have kosher catering. At any rate, I moved to Philadelphia, and so we got there – first, we had a wonderful honeymoon in Banff on Lake Louise. First, we were in Vancouver, and it was beautiful. Then we went to Philadelphia. Summertime was very hot and humid, and it was like – you'd get out of a cold shower, and you're immediately hot again. It was before air conditioning was very common. I think his oldest brother, Sigmund, who owned a dairy, Quaker Maid, and Leah – they had air conditioning in the windows. At any rate, I already was not very happy with Philadelphia. [laughter] And then came the Wintertime, and I used to go visit – I worked as a social worker for Willowcrest Convalescent Home. I applied at the welfare board, and this director, Ephraim Glass, said, “You're very highly qualified. We'd like to hire you. But you have to have two years residency in Pennsylvania.” But he said, “They need a part-time social worker to interview patients that leave the hospital and are going to go to Willowcrest Convalescent Home.” He said, “You can go out. Their doctor lives not too far from where you live, and he goes out every Tuesday to examine patients, the new ones that

came in, to see if some of them shouldn't have come in or if some of them had problems and needed more care." So each week, I would get a list of people to call who applied to go to Willowcrest. On their Blue Cross policies, they just had to pay a dollar a day. So, I visited a lot of poor people in South Philadelphia. Even had 5th-floor walkups, you know? I visited people in the different hospitals in Philadelphia.

RB: Was it common for newlywed women to go out into the workforce at that time?

RT: For newlyweds? Okay. At that time, yes. Because who was wed –? Okay. His brother Nat was married, and I think that maybe because they were a young couple, and they had a baby already that she worked. But for newlyweds?

RB: Or just younger married people.

RT: Yes, for newlyweds, not that I recall. Not that I recall. That's when somebody wants to say they don't know – they don't recall.

RB: So your decision to go out and work was –?

RT: I needed to have something to do, and I loved to work. I'm work-oriented.

RB: And Meyer supported that decision.

RT: And Meyer, yes. Meyer was very good. We supported each other very well. Anyway, one day, it started to snow, and it really could snow there, and I wasn't used to that. So he wanted to tell me not to go to – we used to meet during the week, like Thursday night, at his parents' for dinner. He wanted to tell me not to go because it was going to snow a lot. I never got the message, and I had visited patients in Hahnemann Hospital, and so I came there. Anyway, it was snowing pretty hard. So, how to get home? [laughter] We lived a block from the Broad Street subway near Germantown Avenue. There, the doctors, pharmacists, and other store people had their offices in the

basement of their homes. On the next block was a pharmacist. Someone drove up that needed to get medication for a family member. When he came out, there was already a lot of snow around his car. So, Meyer said, “I'll help you get out of the snow, and I hope that you'll be able to drive us to the Broad Street subway.” So he did. We got the subway, got home, got to our third-floor open apartment to the rest of the building, and I cried. I said, “Here, you have to battle the elements. Summer is too hot. Winter, there’s all this snow. You can't get around.” Anyway, I cried. Well, Meyer told his mother, and she was a very wise lady, so she finally said to him, “You know Meyer, Reva will never be happy in Philadelphia. Take her to Seattle.” He was very attached to his family. He didn't care for that idea too much. But okay. With the blessings of his family, we moved to Seattle.

RB: In what year was this?

RT: We were married in 1946, so this was 1947. First, we lived upstairs [in] my parent's home. My parents had this little house on 34th Avenue, which had one bathroom, it was upstairs. Anyway, that wasn't the greatest. My aunts would come over every Saturday and everything. And Meyer used to like to take a Shabbas nap. I still do too. My aunts would think, “Why doesn't Meyer like us? When he sees us, he goes up for a nap.” [laughter] Anyway, my father knew a lot of people, and when he was a traveling salesman in Portland, he met a lot of Jewish people, and one of those ladies married somebody that had an apartment building on 30th near Yesler Way. My father talked to her, and she said, “First vacancy, your daughter will get.” So we had a nice apartment on the first floor – 30th and Yesler. It was easy to go to shul every Shabbas and very easy to get to my parents' house. We stayed there until David was born, and his bris was in our house, and his father came for the bris. His mother was angry that he traveled in November. Then, he was the sandek, I guess. He held the baby. In those days, I had just come from the hospital with the baby. We were in the hospital then seven days.

RB: What a luxury. [laughter]

RT: [laughter] By the time Judy was born, it was down to four days. Anyway, now they go home the same day. At any rate, the Bris was at our house. The following summer, Meyer's mother came visiting, and we had a daveno in the living room, and that was fine for her. She was a wonderful, wonderful lady. My mother used to make all kinds of things to bring us. I used to go swimming, even when I was pregnant. Anyway, we used to go swimming in Seward Park, and my mother-in-law used to also like to go swimming. And then she was going to be here for fourteen days. She brought fourteen different dresses with her. [laughter] When I travel, I travel very light. At any rate, we took her to Mount Rainer and to Magnolia Park and wherever there was a wonderful view. She had a marvelous time. We all had a marvelous time here. So anyway, David, when he was two years old, we bought a house in Madrona – 3217 East Spring Street. I loved every house I lived in, and David loved it so much he said, “Will you give me this house when I get married?” He had a little girlfriend two doors away, Louise Kosokoff. Lulu, we called her. And they made snowmen together, and we had birthday parties, and Lulu was always with the little cousins at the birthday parties. Anyway, Moshe already knew about Lulu, so we used to take him – Meyer and I used to take him shopping at Bellevue Square.

RB: Now you're referring to your grandson now.

RT: My grandson Moshe. Okay, I jumped. Going on about Lulu. So Moshe said, “Oh, there's David Alhadeff.” Well, Lulu was married to a David Alhadeff. “Not Lulu [inaudible].” [laughter]

RB: Isn’t that something? He knew.

RT: Anyway, we had eighteen wonderful years in Madrona, and the reason we left was because the Blacks were really taking over, and the Black Panthers were not very nice. At Brenner Brothers Bakery on 28th and Cherry, they not only broke the windows, but they went in and broke all the big gallon jars of pickles. They really did a thorough job.

RB: There were other Jewish stores in that area as well [inaudible].

RT: Right. That was a sign to move. Even the real estate companies on 34th that used to only sell to whites – they were Caucasians – so their windows were broken. It really was a rough time. My friend Zeana Greenberg, who lived on Lakeshore Drive here in Seward Park, se used to come to see us. She'd drive around – couldn't go the direct way. The Black kids were throwing stones at the cars going down Cherry Street, so she would go around the lake [in] Madrona and then come up that way and so to visit me. We were very good friends. Sometimes, when I'm sitting in the backyard, and David would open the gate very quickly, I would jump because we just didn't know what to expect.

RB: Didn't feel safe.

RT: We went to Israel that Summer, and we took David because he was going to study at Kerem B'yavneh in lieu of his junior year at Yeshiva College. Meyer said, “When we get back, we're going to buy a house in Seward Park.” Anyway, we toured Israel from Dan to Beersheba in a taxi; it's such a little country. Such a beautiful little country. I have my uncle's relatives there. One uncle had passed away, but his family was still there.

RB: Excuse me, your father is buried –

RT: My father is buried there. My father is buried there.

RB: Could you say why your father –?

RT: My father always wanted to make aliyah, but my mother was very attached to her family, and she said, “We can make trips there, but I don't want to move there. It will be too far from my brothers and sisters.” Anyway, we went on trips there. So the first trip, we sat with my uncle Mordechai, my father's brother, right in back of the Dan Hotel. We sat on the Mediterranean, and he was telling us that when he came as a teenager from Russia – this is after World War I – he wanted to come to Seattle, but my father said, “No. Go to Palestine because I'll eventually get there too.” So, he went to Palestine, and he said at that time, they were good friends with the Arabs. He used to go to Arab weddings, and he worked very hard to clear the stones and the rocks. It was very rocky – the country is very rocky – to make room for the kibbutzim. He said they were very good. But the British came, who promised the Arabs the same things that the Jews had been promised – the Balfour Declaration. The Arabs were promised the same thing. So, there are a couple of Seattle boys that went with Haganah. The Jewish boats were turned back to Cypress, and so these two Seattle boys also were at Cypress to start with. Anyway, it was pretty rough. But it's such a little country, and now [Yitzhak] Rabin thought that he was going to make peace for all times with the Palestinians. Was he ever mistaken? At any rate, the last time I was in Israel was when Moshe, who just became a father, got married. That was three years ago. In 1966, I went with – the UJA had a tour, and a lot of groups – a big group from Seattle went, and we stayed at the Jerusalem Sheraton Plaza. Then, I had an evening party there for my relatives from Israel and my Israeli friends – Shirley Kaufman Daleski and her husband Bill.

RB: Excuse me, you mentioned UJA. Meaning United Jewish Appeal?

RT: United Jewish Appeal. It was organized through the Jewish Federation, and it was really very wonderful. Moshe was studying there, so I went to visit Moshe at his Yeshiva. Then we went to visit, I have a nephew, David's first cousin, in Efrat – David and Shani Gordon. The first room they built on their house was a cement room for – you never know when you have another explosion or a bomb or whatever. When I went there for a

weekend with Moshe, I slept in the cement room. Anyway, they showed me pictures of the construction as it went along. Now, this past summer, my sister-in-law, Jean Twersky Gordon, and her husband went to Israel to spend Passover with her kids and grandchildren. Because their kids were all there, right after Passover they celebrated their fiftieth anniversary there. Moshe and his very pregnant wife were there. David Gordon emailed pictures to David, so I saw on the computer all these different pictures that were taken there. So, when Jean Gordon was telling me about it, I said, “Jean, I felt I was there.” [laughter]

RB: Now I have a special request. Speaking of Israel, and we had been talking about Meyer, one of my favorite stories that I read in your memoirs has to do with this forest in Israel.

RT: The young couples?

RB: Could you describe the group and this forest?

RT: When we lived in Philadelphia, we had a young couples group.

RB: What was the name of it? Do you remember?

RT: It was named just the Young Couples Group of Ha-Po'el Ha-Mizrachi. So when we came to Seattle, and there were all these nice young couples, Meyer said, “Gee, it would be great to start a young couples group. There are a number of your friends and relatives, cousins and whatnot.” And the rabbis’ wives joined. Our rabbi's wife also joined. And our rabbi, Rabbi Appel, later went to teach at Stern College. Anyway, they were members of our young couples group, too. Every time a baby was born to one of us, we would plant a tree in Israel in the Ashinsky Forest – Rabbi Ashinsky – on Keren Kayemeth land in Palestine. This was to Mr. and Mrs. Meyer Twersky in honor of the birth of a daughter Judy Ann. We said we planted a whole grove of trees there. Then, our Young Couples Group of Ha-Po'el Ha-Mizrachi adopted a kibbutz in Israel. Kibbutz

Lavi. They have a guest house there. Meyer and I were there later on. It was started by a group from England, this Kibbutz Lavi, and so there's English speaking people there. At any rate, after that, our Young Couples Group of Ha-Po'el Ha-Mizrachi – through our friends Fred and Minnie Bergman, who also had a place in Israel, and they said, “Lavi? Okay. You write to so and so in Lavi and ask them what they need.” So they needed a typewriter. They needed a washing machine. So, we would have fundraisers. We would sponsor an old Yiddish movie at Madrona Theater. We would have car washes, raising money, and we had different ways of making money – raffles we had – all for Kibbutz Lavi. Anyway, we did get for them a washing machine and a typewriter.

RB: Isn't that something? That's marvelous.

RT: And then we were working on something else for them.

RB: How far back does your love of Israel go?

RT: My love of Israel comes from the day I was born.

RB: How so?

RT: [laughter] My father was so committed to the State of Israel that even when he didn't have money, his credit was good, he would borrow money to send for Keren Kayemeth for buying land. When Norman was born and at Providence Hospital, at that time, it was sixteen dollars – well, when Judy was born, it was sixteen dollars a day. So I don't remember when Norman was born what it was. Anyway, for people that didn't have it, my father thought it was a lot of money. He says, “They call themselves Sisters of Charity?” [laughter] He was so devoted to the State of Israel that when – we were one of the first people in the family to have a car because, as a salesman, he needed it. Because he was so honest – he always used to go with two big suitcases of samples. One of his customers was Larry Munger at the Bon Marche, men's work clothes. Larry Munger – it wasn't very busy. My father put out his line, and Larry Munger took an order,

and then my father went to the next customer in Ballard, quite a ride for him. When he started unpacking there, he said, “Oh my gosh, I can't see you today. I have to rush back to the Bon Marche. I have a pair of Bon Marche pants that was packed in with my samples.” So, he went back. Then, there was a company in Terre Haute, Indiana, called the Stahl Urban Company. All the American salesmen – everybody applied for it. Who got it? My father. Larry Munger said, “He's a terrific salesman, but I never met a more honest person in my life.” My father went to this convention in Terre Haute, Indiana. I'm sure that he lived a little can of this, a little jar of apple juice, and matzah. Anyway, when they have parties – when the goyim have parties, they like to drink. One fellow was really drunk, and he says, “You know, Mr. Ketzlach, you never would have gotten this line because you're a Jew, but because of the outstanding recommendations from a big customer like the Bon Marche you got the line.” [laughter] So he got the line. It was a wonderful line, and it helped a lot. Eventually, my father – his one and only cousin, Ben Stein, was partners in the Durabilt Luggage Company with Fred Bergman. Fred was the outside man, and Ben Stein was the inside man. Well, he said, “Fred Bergman wanted out because he's spending more time in Israel.” So he wanted my father to go into partnership. Well, my father said no. He's tired of traveling. He said he's interested in the insurance business. So, Ben sold the business to the Rosen Family. They became very wealthy. When the Japanese were being evacuated, they all needed luggage and they all went down to Durabilt luggage. And the Steinbergs, who had always given credit to everybody and were in debt – my Uncle Rueben always bought a lot of merchandise and always had too much stock, and they had to borrow money to pay interest – all that. So, when World War II came, all that stock became very valuable. They were able to pay off everybody. At any rate, they became well-to-do and they opened – they had stores in different communities, even a couple in Alaska. Sheldon had artistic talent. His uncle, Bill Taubin, was quite an artist and a commercial artist and did very well. He was in the artist hall of fame or something. So, Sheldon, as a child, as a small child he was drawing art, and they said, “Well, Sheldon, one of your little fellow's feet is shorter than

the other." He says, "Well, he was walking." Sheldon gave up art because he was interested in the business. Sheldon and his wife adopted little twins, who are now about eight years old, and they live in Seward Park. They moved to Seward Park because of the twins, but they bought a very lovely house here. Karen Treiger and Schlomo Goldberg and family live here, and Louis Treiger and family live here, and David lives four blocks away, so we have a lot of our mishpocha here in Seward Park.

RB: That's wonderful. So your extended family continues to be able to live close together.

RT: Yes, right.

RB: In the Orthodox community. It's wonderful.

RT: And Betty Lou and Irwin live – on the other side of Madrona Beach is Denny Blaine, and they have a house right on the water in Denny Blaine. So when it was the naming party there for – Irwin calls her – Rashi. She's named for – what is Rose in Hebrew? Anyway, this little girl had the naming party at Betty Lou and Irwin's. And besides being on the lake, they have a beautiful swimming pool. Anyway, my little grandson, who is now fourteen – Morty said, "Do you have to be a lawyer to have a house like this and a pool?" Anyway, Betty Lou grew up in Temple, but she's very strictly kosher. Anybody can eat at her house. Rabbis can eat at her house. They're very dedicated to their children's school, to the day school. They're always approached by different organizations that want to use their name and to honor them, and they can sell ads and all that. Well, Irwin and Betty – Irwin says he always turns them down, but for the day school – and Betty Lou said her grandchildren are there. She was very active in the school for everything when her kids were there.

RB: Your whole family has been. Your husband was president, and you were president of the PTA. Is that right?

RT: And Irwin was president, and we had a lot of family members. Jack Steinberg was president, and the Genauers – Ben and Mendel Genauer. And Meyer. And Ben Maslan. The Maslans were good friends.

RB: So, really, you and your family have sustained the Seattle Hebrew Academy over many years.

RT: Right. It's one of our primary interests. Now, somebody said to me, “I give to the Jewish Federation.” I give to everything Jewish as well as to all the community. I give to the community. But a big priority is the Seattle Hebrew Academy, the Northwest Yeshiva High School, and my synagogue. In Israel, we have certain priorities there, too.

RB: So your parents' love of education and value in education has really been passed onto you and then to your children and their children.

RT: Yes, and their children. Right.

RB: It's really a value that's carried on. That’s lovely.

RT: Yes. So, at any rate, it spanned the generations.

RB: Now, how did you and Meyer juggle all of the roles? What were your roles in the marriage? Were you primarily at home while you were raising kids, or how did that work?

RT: I was at home raising the kids, but at the same time, I used to go out [laughter] with David in the car, and we used to go collecting from different merchants merchandise for the bazaar and ads for the bazaar – souvenir journals.

RB: For the bazaar?

RT: For the Seattle Hebrew Day School. Then I was also active – there is a Jewish Community Center, and they had a day camp. There were so many kids from Madrona

that went to the day camp that they used to have a bus pick them up on 34th and Union, just a couple of blocks from our house. They'd bring them back at 4:00 in the afternoon. They went to the day camp, which is in Lake Sammamish, of the Jewish Community Center. Their best friends were the Polik children, and they lived in Green Lake – Ethel and Abe Polik. Abe loved Israel. They had so many friends in Israel. They brought relatives from Russia to Israel. He loved Hebrew, and he had all kinds of Hebrew books. Speaking of Hebrew books, Erika Michael, who was the President of the Washington State Jewish Historical Society, one of the primary editors of the book, The Jews of Washington State, which will be coming out before too long – Erika is having a fundraiser at her home for the Washington State Jewish Historical Society. That's going to be on the 24th of this month. Now Irwin Treiger said – I guess he's Erika's [inaudible] – "But she sold her home." "But "I said, "she's still there, and she's having this fundraiser for the Washington State Jewish Historical Society." She has a collection of books that go from the mid-15th century to the present – Jewish books. She has this wonderful collection. She's having this tea from 2:00 to 4:00 – dietary laws observed, and her husband is going to give us a guided tour of their huge library. Now Erika herself has written books. I think her husband has. And she's such a lovely person. I saw her at the Federation at their 75th anniversary, and I said, "Erika I'm looking forward to being to your home," and she says, "We're looking forward to having you." I saw Althea Stroum, who I went to Garfield High School with. [laughter] "Althea," I said, "Your daughter Marsha resembles you." She said, "Which one of us looks younger?" I said, "You do, Althea." [laughter] Because the Stroums have the Jewish Community Center named for them, and they were very generous to the total community. He was chairman of the University Hospital board – big donor there. The Benaroyas were very big donors. All to the Kline Galland Home. The Benaroyas – Virginia Mason, diabetic clinic because one of their children had diabetes.

RB: That was some class at Garfield.

RT: Yes, yes.

RB: What a group of women.

RT: Yes, we all come from Garfield.

RB: Did you socialize in high school? What was it like?

RT: Well, in high school, I socialized, my neighbor from across the street, Louise Altaras Bensussen lived across, so we were very good friends. I associated with Amelia Martin – Italian – from grade school. A lot of my friends from grade school were not necessarily Jewish, but then we had some Jewish children from other schools in our classes; we got to know them. They had mixers, and I think it was pretty cliquish. We used to say, “The rich kids from Madrona.” [laughter] When my brother was on the Rainer School baseball team, and our principal, James F. Shannon, who was very, very nice, was the coach, and they had their own coach, the rich kids from Madrona. Anyway, when we lived in Madrona, we lived there for quite a long time. After my parents sold their house, they bought – my uncle Sam and Dora’s around the corner on 35th – they bought that house, and Sam and Dora built a new home. Rueben and Adele Steinberg built a new home. There are a lot of nice new homes in the Madrona district. It was a wonderful district. It was close to everything, close to downtown, close to the University, close to the airport. Madrona was an ideal place to live.

RB: Must have been hard leaving.

RT: It was. It was very hard, and for my children especially. Judy, when she came home and we were already living here, she said, “Can I knock on the door and tell them I used to live here, and I'd like to see the house?” I said, “Judy, it's not ours anymore. It's not ours anymore.” Anyway, they loved the house, and David used to brag about [how] we had a double lot and a double garage, and we had a room down in the basement and a little kitchen down in the basement and a school room where they had a big

blackboard. Oh, they loved Madrona.

RB: So they were very attached to the house.

RT: They were attached to the house, and I've been attached to the house, so it really was hard leaving Madrona. It really was hard. But coming to Seward Park, it's not too hard to get used to good things.

RB: It's a beautiful neighborhood.

RT: At that time, the Seward Park area was considered not as desirable as the North End, and the houses were cheap. Now this house cost us $37,500, and we spent some money fixing things, so let's say it cost us $43,000. Anyway, it was a good move. [laughter] I used the house for a lot of different organizational events, when we had our committee working on the Garfield reunions, we'd meet here. I still have – AMIT women meet here every May for family gatherings. It's still a great house.

RB: It's been a hub for a lot of wonderful activities.

RT: Yes, a lot of wonderful things.

RB: Now, so you did a lot of volunteer work while you were raising your children, it sounds like. And then, at what point did you decide to go back and get a master's degree?

RT: At what point did I decide to get a master's degree? I always felt that an MSW was much more desirable than just a BA in sociology. I wanted to be a social worker. I went back when Judy was going to the Hebrew Academy – and Marya – and David was going to Garfield High School. When David went to Garfield High School, it was already pretty rough. He was in the top ten, but there was a lot of crime – a lot of crime in that area. So, at any rate, it was a good move to Seward Park and, of course, very close to the

institutions that we love. I would still go out collecting for March of Dimes or Muscular Dystrophy, so I got to know all the neighbors pretty well. They're very nice neighbors.

RB: When did you go back to get your master's? What year was that?

RT: What year was that? It was in ’66.

RB: So, shortly before you moved to Seward Park, you went back.

RT: Right, right. Yes, I was still living there, and then the second year I was here.

RB: That's remarkable. So, you were raising – you still had children at home, and you were getting a master's and volunteering.

RT: A Master of Social Work. Right.

RB: How did you do that? That's incredible.

RT: I moved a lot faster than I do now. [laughter] But I just –

RB: When did you study, for example?

RT: I just thrived. When did I study? Okay. Weekends. I did a lot of – my research was in rehab medicine. At any rate, I got very much involved with the department of rehab medicine, now called physiatry. Weekends and nights. And when did I do my cooking for Shabbas? Thursday night, I'd go shopping for groceries, and I used to make my own gefilte fish and everything. But now, things are very easy. I can have company for Shabbas, and all I do on Tuesday, I call our caterer, Nosh Away, and Phillip and Dana Klitzner live right – if you drive up my driveway, then you drive up their driveway, that's where they live, so they deliver to me Friday on the way home from work.

RB: How nice. It's delicious too.

RT: That helps a lot. [laughter] And I can have the most delicious meals. At any rate, things are a lot easier now, and also, when I worked, it was wonderful to have a cleaning lady every week, every Thursday. My cleaning lady is a very wealthy woman, but I'm the only one she works for because she has two children. She has children and grandchildren living in Kobe, Japan. Her son gets his company to pay him for coming to the United States for meetings that they have with the company. But for her daughter-in-law and for one grandchild in Kobe – and he can speak Japanese. [laughter] At any rate, not that she needs it, but she saves it for their trips.

RB: Besides the woman that would come and clean on Thursdays, did you have other help in the home? Did you have someone to help with the children or with cooking?

RT: No, you know I always envied a person that had help with the children. Because making dinner – I got a kink in my leg. I've got to stand up.

RB: Would you like me to pause for a minute?

RT: Okay. [Recording paused.] So, I love this house. I had a reunion of Family Medicine a few years ago, and they always invite me back for reunions. I used to invite the people to our house. One of the Japanese doctors, Gary Okamoto, said, "You know, we live in the North End and my child is the only Japanese Kid in Laurelhurst School." He said, "You live in such a cosmopolitan neighborhood. Would you sell me your house? You don't need such a big house anymore." So, I said, "Gary, maybe when I'm ninety, I'll sell the house." So what he ultimately did – he moved to Hawaii. I did get to communicate with him. Anyway, I have had a wonderful, wonderful life, and each day I'll count my blessings. When I work with elderly people, they worried about a couple of things. They're worried about having bad pain when they were older. They were worried about losing their independence, making their own decisions. I am very privileged. I can still manage to be independent. I still have family close by. Good friends. Very nice neighbors around the corner – Dr. and Mrs. (Mansi?), and they are so nice, and the

others on the block. And then the house up the corner was just sold by former Sephardic neighbors who sold it to a couple that came from Chicago and then from Oregon, I think the wife is from Oregon, Corvallis, Oregon. They wanted a house that's walking distance to the shul. So one of my favorite people, (Larry Jasson?), sold it to them. I met this fellow the other day. The first thing I did before I met them – they have a little table on their deck, and so I put a banana nut bread and a plant with a little card – Reva and my phone number. They called to thank me. The other day I met this fellow; he wears a kippah, and he said, “Your son puts Alan Frand’s shiurim on the computer.” He said, “I've been subscribing to that for two years, so I already knew your son.” He's very sociable. And so and the (Mansis?) – he was an anesthesiologist at Group Health, and I used to see him there because my mother was Group Health, and my Aunt Rose spent a lot of time at Group Health. Anyway, they're wonderful neighbors. They're very social, too, and he retired as an anesthesiologist. But interesting enough, our Orthodox men were used to being served. They didn't like to cook. They had an addition built onto their house so he could have his own kitchen. So he could, Dr. (Mansi?) cooks. In our synagogue, I think Larry [Russak], a former President, is the only one that likes to cook. So recently, they had – well, when they have fundraisers there, and he likes to be in the kitchen cooking for different fundraisers that are held at our synagogue. Anyway, Seward Park is a wonderful area, and I drive very little, but I can drive to the post office, I can drive for kosher food to the QFC, I have family and friends here, and I have this socialization of walking in Seward Park. Anyway, some of the women from the fitness class, now when they see me, they know me, they wave to me.

RB: Isn't that marvelous? You have a real community here.

RT: Yes, it is a real community. And then, I was working with this committee for earthquake preparedness, so I know other non-Jewish people. A lot of wonderful neighbors in this area, Blacks as well as whites. Closer to Rainer Avenue, there are more Black residences, and property is a lot cheaper, so a lot of Caucasians – new

young people are buying property around close to Rainier Avenue because property values are still low there.

RB: Are there younger Jewish families moving in as well?

RT: Younger Jewish families. I think some of them live on Mercer Island. They bought property when it was cheap there. Now it's very expensive there. And younger Jewish families – some of them are living in Bellevue, Mercer Island, and the North End. There is now a religious and modern Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform all in the North End.

RB: It's really grown in Seattle, hasn't it?

RT: Yes, it's really growing.

RB: I feel like I would just love to ask you this before our time is up because I think it would be of interest to a lot of people, and that is, as an Orthodox Jewish woman, how has that affected your life and shaped your life?

RT: Well, I was born that way. [laughter] When I was in high school, I took senior foods. I had some of the football players in my class. [laughter] And when we would prepare something, they all loved for me to pass on my food to them. When I went to the University Retirement Association, even when I went to the university, and they had different meetings, I could always find salads or fruit. People got used to me. [laughter] They got used to me. And the University Retirement Association, when they have their annual meetings and Sand Point Country Club, you have a choice whether you want chicken or whether you want vegetarian or whether you want something else. And where my seat will be, they have a little V so that waitresses will know that I'm vegetarian.

RB: Wonderful. So kashrut hasn't been a problem.

RT: So Kashrus hasn't been a problem.

RB: What about the differences between men and women? Have women had equal status, do you find?

RT: I think even more so. We have Jewish women on the board of our synagogue. Hebrew Academy has had Jewish women as president. Ellen Russak Hellman, Karen Treiger, Rebecca Almo – there have always been Jewish women in top positions. In the high school, that has been true also. So I think that the thoughts now are for the synagogue, planning for the future. They are now advertising in the Jewish – our synagogue is advertising in the Jewish Press for a program director, not just for children's programs but for young couples, for seniors. We're advertising for a program director.

RB: So it really shows growth, doesn't it?

RT: Yes, right. And we always have somebody to coordinate what's going on so we don't conflict with one another. So it used to be Shelly Russak, and now it's Karen Treiger. Our president, who also is my doctor and has his family and has his own condo in Natanya – one of the candidates for program director lives in Israel. I don't know if he's American or what, but he's interested in the position, so he's going to interview him. Somebody else that they were interviewing [for] the position that was very good, but before they got around to the telephone interview, that person said I've already been hired. [laughter] It's interesting that so many people that have their families back East want to be back East. Even Rabbi Levy, who was the rabbi of Ezra Bessaroth, moved back East because he said it's time that his children and his grandchildren and their grandchildren could get to know one another.

RB: Be together. It's important. Now we have just a couple of minutes left, and I wondered if you had any thoughts or concluding –

RT: My thoughts is that it's good to be optimistic. It's good to have goals. It's good to share feelings. It's good to understand that others – not only understand others but have

respect for all the differences. The Jewish religion tells you every individual is important. So I think that my Jewishness has led to different things [such as] my being a social worker and being active in the total community. I still get requests to go out soliciting for different agencies, but I let them know that because of my arthritis or whatever, that it's more difficult for me. I would be glad to support whoever is doing it and support them in every way. So, I support institutions locally. Sam Stroum left a lot of funds, and he was a big giver, and we all are to the total community because we feel that's important. This is the community we live in. So, what was great about Family Medicine – because we taught the residents to look at individuals in their family, in their community. Anyway, everything that I've done – I'm really pleased. When I look back, I think I've had a very good life.

RB: Reva, thank you so much. You've enriched all of our lives. Thank you.

RT: [laughter]

[END OF CD 3]

RB: Hi, this is Roz Bornstein, and I am back with Reva Twersky at Reva's home in Seward Park in Seattle, Washington. The date is June 27, 2001, and we are continuing to gather Reva's oral history for the Weaving Women's Words project of the Jewish Women's Archive. The reason why we're taping today is so that Reva can describe a few of the artifacts that have a lot of significance to her and meaning for Seattle history for the Jewish community here. So Reva, why don't you start with this object here, and you can describe what it is.

RT: This is an heirloom, sterling silver, that has been handed down for generations from the Twersky family who originated in Tolna and also were in Krilovitz and in Chernobyl. It came down through Meyer's father, and Meyer was the lucky recipient when the children drew lots to see who would get it. My son David now owns it, and, of course, he

treasures it, and they use it every Chanukah. There are little inserts to put in, like little pipe cleaners, to light. You fill it with oil, and then it has the little inserts that you light the wick – it has wicks. There's a thing that fits in here that holds the wick straight up, and he uses it every Hanukah. Meyer used to use it every Hanukah. We have a lot of good memories of that, and it goes way back. And when they have the – when Chernobyl became famous because of the atomic energy problems that escaped the atmosphere, at any rate, we already had a book on the Jews of Chernobyl.

RB: So this Menorah, could you take a guess at how old it might be and when it was made approximately?

RT: Well, my father-in-law and my mother-in-law were able to bring back quite a few things. For Havdalah, he had a fish that was flexible and also in silver, and he had all kinds of trays and things that he and my mother-in-law [inaudible] brought back. The children divided it. The children were still living in Philadelphia. We were living in Seattle. But we were lucky to get this and a little tray, and David has some little bechers that also came from Tolna. This was the item that was most treasured, that everybody in the family wanted.

RB: It's wonderful. Can you describe the second artifact now that I am holding up? It's very beautiful.

RT: My mother was a very gifted sewer, knitter, crocheter, and we had a store on 2311 Jackson Street for over ten years. During the Depression, business was very, very slow. My mother would sit on a chair in the entrance to the store, and she would crochet. When a customer would come in, she would put it aside. Well, in the store, we carried J&P Coats crochet thread. That was pretty inexpensive; we already had that in stock. She used to make these – she saw the picture in the PI [Post-Intelligencer], the morning paper, of this bird carrying a branch of roses in its mouth. She thought, “Oh gee, I think that's one thing I would like to make.” She also had crocheted or knitted dresses. She

did all kinds of things. Sewed for my grandmother, for her sisters. But anyway, this tablecloth took her years to do, and she made something – she crocheted little circles and made tablecloths and bedspreads for other members of the family – for my sister-in-law, for my sister. But she said, “Reva, the tablecloth belongs to you.” So, I inherited this wonderful tablecloth, and I've only used it twice because I have to be very careful with it. At any rate, I have it packed very carefully in blue tissue paper and other tissue paper and a box that's sealed so that it can be preserved and not get yellow. Because it was made back in the Depression, in the ‘30s. This was made in the ’30s.

RB: Did your mother give you this tablecloth as a wedding gift or as a birthday?

RT: Yes, as a matter of fact, that's when we first used it, when I got married. Right. That was a wedding gift. Right.

RB: Go ahead.

RT: And then she used to make all kinds of things for me. Now card tables were very popular then, so she made me these different card table covers. She'd get a piece of material and get something to stamp the pattern, and then she would crochet around the edges, little flowers and she was –

RB: The [inaudible] –

RT: Whatever she did, she did beautifully. She did beautifully. At any rate, she also made me guest towels. She was so gifted. For Passover, she made her own lokshen – very fine noodles. [laughter] Then she used to make it for her sister, for her sister-in-law. Anyway, she would get a very big backache before Passover, making all these fine noodles.

RB: Could you describe that process just out of curiosity, how to make those noodles? Do you remember?

RT: How to make those noodles? You have to get from matzah cake flour – matzah cake flour and eggs and water. So first, she would roll out thin leaves, very thin leaves, and then she would dry them. When they're dry enough so that she could roll them, she would roll them up and then slice these – she'd put a lot of effort into it. Also, for Passover, nowadays, everybody that I know has extra flatware for Passover. We didn't. She would boil a new pot full of hot water, throw in a big stone so that it would sizzle, and that's how she'd kasher not only our flatware, and she would separate each piece – she would tie it and have knots. Each piece was separated; they weren't bunched together. So not only did she do her own, but her sister Rose sent over all of her flatware – fleishig and milchig. She had not only to tie these and kasher it, she had to dry each piece. My mother came from a hard-working family in a village of Shamke. She was always a hard worker. In her last years, when I would bring her here for weekends, I would be so busy, and she would be envious. She said because she could no longer do all these things. She said, “Oh, you're so fortunate; you're so busy.” It's good to be busy.

RB: She had a lot of stamina and passed it on to you.

RT: I guess so.

RB: This is a wonderful certificate. If you could describe it.

RT: Well, this is – when we moved from Philadelphia, we moved a year after – let's see. I was married in – David was born in – I was married in ’46 and was not very happy in Philadelphia. So my very wise mother-in-law said to my husband, “Reva will never be happy in Philadelphia. Take her to Seattle.” So we had had in Philadelphia – we were members of a Young Couples Group of Ha-Po'el Ha-Mizrachi. So, we started a Young Couples Group of Ha-Po'el Ha-Mizrachi in Seattle. We were all young couples, and every year, somebody is having a baby, so every time a baby was born, we planted a tree, and this was issued by the Ashinsky Forest Committee of the Jewish National Fund. And this particular one says, “To Mr. and Mrs. Meyer Twersky, in honor of the birth of

daughter Judy Ann. From Young Couples Group of Ha-Po'el Ha-Mizrachi." So anyway, we're still planting trees, but now my grandchildren are planting trees in my honor.

RB: And it's called the Rabbi –

RT: Rabbi Ashinsky Forest. The Keren Kayemeth has planted, over the years, a lot of trees. Unfortunately, some Arabs have set fire to some of their forests, but they're always replanting and also building playgrounds for children. So, the Jewish National Fund has remained a very important thing, a very important institution in our family, and my father was known as Mr. JNF.

RB: In Seattle.

RT: In Seattle. And he was on the National Board of Jewish National Fund. Right. He was honored repeatedly by Jewish National Fund.

RB: That's marvelous. Let's see. And then this here?

RT: Now Scoop Jackson was very much beloved by everyone that knew him, particularly the Jewish community. He was very helpful in initiating and passing a bill on behalf of Soviet Jewry that they should be able to come out of Russia because of all the persecution. Also, every time something came up about the State of Israel, he was backing all kinds of legislation to make loans to Israel. In the community, he spoke at all our banquets, as did Senator Magnuson also. At any rate, everybody said, "Oh, he is such a good person and such an honorable person. Wouldn't he make a wonderful president?" A committee here nominated him for President. "The Washington State Steering Committee, Jackson for President, cordially invites you to attend a reception honoring Senator and Mrs. Henry M. Jackson, candidate for President of the United States. Olympic Hotel, Seattle, Washington. A copy of our report is filed with the Federal Election Commission."

RB: What's the date on that?

RT: The date on this is 1975. 1975. Now his wife, Helen, is still active on behalf of the Jewish community, and I have gone to hear her speak a number of times. She's a wonderful, wonderful person. He died before his time, unfortunately. He caught a bad cold, and he didn't rest for a minute even though he had a bad cold. If he knew somebody needed his help, he was out there to help them.

RB: Do you know by any chance when his ties to the Jewish community first began? When did he start helping out? Do you know?

RT: Well, I know one particular person that he helped out a lot was Victor Alhadeff, who was having a struggle at that time. He had started a number of computer stores with all kinds of computer supplies [and] programs for computers. There was a time when he had invested so much money he was struggling. So, that was one person he helped. Now Victor Alhadeff became a very important leader in the Seattle total community, but especially in the Jewish community. Hebrew Academy had a fundraiser this past year. Not only is it expensive educating Jewish children – it was secular as well as a Judaic education. He was the chairperson of that event, and he was so forceful that he brought in close to a million dollars in checks and pledges, and he continues – he's very active on behalf of the Northwest Yeshiva High School – I think he was president of that at one time – and, of course, the Hebrew Academy where now he probably has grandchildren going there. He himself was educated in the Sephardic Community. He belonged to Ezra Bessaroth. He was very active in his congregation.

RB: So he had a relationship with Scoop Jackson.

RT: So he had a relationship with Scoop Jackson. He was a strong supporter of Scoop Jackson over the years.

RB: Did you go to this event?

RT: Yes. Meyer and I went. Whenever anything was for Scoop Jackson, honoring Scoop Jackson, we were there. We were happy when we got that invitation, and it's too bad that politics is such and he was too honorable a person to ever attain the political backing that you need all the money for. Anyway, he was a very wonderful person, and we have fond memories of Scoop Jackson. We visited him in Washington, D.C.

RB: You're kidding.

RT: Yes. And he arranged for us to get – we wrote him in advance when we were planning to be there. He got us tickets to visit the White House so that we didn't have to wait in a long line. People with tickets could go right to the front of the line, and we went with our children.

RB: So when you say we, is it your family, or did you go as a group with other Jewish people?

RT: No, Meyer Twersky and Reva Twersky and their three children.

RB: Now, did you know him well?

RT: Well, we were his supporters. He was very personable. At all the functions, we'd shake his hand. We visited him at his office when we'd go to Washington, DC. At any rate, that's how we got to know him. But all his constituents felt close to him, like they knew him as a member of the family. He was wonderful. Scoop Jackson – I think initially, he had once worked for a newspaper and got the name Scoop. But he was known as Senator Henry M. Jackson.

RB: Were his ties mostly within the Orthodox community or just widespread?

RT: Widespread.

RB: Through the Jewish community?

RT: I think every organization when they'd have a banquet, if he was at all able to be in Seattle at the time, he'd be there as a speaker and always drew a crowd. So, he helped in fundraising for the total Jewish community as well as the total community.

RB: All right. Well, Reva, thank you so much.

RT: Well, it's my pleasure.

[END OF INTERVIEW]