Shirley Bridge Transcript

PAMELA BROWN LAVITT: This is the oral history interview of Shirley Bridge. Today's date is June the 27th [2001] in the morning. We are at the home of the Bridges at 2125 First Avenue, Apt. 1905 in Seattle. My name is Pamela Brown Lavitt. I am an oral historian for the Jewish Women's Archive's Weaving Women's Words project in Seattle, and before we begin, I need to get your permission that you know that you are being recorded.

SHIRLEY BRIDGE: Oh yes, you have my permission.

PL: Well, I am so lucky. I wanted to start, I guess, at the beginning, and the beginning is where you decide the beginning is. Is it before you were born? Is it when you were born?

SB: A little before I was born because my family on my mother's side came here from San Francisco after the earthquake and fire. They decided they'd had enough, so they came this way. It's good enough they didn't land in Alaska because they stopped, and they bought a home on First Hill. In fact, they bought two homes on First Hill. My aunt became a nurse at Swedish Hospital, and they enjoyed themselves up there. The thing about it was I was born at Swedish Hospital, too. After they came here, my mother worked at department stores. She went to Broadway High School, where I went to school, and worked in the department stores. Then, she got married to my father, who had come from Chernobyl in Russia, and his name was Selesnick. He had a brother here, and they all met and got together, and then they got married here. It was fortuitous. My grandfather did very well here. He had a tailor shop where you said that my other condo was on Third and Lenora. He was well known for one thing. He advertised the fact that he would make the ladies' dresses shorter so that they would not drag on the ground and get dirty from the manure of the horses. [laughter]

PL: How did you learn about that story? Who told it to you?

SB: It was sort of well-known in the family, and my aunt said something about it. Then they embellished it a little bit. [laughter]

PL: So, was your picture of Seattle in those days –? What was it like when your parents first arrived?

SB: Well, of course, I don't remember too well, but I remember First Hill as being – it isn't much different than it was when we lived on 10th and Terrace, but Swedish Hospital certainly is. It was one building, and now it has the whole hill up there. But downtown, there were no apartments except those that were near the bus station. You know, the hill had just been sluiced down. There were a lot of little businesses along Third Avenue.

PL: So, when exactly were you born?

SB: 1922. May 24th at Swedish Hospital.

PL: Did anyone tell you any stories about your birth being unusual or did your mother tell you anything about that experience?

SB: No, she didn't say too much except I have a big birthmark on my back, and she was glad it wasn't on my face.

PL: [laughter] So, where exactly did you grow up? On First Hill?

SB: Well, we grew up on First Hill for a while. We came from Portland, my father and mother, sister and I, because of the Depression. His business went belly up, and we moved in with the grandparents. We were lucky to have that place. My father worked for Diamond – Joe Diamond's father – and my mother ran an elevator and worked, too.

PL: What do you mean that she ran an elevator?

SB: In the building where my father worked.

PL: Do you remember that?

SB: Yes.

PL: Can you describe what did she have to do and how many hours a day?

SB: Well, everybody worked eight hours a day, six days a week. You go up and down in the elevator. It was a small building called the Stirrat Building, and it was on – I guess it was Third and Union.

PL: So, you said that you lived at home with your grandparents?

SB: Yes, for a while until the folks could get enough money after we were about eight years old. Then, we moved to Capitol Hill and we lived in the Capitola [Apartments] until I got through college through there too.

PL: What do you remember about Capitol Hill at that time?

SB: Oh, it was a nice, nice area. Even though we were not in the best part of it, we enjoyed the school. Lowell School is a good school. Broadway High School had a good reputation. We enjoyed it. Everything was within walking distance. Lowell had a very good program of math and reading. I don't know what it is now, but it was easy to get to, and it was well-run.

PL: I'd like to talk about your educational experiences in Seattle, but I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the house you grew up in before you moved to Capitol Hill.

SB: Oh, that was my grandfather's house. He had two flat houses. They called them that. There were two living quarters in each house, and that made four. He rented two out in one building, and then he rented one out in the building he lived in. My aunt

always lived with him, and when we came, we all stayed together. There were five of us in one bedroom because my cousin, Bob (Borich?), also came to live with us.

PL: I'm sorry, continue.

SB: His parents were always ill, and they died when they were very young, so he was more like a brother to me.

PL: So, you moved to Capitol Hill when you were how old?

SB: About eight years old, eight or nine.

PL: So you had experienced pretty much¬ – the Depression was very much a part of your youth.

SB: Absolutely.

PL: Can you talk a little bit about what you remember about those times?

SB: Yes, I remember living all together. My aunt got fired from Swedish. There were no nurses that were there that were young. They kept the older ones, and she went to work at Pinch's, which was a chicken-plucking place.

PL: How did you spell that?

SB: P-I-N-C-H. And so we always had food, and we always had a little garden, and we had potatoes in the bins, so we always ate, and my grandfather made sauerkraut. So, yes, we did what everybody else did at that time: you survived, and you got together, and you tried to work, and that was about it. As time wore on and things got better, you took little vacations to places out in Alki, where these cottages will be built. [Editor's Note: Ms. Bridge is referring to cottages being built in her name by AIDS Housing of Washington at the time of the interview.] For fifteen dollars a month, everybody could come and live

there for about two weeks, and those who worked came out over a trestle. I don't know if you remember anything about it. Alki was a place where you could get away from the city, and they had a streetcar that was elevated like your elevated in New York only it was just the trestle. People would come in after work on the trestle and have a good time. The kids would stay there, and those people who didn't work would stay there. We had everybody out there including my cousin and my grandmother and grandfather. That was two weeks out of the year.

PL: Pretty special time?

SB: It was fun, yes. And actually, for kids, it's always fun when you can get into the [Puget] Sound, the sea, and run around. It was a break for people who worked, too. Most of these people came out because they didn't have vacations. Vacation came after work. It was a nice spot because everybody was in the same boat. Yeah. The people who lived out there – there was one Jewish family who had a grocery store, the Elkins, and they were right across the street from the beach, and they were very helpful. If you needed to charge something, they charged it for you so you could eat during the time you had your vacation. It was fun. I don't have any great memories of it. It was just a good place to go. There was a place there, and it was in the paper last week, the Stockade, where the Denny Family – you know where the monument is for Alki? Right behind that was a big old wooden hotel called the Stockade, and that's what I remember. That's what I tried to tell everybody about the cottages. People don't remember the Stockade very well. I do, and my sister does. The reason we remember it is because we used to walk up the steps, and I got bitten by a garter snake. [laughter] That was about it. But it was a nice place, and we used to try to go there to sit on the porch with the people who could afford it.

PL: So there was something about the people that were at the Stockade at that time that they were doing better than a lot of folks.

SB: Most of them, yes. Sure, you had to pay.

PL: So, what was the relationship to Denny? He owned the Stockade, or was he a patron?

SB: The Denny family were the ones who came and settled in Alki. They came over. They just live over here – Brewster Denny. Every time the Denny family¬¬ – I can't remember how many years it's been. It may have been a hundred years. But they were in the paper telling everybody how they were there and who the family is now that it left. And we've kept in touch with Brewster Denny, just on a casual basis. He's a very fine man, and he taught out at the university. He wasn't raised very wealthy either, but he had the name.

PL: People talk about how, during the Depression, people can be very resourceful, and I'm wondering how, if at all – and I'm sure they were – your family was resourceful.

SB: Yes, we were, and as I said, we got along with the food, and then we would – we were within walking distance of town, and it cost a nickel to take the trolley down the hill. We had trolleys then. So, we would walk, and we would walk down to get flour for bread, and then we would walk up again. We really didn't bother with any car fare because a nickel was a lot of money, even with kids. I think the kids were free, but I can't remember that either. But we did go down [inaudible].

PL: And that's quite a hill.

SB: Yes, it is. It was the Jefferson Street hill. I think there was a Madison trolley, too, but I don't remember which hill we went down.

PL: What do you remember about your relationships with your siblings?

SB: Beverly? Well, my sister was – in Portland – there was two years difference. Bev and I have always been quite close. I was a little bit like her mother. We lived in the back of the store in Portland, and she came out one day and grabbed onto the pipes in the window that were hot. she burned her hands, and luckily, there was a doctor upstairs who cut her loose and fixed her hands up. I had to look after her, and I was the one who would get punished if anything happened. this time, I wasn't punished because that was something that was unforeseen. I always felt as if I were a mentor of hers, you know, and she felt that way too.

PL: So, you didn't get into trouble for that?

SB: No, I didn't.

PL: So you moved to the Capitola and how long did you live there?

SB: From grade school until we got to college. Until I got married. You know, you didn't move away because you needed the money when you worked to help your family.

PL: What did you and your family do for fun besides go out for your two-week trips to Alki?

SB: Oh, well, that was a long time before. We finally got a car. Let's see. What was it? I think it was a '39 Pontiac. We had that for a little while and we used to take rides around, out to Alki, out to Golden Gardens. There were no big trips. We would go up to Volunteer Park, see the art museum, and walk around there. Bev and I would play tennis up at the park, and we would also study up there after school.

PL: What was the museum that was there at the time?

SB: It was the same one that's there now.

PL: The Asian Art Museum?

SB: It wasn't called the Asian Art Museum. It was called the Museum at Volunteer Park. That was the only museum they had, and we loved to go in there and look at the Asian art, especially the snuff bottles. [laughter]

PL: Why the snuff bottles?

SB: Well, they were just beautiful. Dr. Fuller, who kept most of the art in his basement – his mother and he – would bring out these snuff bottles and the beautiful art. It was a lot of jade, and it was well done. It wasn't what it is today. They didn't have a curator or anything. Dr. Fuller did everything. His mother ran things, too, pretty much, and they kept a lot of the wonderful art in their home.

PL: I think I had read somewhere that your mother, even during difficult times, kept a box outside the door for people to put change in. Was that a pushke box?

SB: Well, it wasn't outside the door. It was inside.

PL: Can you tell me or describe what you recall about that?

SB: Well, Mother always felt that no matter who had money and who didn't, why, we always had a little bit extra to give. I've got a pushke over here.

PL: I'd love to see that.

SB: Anyway, almost everybody did the same thing. I remember when she was ill, she wasn't working, and she had cancer. Why, she would still give to – well, it was Jewish Appeal at that time. It would be Federation or Women's Division now. So, you are brought up that way. That's how you learn to give, and that's how you learned to raise money.

PL: Can you tell me a little bit about your relationship with your parents?

SB: Yes. Mother and I were close. Bev and Mother were even closer. Father and I got along very well. We'd take walks when I was eleven or twelve. Father worked long hours, and so did mother, so there wasn't a lot of time for fun. But my mother always had meals on the table, and we had a kitchen without an oven, so I don't know how she did it. That was the Capitola.

PL: Is that right?

SB: Yes. These were times when people didn't bother to fix things up. If you didn't have it, that was just tough. You had to get it yourself. You didn't have money, well, you didn't have it. I'm sure that many of the people you've interviewed have gone through that. There weren't too many very well-to-do people in town. The names you have are not the names that had money.

PL: So, in terms of not having an oven, what do you remember then about her cooking?

SB: Oh, she was a good cook, and she didn't mind cooking. We never learned to cook because the kitchen was too small. Yes, she worked all the time, too, so we cleaned the house, and she did the cooking, and that was the way it was. Father was a tailor, so we always had good clothes. He was very good, and he would make all of our suits and all of those coats. I still have a couple of our coats. I have a suit too. He would make sure that we looked great. I remember, even in college, he made my evening dresses and my long coats.

PL: Did you have input as to how they looked?

SB: Oh, yes. We used to make poor father do everything again. [laughter]

PL: What would you say your style was back then?

SB: Same as it is now. I just like tailored clothes. I don't shop for clothes. I have some woman who tells me what she's got, and then I say, "Well, that's okay. Bring it over." If I like it, I take it. I'm not a shopper. In fact, I hate to shop. I drive Herb nuts; he likes to shop.

PL: You said your mother worked in some department stores.

SB: Yes.

PL: Which department stores?

SB: It was called MacDougall's, and she sold gloves. She had nice hands. I have my father's hands. [laughter]

PL: Do you remember visiting her at the shop?

SB: No. I don't really remember that. It was probably before my time because she was quite young when she got out of school and started to work. I remember looking in the phone book, and her name was in the phone book as an extra person, as an adult.

PL: What does that mean?

SB: That means that she was pulling her weight in her family, apparently.

PL: Isn't that something that she talked to you about? That she was proud of?

SB: Well, she was proud of working, yes, and she told me – she was the one who pushed us into pharmacy. The reason being is that she always said to me that you should be able to support yourself and your kids. Anyway, when we lived in Portland, there was a drugstore down below us and doctors above, and we went into the drugstore, and she thought everybody looked great in those white uniforms. The owner, I remember, was a Mr. Peterson, who later became the mayor of Portland. He didn't make

his money in pharmacy. Nobody did. [laughter] So, she pushed it. She said, “You can make a nice living, and you’ll get a good education.”

PL: Was this something that she herself wanted to pursue?

SB: I don’t think so exactly. I think she thought it would give us a little bit of credibility.

PL: Let me just understand when it was that you lived in Portland.

SB: We lived in Portland for about six years, from the time my sister was around two until I was around eight. Let’s see, a little less – about five years.

PL: And why did you move down to Portland?

SB: Well, we had friends down there who had tailor shops, and they said business was quite good then. Have you heard of Fred Meyer’s Markets? That was a time that Fred Meyer had a little food stand up on Sandy Boulevard by a theater called the Hollywood Theater, and he and my father became friends, and we used to get some produce from him. And Fred Meyer really bought up part of Portland and did very well. But this was the early times, too.

PL: And for the context of this interview, what became of Fred Meyer?

SB: What became of Fred Meyer? Well, Fred Meyer started out with the food stand, and then he became – I think he bought drugstores, and he bought the Hollywood Theater, and then he bought drugstores. He kept buying up little bits of land. Then, he developed them in Portland. He was well-known there. I think he even had a foundation, I can’t remember. And then, of course, he spread out into the other areas, into Washington, and I don’t know where else he was. But before he died, he had quite a little network.

PL: Was Fred Meyer Jewish? Non-Jewish?

SB: He was non-Jewish. We had a lot of non-Jewish friends.

PL: Well, I want to ask you a little bit about growing up in Seattle in terms of your Jewish and non-Jewish networks and friends. When you lived in First Hill, what do you remember about your neighbors in that neighborhood, if you remember much at all?

SB: Well, it was a Japanese neighborhood at that time. My grandfather had a tenant who was Japanese, and during the war, he took over some of their property and held it for them. This was the thing because it was taken over by so many people. They were just booted out. I still have people from that neighborhood, some who will speak to me, some who will not, because they felt we all should have done more. And we should have. But, yeah, I remember. But we did what we could.

PL: What were the relationships between you and your Japanese neighbors? What were the social relationships and interactions?

SB: Well, they went to a Japanese school, and the Jewish kids went to Hebrew school. I didn't happen to go because I went to Temple. But it was friendly. There was a little Japanese grocery store down the block and we all got along fine. But it was separate, although I did have Japanese girlfriends. Then there were a couple of twins who were very cute, and we would wave to them as they went to Japanese school. I think there was one Jewish family on the hill up there, but that was all. I don't remember any more of them.

PL: So, up until what age did you live on First Hill?

SB: You mean with our grandfather?

PL: Yes.

SB: Up until I was about nine or ten. Nine, I guess, and we went to Lowell School.

PL: What do you remember about your home in terms of being Jewish? How did your home reflect or not reflect that, or was it something that you saved for going to temple?

SB: I think it was something we saved for going to temple. My grandfather was Orthodox, and he prayed every morning, and we lit the candles, but we were not terribly religious. He did have kosher food in the house. If you've ever had meat koshered by your family, he used to stick it on the drain board and salt it to death. So, we didn't have much meat. But that was common. We didn't have a lot of means, but we were not starving, and if we hadn't moved in with him, we might have been.

PL: Do you remember anything about the first way in which your home felt Jewish besides the Sabbath candles or something about the way that your grandmother celebrated holidays or cooked food?

SB: She died very early of cancer. So, my mother did the cooking, my aunt did the cooking, and it was not particularly Jewish, but it was kosher. My grandfather was the one who carried on the idea. My father and mother were not particularly religious at all, but they did see the need to have their children brought up in a religion, and so we went to Temple.

PL: Can you talk a little bit about what that meant? You're talking about Temple de Hirsch. I think it's amazing that everyone here calls it "Temple." Do you know when that started?

SB: Well, I don't think there was any other Reform movement at that time, so it was just "Temple de Hirsch." In Portland, there was just one temple, too, Temple Beth Israel, and I went to that before we left Portland. That was a well-to-do temple. It was a beautiful one. A lot of wealthy people, people who owned Meyer and Frank and Lippman and Wolf and some of the big department stores in Portland, and a lot of land there belonged – and it was the only one outside of Orthodoxy I think that they had. We enjoyed it. I

enjoyed going there. The Sunday school was separate from the temple at that time. I remember the Wendels and the Franks. Everybody was sort of equal at that time. But this was just before we left, just before the Depression hit.

PL: And when you say that everyone was equal at that time, can you describe how –? Shall I pause for a moment, Shirley?

SB: No, that's okay.

PL: Can you describe what that meant and how the Depression changed that?

SB: Well, the Depression changed it because we moved, but people were friendly. I'd had some girlfriends. I remember one woman called Anita Hearn, who just recently passed away in Portland, and James Wendel, who was a cute little guy in short pants. We got along famously. But they lived in a different neighborhood and a different area, so actually, the socializing was mostly through temple.

PL: I want to get back to your Jewish education because I understand you went through confirmation, so that was a pretty significant part of your experience. Can you describe then when you moved to the Capitola, Capitol Hill was like at that time?

SB: The newer part of Capitol Hill was the same as it is now. It didn't change. I think some little houses across the street from you were built at that time. But no, everything else was the same.

PL: Who was living there? Who were your neighbors there?

SB: Oh gosh, I don't even remember. Some of my sister's friends lived there and they were kids who went to Broadway High School mostly. But I wasn't too close to them. I was close to people in Temple, the Hardmans, and all. A few of us girls got together in Temple –

PL: You mentioned that – I'm sorry, go ahead.

SB: No, that's fine.

PL: You mentioned that there was only maybe one other Jewish family that lived on First Hill. So, was there a difference in terms of Capitol Hill? Were there more Jewish families in the neighborhood?

SB: Oh yes, there were Jewish families who went to Temple and Jewish families who went to Broadway. Yes, we got together, and I also had non-Jewish friends; there were four of us who went together. But yes, the atmosphere was a lot different than First Hill.

PL: What were the expectations around having Jewish or non-Jewish friends? Did your parents or grandparents transmit to you any desire for you to remain in a Jewish circle or not?

SB: No. My grandparents were very liberal, too, in that respect. My parents had Jewish friends, they belonged to something called the Workmen's Circle. [laughter] Pretty radical. I had Jewish friends also, but I also had non-Jewish friends and so it worked out.

PL: Can we talk about the Workmen's Circle a little bit?

SB: Well, I can't remember too much about it except that my uncle and aunt were very involved with it, and they finally left and went to New York for different reasons. There used to be a place called Alts [Farm] they would go to.

PL: What was it called?

SB: Alts.

PL: Alts meaning in Yiddish, the word alts?

SB: No, it was the name of a place where very liberal Jews went to gather together. It was down on the waterfront someplace over in – I can't exactly remember, but it was sort of a commune. [laughter]

PL: Really? So, where was it exactly on the water? Was it right down here where you live now?

SB: No, no, it probably was farther South. People would know. I don't remember. I was a little kid and I was not interested in it particularly. But then, in Seattle, these same people who later left because they were invited to leave, I think, came into the Workmen's Circle, which was behind temple, not too far away. Maybe down the hill on 16th or so. It was just mostly a social club. And middle-income people, not religious, not at all. They would go there to play cards and to dance and to just talk. I think maybe do politics, but I wasn't in on that at that age.

PL: Do you remember whether or not Yiddish was a language that was spoken in your presence?

SB: Well, my mother and grandfather and my aunts spoke Yiddish to him, but no. In fact, my father and my mother would not have us speak any other language but English. Father spoke Russian but would not teach me. He spoke English with no accent because he had met a schoolteacher in Massachusetts where he worked. He was a good-looking guy. She had taught him how to read English and how to speak English. So, he spoke with almost no accent. My other uncle spoke with a terrible accent. Until you heard him, he looked like a little Norwegian sailor. They all came over here, and they worked in the clothing business. But he enjoyed studying. He had very little formal education, but he would do a lot of cutting, so he knew how to measure and he knew how to figure things out.

PL: So, you said you went to Broadway school.

SB: Broadway High School.

PL: So, can you tell me a little bit about your experiences? Were there any particular formative experiences that stand out to you?

SB: I was a student who belonged to a few clubs, like the Latin club. What other club? Well, there were a couple of women's clubs there. But I wasn't active in the politics of the school. It was a fairly liberal school. The Jewish girls, all but me really – I went with them too, but most of the time, they sort of stuck together. Like Hazel Clare Loewy and Margaret Alexander and the Block girls. They felt more comfortable. I was comfortable in both places. I enjoyed going out with these women that I knew there. One of the women's brothers was a principal at one of the high schools in town, and the other woman's mother was a woman who worked in the unions, and the other one's parents were Baptist ministers. And I enjoyed them. In fact, the woman, who was the daughter of a Baptist minister, lived next door to Herb's grandmother on 11th Avenue East, 11th and Republican. So, I was comfortable in both places, but I really was quite close to these women.

PL: Are you saying that there was somewhat of a divide within the high school –

SB: Yes.

PL: – that certain Jewish girls –

SB: If you wanted to be, yes. I'm sure that there was a divide among people who – there weren't too many who belonged to the Sephardic community there, but I am sure that there was some division there, too. I don't remember where people went to school. But yes, I'm sure that there was. There were a lot of Japanese kids there who stuck together. I was friendly with some of them. But I was always – I was never just wedded to the Jewish community.

PL: Where do you think that your decision not to be completely wedded to the Jewish community came from? Was that something that your parents encouraged? Were there values that they had about diversity and diversifying your interests and companions?

SB: Well, they thought it was a good idea to diversify because that's what the world was like outside, and we didn't have a lot of money. Some of these people who stuck together, stuck together for social reasons and some stuck together because of comfort reasons. I felt comfortable with the other groups.

PL: Would you say that you had, no matter the company, a particular experience being a Jewish female student?

SB: I was always aware, and I'm still aware when I go out with my non-Jewish friends, that they know I'm Jewish. As liberal as they are, I'm still their Jewish friend, and I never forget that. I think if you know who you are, you can go with anybody and enjoy them. That's the way I feel. That's the way my mother felt, too. And my father also. My father opened a manufacturing place and sold clothes to Frederick's and Best, which is now Nordstrom. So he did very well after a while. And his brother also did that. Then we had some relatives in California, the Selesnicks, and some of our relatives didn't have many means and they couldn't start a business, so they went to David O. Selesnick's mother, Florence, who was very nice to them and got them jobs in the studios. My Uncle Joe became a fitter over there and my Aunt Gussie, whose parents had stores in town, became a secretary to some of the stars. So, you finagle as much as you can and use your relatives. She happened to be very nice. Nicer than the boys, I think.

PL: So, in terms of dating in Broadway High School, did you feel the same way around dating that Jewish boys and non-Jewish boys were fair game?

SB: Yes, in the university, too, I dated non-Jewish boys. I didn't date a lot. I really was more of a – I worked two jobs at the university, and I wasn't terribly popular. I went out

with some Jewish boys, and I went out with some gentile boys. I felt equally comfortable or uncomfortable with both of them. [laughter]

PL: What would feel comfortable about dating Jewish boys or uncomfortable, and what might feel comfortable or uncomfortable about dating non-Jewish boys?

SB: It was the same to me. They were boys. You watched out for them. [laughter]

PL: Well, where did you go on your dates?

SB: Let's see, usually it was after work or after school. Oh, there'd be some dances, sorority dances. I did join a sorority for a year. Then it interfered with my lab work, so I left. Oh, you'd go to shows, or you'd just go for rides. There was one guy who was not Jewish that I went with quite regularly, and we'd go out to the beaches with his family and friends.

PL: How did your parents feel about the question of dating around Jewish versus non-Jewish?

SB: They didn't say too much about it. They knew that I would marry somebody who was Jewish or who would become Jewish. They never said anything, as we didn't either, about race or color. They were very good about that.

PL: Were your parents forthcoming to you about other parts of life that had to do with your experiences in the world or your opening your eyes to the world?

SB: Well, yes, I think so. First of all, they were very forthcoming about sex and all. So there was no problem there. And, of course, they thought that since I was a pharmacist, I knew, and I did. But they were always very forthcoming, and they trusted us. We discussed politics, especially Russian politics. We didn't discuss religion much at all. It was just sort of thought of as – I was a good student. It was just thought of as something

that you did. You joined. My friends went to church on Sunday, and some of them and I went to Temple on Saturday. My mother was very devoted to that. She would see that we would get there. I went with one of my friends, years later, in high school, to a group called Christian Endeavor. This was my Baptist friend whose father was a Southern Baptist minister on Capitol Hill – 15th Avenue, where the fire station is. They were talking about original sin and I said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "How can a child be born with sin?" She had no answer for that. Afterward, she left home and got married very early, and I can see why. Her father was unbelievably strict. They couldn't dance. They could skate, but they couldn't dance, and they couldn't go to games, and they couldn't do anything. So, it becomes very tough.

PL: How did that contrast with your experiences at Temple – going to Sunday school there, going to being educated socially there?

SB: Well, I've always had this Jewish idea. Sunday school was good for me, and it was good for everybody. In fact, Herb finally taught at Sunday school. He had gone to Talmud Torah. You learned about the Bible. You learned Bible stories. It was interesting. It kept your interest up. Rabbi Koch was a very liberal man in some ways, but he was almost Christian in some of his beliefs. When Rabbi Levine came around, why, it was a little more religious. But Rabbi Koch, he was funny. There were a lot of people in Temple who were very non-religious as far as Christmas trees went. So every once in a while, we would hear that he had gone to somebody's house and there was a Christmas tree. And what did they do? They upended it and stuck it in the basement. [laughter] He was liberal but only to a certain point.

PL: When you say that he was kind of funny, what do you remember about his presence because he was very influential in bringing lots of different children into the Sunday school and being educated?

SB: Which Rabbi are you talking about?

PL: Rabbi Koch.

SB: Rabbi Koch. Yes, well, Rabbi Koch's kids – one of his sons, lived across the street from us in Montlake. He went out into the non-Jewish community, and I think he became fairly well-known there. So, the temple became a place where people were accepted into the non-Jewish community, too. He married a very well-to-do woman called Dinkelspiel. I think they were related to the Neubergers and the Ecksteins and the people in town who had money. But yes, since he was more liberal, you know you never heard about the Orthodox community in with the non-Jewish community. I think he probably was the closest to it. Some people did not think he was religious enough. He was fine for me.

PL: What do you remember about your Sunday school and educational experiences leading up to your confirmation? What do you remember learning and the atmosphere in which you learned?

SB: Well, I thought it was quite good. We had midweek Hebrew. It happens that Florence Flaks, who was a relative, taught me midweek Hebrew. She was a university graduate which was unusual in those days because she would be about – she is about ninety now. I enjoyed every bit of it. I enjoyed the Hebrew. I enjoyed learning to read. We did never write. I enjoyed learning about the confirmation. I didn't go to graduate school, though, and I didn't have a bat mitzvah, but I probably would have if it had been the thing to do at that time. I thought I learned a lot about Judaism. I learned a lot about other religions because we had a course in contemporary religions, and that was Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Christianity, and that's what I liked about temple. We weren't just so intertwined with the Hebrew people or with the Jewish people at all. Herb went to Talmud Torah, and he said he didn't know anything about the Bible. They would talk about – you would read the Torah, the Talmud, and he would repeat by rote, but you didn't know what you were doing.

PL: So, you feel that that Jewish education has been very useful to you?

SB: Yes, I think so. It was a good way to meet other Jewish people who thought like I did. There were many who did not like being Jewish, and there were two groups of people in the Temple: those who were Zionists and those who were not. Some belonged to the American Council for Judaism. Do you know that one?

PL: Can you tell us what that was?

SB: Well, that was a group of people who got together. Then there was the American Jewish Committee. You know what that is. The American Council for Judaism – they were the sort of people who really didn't want to be Jewish, I think, and they were not supportive of Israel, etcetera. But eventually, when things came to a head, and Israel became a state and all, a lot of them went over to the American Jewish Committee.

PL: Because the American Jewish Committee was –?

SB: The next liberal group.

PL: And they were supportive of Zionism?

SB: Yes, I don't think these people from the American Council for Judaism were, but what else were they going to join to be liberal?

PL: How did those arguments or conflicts – or perhaps they weren't even that egregious – manifest themselves in your education within temple, within lectures?

SB: Well, it got everybody really upset because it was sort of a division of the Jewish community. The very wealthy became the American Council for Judaism people. Many of them, some of the Schoenfelds, joined the tennis club and joined clubs that they couldn't have gotten into. I think that was the main problem. They wanted to be social in the same way non-Jews were social, and that's too bad.

PL: How was it that Israel then –? In terms of the public persona of Jews in the larger community in terms of acceptance in these clubs that you're talking about, why did it matter that you were supportive of Israel or not supportive of Israel?

SB: No, it didn't really make any difference. Just that the people who were wanted not to be Jewish. It was very difficult to get into any clubs. They took people into the Washington Athletic Club during the Depression. After the Depression, they just threw you out. They didn't want you anymore. Or if they wanted you and kept you, your family couldn't join.

PL: What is the Washington Athletic Club?

SB: It's a club in town that Herb was President of. It's an athletic club and a social club, but mostly athletics. It's right in the middle of town. Herb belongs there. I have a card, too, because when I started to go there, I disliked it because they didn't give women equal rights. So, I joined the Women's University Club, which wasn't easy either, but it was the only club where women could join on their own. But afterward, the Washington Athletic Club came into the twentieth century, and they took women on an equal basis, and so now I go there because it is convenient, and you can get special rooms, and it's a nice atmosphere.

PL: Can you give us a sense of the chronology of when the WAC, the Washington Athletic Club, and the Women's University Club were favorable to Jewish members versus not favorable to Jewish members?

SB: Oh, I don't know. I know that the WAC took people in during the Depression because that's what they wanted to do. They needed money. They needed members. There were some people who headed that club who were very anti-Semitic. I won't name names. Then we had a Women's University Club. There were always some Jews in there – the Lindenbergers and people with money, but not very many. Then the

people who owned, let's think—the people who owned one of the jewelry stores downtown, I will not mention their name, she belonged. I had a friend who was a pharmacist who belonged. They wanted me to belong, so I did apply. I didn't realize that these people had to fight to get me in. This was 1963. At that time, they didn't have very many Jewish members except those that had been brought in in the '20s and maybe a few a little later. But they fought, I guess, behind the scenes. I didn't know about it, and I got in. After that, I noted that it became a little easier. You would bring people in. There have been some Jewish members, [but] not a lot brought in. But there's nothing anymore that keeps Jews out or Blacks or Asians. And there was never a Black or an Asian in that group until just lately, until after the '60s.

PL: Was that due to –? Is it Title VII?

SB: Could have been, but I don't know. I think it was – my thought was that it was just necessary to have members and that people were not joining because their friends were being left out.

PL: So if in a sense you became one of the early –? Were you the first or one of the early ambassadors of Jewish culture into these organizations?

SB: I don't know whether I was or not but I know that there weren't very many.

PL: You had mentioned in a previous interview in the Seattle Times in 1987 when you were talking, I believe it was about the WAC and your husband's involvement in it. You said, "I don't see women in the city as having a lot of power," you told the reporter. You specifically were talking about how women have yet to take on positions of –

SB: Importance?

PL: – importance in those organizations. [Telephone rings.] I'll pause. [RECORDING PAUSED] So continuing that, I was asking, when you said, "I don't see women in the city

as having a lot of power. I think it's the way that women have been raised and men have been raised to consider women." I think you were talking about there being – you were sort of jousting for the reasons. But I'm wondering, in these particular organizations, how did that play out in terms of women, and Jewish women in particular, rising to positions of authority and taking on roles?

SB: Well, about one of the first places where women got taken in as equal members was Rotary. I don't know how many Jewish women, but women got taken in there. That was important.

PL: Can you describe a little bit about the Rotary Club and how it functions in Seattle? I know that's a loaded question.

SB: Well, it's a big club in Seattle. There are other little Rotaries. My cousin, Debbie Seamen, is going to be president of one of the Rotaries, and a friend of mine, Kathleen O'Connor, will be president of another one. The big Rotary has had women presidents lately. Gosh, it must have about eight hundred members. I don't remember it exactly. But when my son Jon said he wouldn't join until women were taken in as full members – you'd have to ask Herb when that was because I don't belong to Rotary. Or you can ask Jon, but he's in, so apparently, they were taken in. I can show you the Rotary book, and you can get an idea. There are quite a few women now, and they're taken in as full members. I think it was when women started moving upward in their positions and started owning businesses and becoming physicians and so forth. It took you young women to break things open, there's no doubt about that.

PL: So, in terms of your involvement then with the Women's University Club, this was being a graduate of, is it related to the University of Washington?

SB: No, it's a private club. I'll show it to you if you like.

PL: Is it a local club?

SB: Yes.

PL: And do you know how old it is?

SB: Not until I look it up. If you want to cut it off here, I'll look it up.

PL: We can do that after, that's fine. Let me go back then to talk a little bit about your experiences at Temple. Were the Sunday schools and the education separate from actually going there for Shabbat, and were they similar? Were the groups of people similar, and were they different?

SB: They were different. People who came on Friday nights and Saturday mornings were family people. They weren't the kids. They dragged you along. There were a lot of people who went every Saturday, every Friday night.

PL: When did you go?

SB: We went Saturday mornings.

PL: Is that when the Torah was read from or was it read from on a Friday night?

SB: Usually, it was read from on a Friday night, usually. But the prayer book was very liberal, so we didn't have a lot of worry about it. What it was was really just keeping your hand in Judaism and listening to the rabbi speak and being greeted by his wife. She was very charming – some of the old school of Seattle. Actually, the Sunday school was separate, and it had a lot of people whose parents were not religious in the sense that they went every week. In fact, if you joined temple, you had to have a little money, and I remember when we first came there, we were taken in. I remember going to the office and giving them a dollar because it was very difficult sometimes to get money to go. But they accepted whatever you had. I remember there were two sisters who worked in the office, the Phillips girls, and they were very kind. I think one married a rabbi. I can't

remember. That was about it. You know, you went to Sunday school. There was no Saturday school. Then you went to Sunday school, then you went home, and then in the middle of the week, when you were studying for confirmation, you went to Hebrew school, and then you walked home. People lived close by temple. Nobody lived on Mercer Island or in Bellevue. [laughter]

PL: Were there any Sephardic students that were studying towards Confirmation?

SB: Yes, Bernice Rind. Bernice Mossafer, yes. She was about the only one I remember. There must have been others, though. But she was in my sister's class, I think.

PL: What do you remember about the relationships between Ashkenazim and Sephardim in Seattle, either by immediate knowledge or by things that you had been told?

SB: Well, by immediate knowledge, there was a big separation, and I don't know whether people were being kind of snobby or not, but it was like "intermarriage." People did stay within their own communities, and I really don't know why. I think part of it was out of preference. You felt more comfortable, and part of it was out of being snobby, that was all.

PL: Where do you think that snobbishness came from?

SB: Well, probably part of it was the language barrier, and part of it was the idea of education. The Sephardic community, and not all but a good many, did not believe in education for women, and neither did the Orthodox. My mother—there were no boys in the family—I have her siddur, her book, her Hebrew book, and from the third grade on she studied.

PL: So I have two questions. The first one is then, were girls and boys either –? If your parents had had boys, would they have been educated differently? Would they have gone to Orthodox versus Reform?

SB: Oh no, absolutely not.

PL: And how is it that boys and girls were or were not tracked differently within Temple's Sunday school in and of itself? Were boys moving towards bar mitzvah and girls towards confirmation, or everyone towards confirmation?

SB: Everyone moved toward confirmation. Some of the boys were not bar mitzvah either. But none of the girls that I know were bat mitzvah. And that was probably tradition, I don't know. I never thought about that. There were so few bar mitzvahs, too. There were not a lot.

PL: Was there any conversation around the bar mitzvah, and did you attend any?

SB: Oh sure, we attended them. But there was nothing much said. It was kind of a quiet – confirmation was what everybody really looked forward to.

PL: Why?

SB: I don't know. I think it was a social thing.

PL: Was it a big party?

SB: Oh yes, there was a big dance afterward and a big party. And some of the people went on to graduate school. I went on to some graduate school. That's how I learned about the different religions, but I didn't do a lot.

PL: When you say that they went onto "graduate school," what do you mean?

SB: Well, there were two more years of school, and then you graduated. There was a graduation as well as a confirmation from Temple. And some of the people graduated, and some didn't. I didn't bother after I went that first year and got what I wanted out of it. And then you know you begin to have to study a little harder in high school for college too. So I don't really know why I didn't go on, but maybe there was no incentive to study some more. Maybe the subjects were not what I wanted.

PL: Can you describe, if you remember, the celebration and the ritual around confirmation? What did you dress, how did you prepare, did you go out to dinner, did you have a dance, who played, what kind of music? The whole hullabaloo.

SB: Well, I don't remember that, but I do remember there was a dance, and I do remember you got into a white dress, and they took pictures, and you walked down the aisle, and there was a – there were big classes at that time, and there was this big dance at night. I don't remember whether or – then you went out afterward. So, it was like graduation from high school, I guess. Similar to it.

PL: In the non-Jewish community here in Seattle, did they have anything that paralleled that, such as deb [debutante] balls or other things where thirteen to sixteen-year-old girls got in white dresses?

SB: No, there were no deb balls that I know of. There could have been, but I think they would be mostly through the clubs that parents belonged to or through the churches that people belonged to.

PL: So, did you invite non-Jewish friends to come to your confirmation?

SB: You know, I don't even remember that. Well, sure, I invited my friends, but I don't remember my folks inviting anybody. And then afterward, after confirmation, after the little service, you went downstairs, and you had the cookies and the cake, just like they do now. Nothing much has changed. But I don't think they have the big dances

anymore.

PL: Were there any other significant Jewish learning experiences that you had at this time outside of the school setting?

SB: No, I don't believe so. I was not terribly motivated to go after any religion after I had seen so many. No, I think not.

PL: In terms of your high schooling as well, were there particular, or within your education in Sunday school, did you have women teachers in Sunday school?

SB: Oh yes, we had one teacher called Mrs. Segal. I remember her very well; she was really a ninth-grade schoolteacher at a high school. We had a Miss Waxman who taught at a grade school, in fact, and a Miss Pearl. Most of the teachers there were teachers in schools. I don't know how they got them, but they taught school all week long, and then they came and taught Sunday school. We had this one teacher who taught Hebrew who was a university student. There were men too. But yes, there were a lot of women teachers. And a lot of men teachers. The men teachers, too, were teachers who taught in public schools.

PL: So, out of this plethora of teachers who moved in between your public-school education and your Jewish school education, were any of them particular role models to you? Or impacted you in some way?

SB: Well, the Hebrew teacher did. I admired her for going and taking courses. She was a music major, but she took courses in Hebrew. She wanted to teach, and she wanted to be something in the Jewish community. She later became a relative of my relative. As far as the other teachers, Miss Waxman was a good role model. She taught, I think, at Bailey Gatzert [Elementary School], and she was a good role model and she was someone you could talk to, I remember that, and tell any problems you had. She had a couple of nieces in the Sunday school, too. Nice people. Not terribly religious. I don't

remember seeing them at Temple, any of the teachers, every Saturday or every Friday night.

PL: Were you encouraged at all to do any kind of community service through Temple or your high school educational experiences in the community? There was an influx of immigrants into the community. Things of that nature. What do you remember, if at all, about that?

SB: Well, I know that I got into extra activities through some of my high school activities. Through my Sunday school? I don't remember that too well. I did teach Sunday school for a while.

PL: At what age? How old were you?

SB: Oh, that was just before college, I guess, freshman in college, and I only taught kindergarten. I'm not great with kids. Yes, I was encouraged by some of the things that I saw, and I did get into some Jewish activities, but I got into other activities too.

PL: Such as?

SB: Well, let's see. I would do some fundraising, and I would do some work for the Latin clubs, and I would do some work for people in the apartment.

PL: What do you mean, "people in the apartment?"

SB: Well, I would babysit for them and see what I could do there. People were so busy making a living that it was very difficult to go out and try to raise money or try to have a good time or even try to do something for other people. I did what I could, and I did work with the non-Jewish community through one of the Baptist women. I think I did go to many of her meetings and tell them how Jews felt. I couldn't understand it.

PL: When you said that you went to many of her meetings, was she involved in –? Are you talking about going to meetings at the Baptist church?

SB: Well, it was after school meetings, and I don't know, it wasn't always the Baptist church. But it was called Christian Endeavor, and I wanted to find out what Christian Endeavor was. I wanted to see if I could say something, which I did.

PL: [laughter] What did you say, Shirley?

SB: I said, "Jews don't understand what you're talking about." Of course, they were too polite to say anything. I said, "But there was no such thing in our religion. We forgive people when they're born. They do not come in with original sin, and we do not bother them at all. How can little kids be sinful?" I said, "We don't believe in that." They asked about the hereafter, and I said, "Well, we aren't sure there's a hereafter. If there is, why, that's fine too. Nobody's come back to tell us that. But we believe that the good deeds live after us and that they should be doing good deeds." How you go when you're young, you don't know what to say. They didn't understand that too.

PL: Did you feel this was a "first contact"?

SB: I think so, yes. I was just amazed by the whole thing.

PL: What do you remember about the scene, and did you go back on numerous occasions to do this?

SB: Yes, I went back several times, and I also went to the Baptist church to see what in the heck started that. Since they lived next door to Herb's grandmother, I got a chance to talk to the children, all of whom left home. It was very rigid.

PL: What do you remember about entering that Baptist church for the first time?

SB: [laughter] Well, I noticed that there was, of course, the big cross on the podium and that people were very, very solemn. Very solemn. Then, he started in, and I can understand why they were very solemn. But he was a very solemn man. Some of them – had another friend, Charlotte, whose mother was very much of a follower of his, and she and I would talk a lot about it. She finally left the church, too. Young people were not being cultivated. I don't know what ever happened to the rest of the people in the family, but I'm sure I could look them up. Her name was Lorimer.

PL: Do you feel that that experience somehow solidified your resolve about Judaism in any way?

SB: Oh sure, it made me think that I could not have ever been a member of the Christian faith. Because, apparently, people believe that. That was one of the tenets I believe of all of that, of Catholicism too, I think. Of course, there was also Zoroastrianism and Ba'hai and all of those others that did not have those narrow ideas, but yes, I was satisfied with Judaism.

PL: I want to talk a little bit about your decision to go to the University of Washington. Did you know all along? You had said that your mother had some very strong influence over your decisions. Could you describe your decisions on attending college?

SB: Oh well, we always knew that we were going to attend college. That was a foregone conclusion. Mother and father both valued education very strongly and thought that women should have as much education as the men. So, we were pushed in that direction. I enjoyed chemistry in high school. In fact, I had a wonderful chemistry teacher. He was the only man who knew what he was doing. He was a doctor of zoology who happened to have an ill wife and so he taught chemistry. For my first year in college, I didn't have to study at all. He taught me as much chemistry as I learned my first whole year of general chemistry. He was a big influence in my life.

PL: Did he recognize that you were interested and excelled in this, and how did he reveal that to you?

SB: Well, after school, he would show me some of the experiments, and we would talk over what had been done, and my tests were a snap. I really enjoyed learning. I enjoyed setting up the applications, and I enjoyed setting up the – oh, I actually enjoyed setting up some of the experiments. And he would let me do that. He was a little guy. He was very interesting. He could have been a good chemistry professor at the "U," but he was very devoted to his wife, who was ill.

PL: Do you remember what chemistry focused on? Because today I imagine chemistry has changed quite a bit.

SB: Oh, it has. Well, in pharmacy?

PL: Well, yes. You can talk about how your studies of pharmacy –

SB: Well, we had all sorts of chemistry. We had general chemistry, we had organic chemistry, we had food chemistry. We had four years of chemistry.

PL: So, at what point did you make the decision to go to the University of Washington? Was there ever a question that you might have gone to a different school?

SB: No, nobody had any money. And you were just lucky to get there. In fact, my aunt loaned me two hundred dollars to get through three quarters at thirty dollars a quarter, so I had money left over, and then I won the scholarship. I paid my aunt back. My sister did it nicely. I didn't. She took her to Hawaii for a vacation.

PL: So you entered the University of Washington in –?

SB: 1940.

PL: In 1940. Can you tell me a little bit about how many students were studying pharmacy and what the demographics of that population were?

SB: Well a lot started out, an awful lot dropped out. About I would say eighty in the class and about eight girls. I dropped out for a year to work two jobs, and then when I came back, my sister came in, too. But I worked one job from 9:00 to 3:00 and another from 5:00 to 11:00. Those were the days when you could take a bus all over town, and that's what I did. I took two buses to get to one job and three buses to get to another.

PL: Where were you working, and what were the circumstances that necessitated that you leave your education?

SB: Well, I didn't really have to leave, but I thought it would be a good idea because I was a little stressed but also my sister wanted me to come in with her. I wanted to push her. One was a general store, and I worked there alone, [laughter] which I shouldn't have done, from 9:00 to 3:00. Then I worked over for a fellow who was an Orthodox Jew called Ben (Warren?) from 5:00 to 11:00 at night. And that pharmacy was out by Laurelhurst. We did that for a year, and then I went back to school. I was never so glad to get back to anything. That was one of the happiest days of my life, to get back. That was it.

PL: So, what was the study of pharmacy like at that time? How did they teach that?

SB: Well, it was very basic. You had a lot of chemistry, which was very much the same as this, but you didn't have all the problems that you have now. We used slide rules, and we did practical pharmacy. We did something called "pharmacognosy," which was just like botany. We did zoology. Pharmacognosy, you'd look at these dried leaves, and you would have to identify them and their interactions. It was like the modern drugs that they use in like –

PL: You're talking about homeopathy?

SB: Well, it was not homeopathy then; it was called pharmacognosy. They showed you the dried leaves, the Digitalis, the dried leaves of Rowolfia, and the dried leaves of other plants. Let's see, which would there be? Oh, even of Scoparius, which was Scotch Broom. But they didn't have – there were no genetics. There were no generic drugs either. Genetics and generics were separate, of course. But there was nothing at all to interfere. You did powder papers, and you did a lot of solutions and all.

PL: Hold on to your thought, I need to switch the tape.

[END OF TRACK 1]

PL: This is the continuing oral history interview of Shirley Bridge, and we are on mini-disk tape number two. So we were talking about pharma –

SB: Cognosy. [laughter]

PL: – cognosy. I'm not sure I fully understand what that is.

SB: Well, you know the drugs that they do and naturopathic medicine? That's what they were. We didn't make such a big fuss about it. We were very happy when they came out with drugs that were not natural because you can do them faster, and I remember there were no drugs for hypertension in the early '70s. No, it wasn't the '70s – it was early '60s. One of the doctors wanted to find an experimental drug, so there was a drug being grown in India called Rowolfia Serpentina, and we sent for it. It came in little packages, little green tablets, some of them were smashed. We got them in the pharmacy, and he prescribed them. There was nothing against it in those days. Well, it did help, and the next year, lo and behold, Squibb came out with a drug called Radixon, which was the active ingredient of Rowolfia Serpentina. If we were smart, we would have made money on it. But it was really interesting because that was the first drug that was used, I think, throughout the country.

PL: While you were being educated in pharmacology, what were the circumstances then for what diseases were being focused on, and what kind of education were you given then that might be different today?

SB: Well, there were not too many drugs. We focused on sulfa drugs because that's what we had, and then penicillin came in when I worked at Swedish Hospital, or when I was still a student, and I remember one of the doctors came in–we had so little penicillin and penicillin tablets or injectables–and his wife was ill, and he wondered if he could have some. Of course, it was rationed, and I said, "Oh, of course." But he was very nice. He wasn't going to take it if there was somebody more ill than his wife, but she was plenty ill. So that was the thing; there were no wonder drugs at the time, and there was no Acromycin, no Teramycin. Those were wonder drugs at one time. And we didn't have a lot of blood tests for what was wrong with you at the time. So, pharmacy was rather primitive. Now, it isn't at all. It's way ahead of me. I can't even remember how these people can keep all of these drugs in mind, and the cytochromes and all of the things. They do organic chemistry, but they have a rhyme and reason to what organic chemistry is now. If you took zoology you must know how zoology has changed. Genetics made a lot of difference in everything. And we all took – you said you took pre-med. We took pre-med in pharmacy. There were two women in the class. They were both daughters of doctors, and they became physicians. But they were the ones who had money in the entrance, you see.

PL: Were your aspirations similar? Did you want to go to medical school?

SB: Yes, there was no medical school here. I did very well, and I probably could have gone. There was only one woman in the first class, I think, and she was a pharmacologist. But there were not very many women.

PL: Was pharmacology taught in a way that you were involved mostly in the science of it or the patient care-giving side of it?

SB: No, it said it was the science of it. Pharmacology was a study of the drugs that were not the powdered drugs, you know, or the naturopathic drugs. These were drugs that were developed otherwise. It was the effect of these drugs on the body which you studied.

PL: How did you study that? Did you inject? Did you dissect? What did you do?

SB: Well, we didn't do it. The pharmacology professor did and gave us his notes, and this woman who was his assistant gave us the notes. Then we went into class – like physiology – and we would kill a poor cat and dissect a cat.

PL: You'd kill it right there?

SB: Yes, she'd kill it. Then, they would take the organs and test some medicines on them. That was the way we did it.

PL: What do you remember, since you mentioned that the ratio was eight women to eighty or seventy-two men, or whatever it is? What do you remember about the relations between the sexes or how you were treated with the expectations for your employment?

SB: Well, we were treated well. It was wartime. And most of the class was gone to war, so the women who were left got good jobs. It was a little different in pharmacies in those days because there were drug stores that were prescription stores, and that's all they did were prescriptions. They only took prescriptions from the doctors, written and over the phone. It's not like that now. Hospital pharmacy was women's work. My sister went into hospital pharmacy, and I went to the drugstore aspect of it. But they were only prescription stores, and that's all you did. And you made injectables. You made eye solutions under a hood. It was a little different.

PL: Now I'm naive about this, so what do you mean by "eye solutions under a hood?"

SB: Well, that was to keep it sterile. I hope it was sterile. You would make an eye solution that was fairly sterile under the hood, and there were lights to keep it sterile. You would put it in a bottle, and you would fill a prescription.

PL: For what kinds of ailments?

SB: Mostly just eye infections. Although we did some injectables. Didn't do those too well.

PL: Something was about to make you laugh, and I don't know what it was.

SB: Oh, I don't remember either. [laughter] I remember the thing I was thinking of. We also did manufacturing. I worked for a German Jewish pharmacist, and we did a lot of mouthwashes: (viocodeine?) which was a cough medicine. We did some vitamin B injectables. He wasn't afraid to do anything. Then we made suppositories, I had a suppository machine. There was a little Jewish woman – I won't mention her because so many people must have known her – and she used to wear these heavy rubber stockings, and they were always too tight. So, one day, I got really upset with her. She brought it in for about the fifth time. So I took the stockings, put them on the suppository wheel, and went like that. Stretched it all right, and she was very happy. [laughter] That's life.

PL: So it sounds like you did have quite a bit of interaction, at least in your work life. Would you say that there is anything about your education at the University of Washington that was unique in pharmacy? Did they have a particular direction, unlike other places that you might have gone?

SB: I didn't even think about it. It was during the war. What they did make us do was come to graduation because there were only twelve of us, and we took the state board. When you take the state board now you have a whole book of questions and answers. We had to dig through and get the answers through little pieces of paper. They had just

moved into this chemistry building, though, so we had good chemistry labs. Except that they had – if you got yourself caught on fire, there was a blanket so you could wrap yourself in. But there was no shower. You had to step in the sink. [laughter] So that was a big funny deal. In fact, it wasn't so funny because we did have an ether fire once and we had to get out of there. I don't know how anybody would have been able to get into the sink to wash off.

PL: I'm going to ask you a kind of odd question, which is the question of what is a licit drug and what is an illicit drug. How are you taught that? How did it play into what you thought about what you were doing? What did they say were drugs that shouldn't be used, and yet you had access to them? Can you talk about that a little bit?

SB: You're talking about marijuana?

PL: Well, I think that's one. I think there are other drugs as well that are behind the counter, such as methadone, things like that.

SB: No, there wasn't anything like that when I went to school.

PL: But there was marijuana?

SB: Well, I guess there was. And there was ergot and ergoapiol, but those were all on a prescription. Marijuana was just sort of – just in the drug garden. But they always had cannabis, and cannabis was used for pain in drugs. There were no really illicit drugs. Nothing like Ecstasy. Nothing like – well, methadone. Methadone was still on prescription. I did work in a methadone program, yes. Part of the time when I was out of school in the summer, I would work at this methadone program, which was called Puget Sound Special Programs. It was run by a young woman doctor, and people would go in and get their methadone, and then I worked down the street for a little while in another prescription store, and they'd come, see me, and walk right out again because they had prescriptions.

PL: What era was this? What time? What decade?

SB: Oh gosh, it must have been in the early ‘50s. I was really out of school.

PL: Yes. But it sounds like you were part witness to the way that patients have been treated differently with different drugs over the decades. I’m wondering if you might describe some of what you’ve witnessed in terms of those changes.

SB: You mean the methadone program?

PL: Methadone program or how drugs have come in and out of fashion or perhaps have been seen to be dangerous to people.

SB: Well, all drugs are dangerous, and we always knew that. Drugs are dangerous because they are not controllable. We never worried as much about it as they do now. The methadone program was the last resort and still is for many people. In fact, I had – we used to fill prescriptions for three people in the morning. I used to open the prescription store, and there were three people there. There was a lady of the evening, and then there was a photographer, and then there was a gambler, and they’d all get a doctor’s note for morphine and for Dilaudid, and they’d get 16 each day, and it was legal. And then, one day, one didn’t come in. He had been pushed down the elevator shaft for his pills. Well, but one of the funny things is that one of the guys who got the pills came into the methadone program years and years later, and I said, “My god, what are you doing here?” I said, “Why are you still –?” And he said, “Well, I got scared because the only vein I had was a jugular left.” So funny things happen. But there was no real regulation of the doctors either, and there were a lot of doctors who were addicts. None of the drugs were really regulated. There would be a dose in the drug books, and you took it, and you didn’t worry about drug interaction. If the two didn’t explode when you added it was okay. There was very little done about drug interaction in those days.

PL: When did that change?

SB: Probably in the ’70s because some new drugs were coming in all the time. I think probably the drug companies with their new drugs must have added to that. There’s so many drugs now. Look at this book.

PL: What book is that?

SB: Well I didn’t take the – I have another one.

PL: Drug Information Handbook. That’s just the pocket version.

SB: And this is the pocket version.

PL: That’s quite thick. So I guess I’m wondering about the role of a pharmacist in relationship to the doctor, to the nurse?

SB: It’s changed an awful lot.

PL: What was it like when you started?

SB: Well, you just filled the prescriptions, and you didn’t ask questions. If the doctor wanted a prescription filled and you didn’t like it, you did it anyway. And then you would say, “The hell with you, doctor,” and then you would call up again and find out if it was okay. But now it’s changed a lot. Pharmacists go six years now, and you get a PharmD., a Doctor of Pharmacy. You are able to take blood pressure, and you’re able to even prescribe somewhat, and you are able to – let’s see, what else was it that we did? They took blood pressure and they also took bone density, and you could ask people in the pharmacy to take blood and check for diabetes. Well, you couldn’t do those things before.

PL: Why not?

SB: Because the doctors had you by the neck. Nobody even thought about it. Although a pharmacy – this old German pharmacist would do things too. We used to send a lot of injectables over that maybe other pharmacies would not send over. But things have changed and are regulated so much by law now that you really do have to be careful. And we didn't have to worry about it. I think we were insured for three hundred thousand dollars when I left. Now, you have to be insured for millions because you can get sued, the company can get sued, and the doctor can get sued all at the same time.

PL: Within, I'd say, there have been studies done in the Sephardic Jewish context of potions and things like that for the sick and the ill, and there are always mothers who prescribe certain things that maybe they have a basis in pharmacology, and maybe they don't. I'm just wondering whether or not anything in your upbringing or things that you've heard over the years from living here, are there home remedies?

SB: Oh, of course. My mother used to make onion syrup for a cough. Yes indeed. And they used to put mustard poultices on you.

PL: What's that?

SB: Well, mustard for your chest so you wouldn't get congestion. There were all sorts of home remedies. I think some of them worked okay. But those are the two that I remember. It was like – they certainly kept people away from you. [laughter] And then they used to use garlic a lot. Allium is garlic. It's a drug that they have over the counter. But people used to chew garlic because there was nothing else for blood pressure. They were maybe standing at the door, and you could smell them as they came by to get their prescriptions. That was used a lot. I think it still is by a lot of people. Ginko biloba. I think so many of these drugs now interact with newer drugs that it's dangerous to use these naturopathic drugs. They can cause trouble. There's not enough known about them yet. There will be a book put out I think.

PL: But it's interesting, you were saying that when you first started studying that naturopathic remedies were part of our study. When did they fall out of fashion?

SB: Well, they weren't really naturopathic. They were—Digitalis is a drug that is made from nature, sure, but it isn't naturopathic. Naturopathic when I was studying was a dose. It was a small dose. And naturopathic physicians gave small doses. The schools nowadays know a lot about the drugs that are going on – the drugs from nature – and we get courses on them too in extra-curricular activities. We have to have fifteen hours to keep our license, and they talk about the new drugs and the drugs sold over the counter. You call them naturopathic, but they really aren't. They're just drugs made in nature. Naturopathic used to refer to a dose, a very small dose, and I guess it still does.

PL: The efflorescence of homeopathic, naturopathic, and acupuncture – alternative types of care – have really blossomed in Seattle in particular. How have you witnessed that, and can you describe in any way how you had an interaction with that as a pharmacist?

SB: Well, of course, we have Bastyr University, the home of the people who believe in these nature products, and they're very bright. We have had courses from them in the school of pharmacy, and I try to learn as much as I can. The problem is they don't tell you too many of the idiosyncrasies of those drugs or the interactions because they don't know. That's the thing that worries us. Anybody, you can do any other kind of medication. If you want Chiropractors, that's fine if you feel like it. Massage therapists. Physical therapists and massage therapists are different. Physical therapy you can't even get without a doctor's prescription. Acupuncture is fine, and doctors will say, "If you have nothing else that will relieve pain, use it."

PL: In terms of going back to the cannabis. How have you seen over the years the legalization movement and the use of it, prescriptions, what has it been used for? How has the perspective on that changed or stayed the same over time?

SB: Well, everybody is afraid of cannabis, and I'm not too sure why. It's used in glaucoma a little bit. I don't remember whether they're using it to smoke or whether they're using the active ingredient, cannabinol – I can't even pronounce it – and then for cancer. They use anything for that. Anything to take pain away.

PL: So, when you started out, was that something that was prescribed regularly?

SB: No. No. But it was prescribed, too. People all knew there were other drugs that were prescribed, too, and there were drugs too, like Viagra. Yohimbine used to be a drug, and nothing is new under the sun if you're really looking for it. Did you ever learn about drugs yourself?

PL: Not when I was studying zoology.

SB: But you are now?

PL: A little bit. But let me ask you then also, and then I'd like to talk a little bit about the factual part of your work experiences, where you worked, and so on and so forth. But in terms of women's drugs, can you talk a little bit about –? There have been drugs for migraine and menstruation and these things. What were you taught about specific women's ailments, if at all, when you were in school and how has that changed over time?

SB: Well, we didn't talk too much about it, but when I got out of school, there were a lot of women in my generation who used hormones during childbirth. A lot of these women had children who had cancer. It really was too bad. We didn't have – they had just drugs for women – contraceptive drugs – such as come into being. There still are problems with them, but there was nothing like that. We had drugs for people who wanted – there were people who did abortions, which were all illegal until 1970 when the women's commission ¬– and I was on that – we got a law passed.

PL: There were drugs for women's abortion?

SB: Yes, that was the only thing you could have. There was a drug called ergoapiol, and then you had quinine. Those were the two drugs that were used before you had an abortion. Abortion was illegal, but there were doctors who would do it.

PL: So what is the, is there a veil of secrecy around the use of these drugs?

SB: Not now, no.

PL: But back then?

SB: No, not really. They would write prescriptions for them. Everybody knew what they were being used for. There's nothing new under the sun. But they used a lot of Stilbestrol and a lot of Premarin, even then, not knowing that it could lead to problems besides the problems like that. Too much of a hormone can give you cancer of the ovary, you know. Don't quote me on some of this because I'm way behind on some of it, but you do have to be careful.

PL: So, where was it that you had your main work experiences?

SB: Well, when I got out of school, I worked at Swedish Hospital for a while, and I went to this prescription store and was there for about twenty years.

PL: Did it have a name?

SB: Yes, it was called (Colden & Lewis?), and then it sold and was called Ted Valaas, and then sold, and it was called Peterson's, and I went along with each sale.

PL: What exactly is a prescription store? Most of us are not familiar with that word.

SB: Well, it only sells prescriptions. It didn't have any of the hardware you see in stores like Pay and Save or Fred Meyer or any of that. We used to make prescriptions, too. We

used to make our own line of cosmetics but it was really mostly you filled doctor's prescriptions. You had phones on the wall where doctors would call in, and they'd want it right now. So, I went from there to Snow's pharmacy. In between times, I had been ill. I had five primary cancers. Because I belonged to the union, they would pay you for being ill and pay for your medical, and that's what he also got us that – Dave Beck.

PL: Now, what union did you belong to?

SB: Well, it was called the Pharmacists Union, but it was AF of L and then AF of L and CIO. It worked very well. And then in between times – I think I worked at Bartell's, in between. Where else did I work? And then I went back to Swedish.

PL: How were those milieus different?

SB: Well, Swedish Hospital Pharmacy is something that is really different, and unless you're working the outpatient pharmacy, you're stuck in a little hole, and you make solutions for the floors, and I didn't care for that. Oh, then I also went with somebody, and we started a pharmacy at The Bon [Marché], which was a prescription pharmacy.

PL: Is there still a prescription pharmacy at The Bon?

SB: No, it kind of petered out.

PL: Who were your customers?

SB: People from The Bon. They would call. Doctors would call in. We had a good practice there. Then, afterwards, when I got sick again, then I just came back to Swedish for a while.

PL: At what point and at what age did you first experience your first illness?

SB: It was forty-five years ago. I was about thirty-four. My son Dan was nine months old, and Jon was four years old.

PL: Well, I think that –

SB: That was my first one.

PL: What do you remember about that time that happened when you recognized that you were not feeling well?

SB: Well, I went to a woman doctor who saved my life several times: Elizabeth Hauser. She checked me and she told me that she thought there was something there, and I went to a surgeon that I knew who was very cooperative, and we did it in a hurry.

PL: Are you talking about breast cancer?

SB: No, it was cancer of the colon, of the rectum. I've had a colostomy for forty-five years.

PL: Being a pharmacist and knowing quite a bit about medicine, what was the discourse around colostomy at that time?

SB: Well, you either lived or you died. And I talked to the guy who was the head of a tumor institute at Swedish, which was a little place at the time, and he said I had a twenty-five percent chance, which the thing is – I'm not introspective; I told you, so we just go on. Then I had another problem. I had cancer of the uterus, then cancer of the breast, and then cancer of the bladder, and then this last one was cancer of the cecum, which spread, so I had my first chemo when I was an old lady. That was about three years ago.

PL: So you only took chemotherapy in the latter –

SB: Yes, when it spread. I was very lucky until then.

PL: So, for the first, can you break up the times in which you experienced these? You said the first one you were a young mother.

SB: Yes, that was 1955, I guess. Then it was 1960 and 1963, and then later, when I was a grown old lady, I got cancer of the bladder in the 1990s. Oh, I forgot, I did have one non-malignant. I had my gallbladder removed. Lucky me. And that was about it.

PL: So for each of the early operations, essentially, those were operations to remove something.

SB: Yes.

PL: You're a very strong woman. What was it like for you to go through this time as a mother and as a working woman? How did you manage it?

SB: Well, I just kept working. The thing is, my husband was very supportive, and the kids were supportive, and I just did what I had to do. I don't think about things. I just do them. If you sit down and you join a group and you try to be introspective, you're not going to get anything done. I have counseled people who want to be counseled on how to help your colostomy, and some people just never get it. It's hard to do even after forty-five years. So, you either make up your mind you're going to live a normal life or you're not going to. I don't know whether that's the way most people think or not. I've been very fortunate because so far, I've been okay. But we don't know. Yeah.

PL: Having cancer over the course of your lifetime, has that influenced your choices in terms of how you've reared your children, how you've interacted with the community and organizations you've gotten involved with?

SB: No, not at all. The thing is that I try not to let it because if – in fact, I don't even think about it – because if you do think about it, then you're going to be in trouble and you're going to join a group, and you're going to talk about it and why talk about it? It's there, you accept it, and if you don't accept it, you're going to be in big trouble.

PL: Well it seems like you've made those choices witnessing other people who have made other choices.

SB: Yes, I'm sure that there – and I don't say mine is the right choice. It is for me. And, of course, when you have chemo, you don't feel very good, and you never seem to get over it. So, I can understand how people do things like this, especially the younger people.

PL: I think what I want to do is stop here, and we'll pick up the next session. Because we've skipped over how you met your husband, and your children, and all that good stuff.

SB: All that good stuff. Well, he's better at that than I am.

PL: Well, I want to thank you for this first session, Shirley.

SB: You're welcome.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

PL: This is the continuing oral history interview of Shirley Bridge. Today's date is August the 8th. The year is 2001. This is Pamela Brown Lavitt, Oral Historian for the Jewish Women's Archive, "Weaving Women's Words" project in Seattle. I'm happy to see you again.

SB: Thank you, same here.

PL: I wanted to ask you when, where and how did you meet your husband?

SB: Well, we met at a picnic, one of the neighbor's picnics [a B'nai B'rith picnic] around 1947. I was with someone else, and he asked me to dance, and I said, "No." [laughter But he was persistent, and then at a wedding, he asked me again; this time, I said, "Yes."

PL: Why'd you say yes that time?

SB: Because he was a good dancer. [laughter] And then we went on from there. He came down to where I worked to meet me and see what I did because he was very interested even then in having women have a career and do what they wanted. So, he knew what he was getting. Then, we went out, and he asked me to marry him on the first date, and I laughed at him because he was younger than I, and I thought, "This kid asks everybody to marry him. Must be desperate." But it went on from there, and we got together and engaged. He just put the ring on my finger. We went up to see my parents in the apartment house up on Capitol Hill where you live, and nobody seemed too interested because I'd never told them who I was going with. I never talked about my dates. So, he came into a hostile environment. But my sister was in bed, and she turned over and said, "Oh, your ring's nice. Good night." And my father said, "Are you marrying him for the ring?" My mother and aunt were a little nicer to him. That was about the way we did it. We got married in '48. We got engaged in September and married in January. Since I was working across the street from Frederick and Nelson, all of the showers were across the street.

PL: All of the showers? What do you mean?

SB: Well, years ago, people used to give showers so that when you got started in your married life, you would be able to have dishes and glasses – and you can see some of them here – and silverware. Nice gifts. My mother-in-law had a lot of friends who

believed in giving showers for weddings. That was part of their pleasure.

PL: So, where exactly did you have your shower?

SB: Frederick and Nelson.

PL: It was actually at the department store.

SB: Yes. They had a tearoom up there. They had special rooms. It wasn't the only place but that was one of the places. They did it on my lunch hour, which was very nice of them. I know they didn't understand why I was working or anything about it. These were women who probably hadn't worked a day in their lives. But they were nice enough to understand that I had to get back. So, we had short lunches and short showers, so to speak, hardly getting wet there. [laughter]

PL: You mentioned a couple of times in that story that most of the women that you knew were not working. Can you talk about that?

SB: No, most of the women that my mother-in-law knew weren't

working. My mother always worked. And all the women I knew, all of my friends, were women who worked in pharmacies. So, yes, they all worked, and they all continued to work. And Herb knew that I would do that, too. In fact, for a while, I was making more money than he was. Those were the days.

PL: How much money were you making back then?

SB: Oh, my, I made fifty dollars a week. That's a lot of money. I think I told you that for a long time, women pharmacists were getting less than men. So, Dave Beck, who is a well-known union man here, also sort of a well-known character, sort of a racketeering character, got us equal pay for equal work. So, we were making what the men were

making, and we sure didn't let that slip away.

PL: Was that a struggle that you were involved in?

SB: No, not really. It wasn't a struggle because unions were very strong, and it was a very good union. It gave us money when we were ill. When I was ill – and I was quite ill – after that, I got paid. They also paid for your health and welfare. So, it was very nice. He was very forward-looking. Unfortunately, Dave Beck was put in jail for income tax evasion, but he got out and was a great fan of the Mariners. So, he lived his life fully, and I think he did a good job for the women, whether it was intentional or just because he wanted a stronger union, I don't know.

PL: So, getting back to your courtship with Herb, what was Herb doing at the time?

SB: Herb was in his father's business. His father was one of these old-fashioned guys who liked to tell his sons what to do. When Herb was in the service, he got a letter from his father saying that he was a quarter owner of the business, and Bob – Bob, who is his brother – got the same letter. So, when he came back, he was expected to stay in the business and work, and I guess that's what he did for a while. Years later, in the '50s, when they wanted to expand, and his father didn't want to – didn't know how – we almost left the store. But instead of us leaving, his father was – he loved his family very much even though he didn't show it often, and he left. So, he stayed on as a salaried employee.

PL: And what was this business?

SB: The jewelry business. Ben Bridge Jeweler.

PL: What kind of expectations did you have, as well as your family, have around your marriage – who your marital partner would eventually be?

SB: Well, I never thought much about getting married. That wasn't a priority with me. I would never have quit school even if Rockefeller came around because it was too hard to get there. I stayed out a year and a half to work two jobs. When you really want something, you don't give it up. So, I don't know if I'd ever have gotten married if Herb hadn't come along and been a little persuasive. Because that was not what I really wanted. It just didn't bother me. I guess I was one of the few women in college. It didn't bother me.

PL: In terms of Herb's view of what it is that you would do after marriage, did he support the idea of your continuing to work, or was that a necessity at that point?

SB: No, it wasn't a necessity. Yes, I told him that that was one of the terms of the marriage. You would be interested to know in our wedding ceremony – Rabbi Levine did it – and they always used to say, "Love, honor, and obey," and I said I wouldn't go through the service if he said, "Obey." I would just say, "No," and that would be the end of it. So, he was a little upset, but he wrote "obey" out.

PL: So, what did he stay instead, do you remember?

SB: "Love, honor, and cherish."

PL: What do you remember about your wedding?

SB: Well, it was a bigger deal than I wanted it to be. We had it at the Olympic Hotel, and everybody sort of chipped in because my parents didn't have a lot of money. But it was nice. We had a reception in the foyer, and we had a sit-down dinner, you know, the regular. And then I went out of the – I'd only been to Oregon. We went to California for our honeymoon and visited his relatives there, who nicely gave up their apartment so we could stay. I saw San Francisco for the first time, where my folks had come from. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the traveling. We drove in a little old Nash and had fun just going across. We didn't go too far; we just went to California because you didn't have a lot of

time in those days. Two weeks was a long vacation.

PL: What do you remember about those early days of negotiating your relationship?

SB: Well, I don't think we negotiated very much. If I didn't like something, I just didn't do it. I am a big arguer. I know that he was surprised. One day, we were – this was before we were married. He took me across the water to Bremerton because he was in the Navy, and he enjoyed it, and he stayed in. There was a candy bar in the car, and he said, "Oh, we're going to eat. Don't eat that," he kept saying. I said, "You stop this. If you want me to go out with you, you're not going to tell me what to do." He was not used to being talked to that way. He was a big man on campus or something.

PL: Where do you think that you got this from, your strength?

SB: My mother was a very strong person. That's another story.

PL: Do you want to tell that one?

SB: Oh, I suppose. She actually was the one who pushed us into pharmacy, saying we should always be able to support ourselves and our children. But when Herb and I were still engaged, he brought me in late one night, and she wasn't worried about what I was doing. I was old enough to do what I wanted, but she was worried about my physical body. I heard her kind of rumbling in the apartment, and Herb said, "Well?" I said, "Go, leave, hurry." And he said, "No, I'm not going to run down the stairs." I said, "Yes, you are." I was holding the door, and she was pulling on the other side, and she was not a little woman. So I said, "Go because if you don't, you're going to get punched right down the stairs," so he ran down the stairs. It was a little different than his family. I came from a matriarchal society, and he came from a patriarchal society. His mother was a very gentle person.

PL: So how did that manifest in your roles in terms of being a couple and eventually in terms of parenting?

SB: Well, we argued a lot. We still do. I don't mind arguing, and I think that's a way to get things settled and get things off your chest. As far as parenting goes, Herb was born an Orthodox Jew into a Jewish community. He didn't really know anything about historical Judaism, and I went to Temple [de Hirsch]. I said, "I think it's a good idea for the children to learn about their Jewish roots, but they also ought to learn the history of Judaism." So, we went to Temple, and the boys were in the choir – they have good voices. Herb taught in Sunday school, and he became a Reform Jew, that's fine.

PL: And in your home as well, were you Reform Jews?

SB: Yes, my mother and father, we didn't have room in the apartment for two sets of dishes. Mother came from an Orthodox family. Father coming from Chornobyl, I don't know what he was. They ate what they could. But yes, we had no trouble with that at all. Herb is not ultra-religious, and neither am I.

PL: Did you discuss having children?

SB: Yes, we did. He had to talk me into it.

PL: Really? So initially, you didn't want children?

SB: I didn't really care one way or another.

PL: Why do you think that was, Shirley?

SB: Well, I'm just not the maternal type. [laughter] I never have been. I don't know about you, but cuddly little kids? I like cuddly little kids about fifteen or sixteen, so I can talk to them and argue with them. But I know a lot of people like babies. No, I like a child when the child is old enough to think and talk.

PL: So how did Herb convince you?

SB: I don't know. I can't remember. It's been a long time ago.

PL: So, how long had you been married before you got pregnant?

SB: About three years.

PL: And who was your first child?

SB: Jon. Jon, my son. My aunt was my babysitter, and my father lived with us because my mother had passed away just before Jon was born. She liked to eat, and she fed him. He was a round little porker. He was very bright. Funny kid because he couldn't walk until he was two. Herb went away to Korea, and when he came back, he ran toward him and fell. But he could talk when he was nine months old. So I'd take him to the doctor and the doctor would hear him talk and he'd say, "Come on in." I said, "He can't walk." But you know, some are slower in other ways.

PL: So, how long was Herb away in the service?

SB: Almost two years. Let's see. The baby was almost two years – a year and a half. He was in Korea. Somebody came to the door. I said, "You better get home because I think you have an official package here." He was called back into Korea. He served there, and when he came back, he stayed in the reserve. I got a leave of absence of a month and went down to be with him, and my aunt came down with Jon. They were very good to me where I worked. When we came back, he wanted to stay, and I wasn't too happy about it, but then, as he got up in rank, he wanted to leave, and I said, "No, you're not going to. If this guy could make admiral, so could you." So, he stayed in and became an admiral. But yes, we were in the service for a while.

PL: You mentioned that your father lived with you after your mother died. Can you explain the circumstances that led up to that? Because you mentioned to – I think it was Goldie, “family, family, family” – you had a lot of family living with you during the course of –

SB: Oh yes, we did. Well, first of all, we had his second cousin living with us. She was a young woman who had rheumatoid arthritis and was on crutches. She came to us and stayed with us from age fifteen until she was about nineteen and went to the university here. Father was very good with young people, and he was good with the children. He was a homemaker himself. He would do our ironing, and he would help with the cleaning, and he had his own room and his own sitting room, but he was very helpful. We were lucky to have him because I would come home from work, and he would cook the meal. I think I told you this. There was no freezer at that time or anything like that. So you cooked the meal when you got home from work, put it in the Frigidaire, and then he would put it in the oven for us, so when we got home. He would have eaten before, and when we got home, why, he would have it all warmed up for us. And, of course, I cooked for him because nobody else seemed to care. But my [son] Dan, to this day, says, “I still remember double-killed chicken” because we used to pot roast chicken. It worked out pretty well. When we moved from the house in Montlake, we moved over to Herb’s family home because by that time, his mother had died, and his father wasn’t keeping the house very well. My father finally passed away, and then his [Herb’s] father came to live with us for four years, too. So we always had quite a few people living with us.

PL: How long did your father live with you?

SB: About twenty years. He was very good to us. He did all my clothes. I was lucky.

PL: Tell me a little bit about your family life. So Jon is the first-born. When did you decide to have another child?

SB: In four years. I wasn't in a hurry.

PL: Was the childbirth experience, pregnancy, was that a good experience for you or was it a difficult experience?

SB: I never thought about it. You know, when you're pregnant, you're pregnant. It's just like having surgery; there's nothing that you can do. Just go along with it. When I had Jon, they used to knock you out. With Dan, I didn't have a lot of help, but I don't think it made any difference.

PL: Did the doctors advise you back then certain things about giving birth or breastfeeding? Things of that nature?

SB: Well, I wasn't going to breastfeed because my mother died of breast cancer, and I didn't want to give my kids all my good genes, which is lucky. They've got enough of them. And yes, they just wouldn't let you gain more than fifteen pounds. They thought it would be better. I think it was better for them. But they said it would be better for the baby. So, I used to walk up the hill from where I worked to the doctor's office and back down again. It was good exercise.

PL: What hospital did you go to?

SB: Swedish. I was born there. They were born there. I'll probably die there. Let's see, what was it about Swedish that I – well, I worked at Swedish, too. But not at that time. When I worked there, there was one little wing of a hospital. So, not as big as it is now. They've got half the hill. Let's see, what happened with the kids? Well, the kids seemed to get along fine. When my aunt passed away, we got the people we knew to come in and do babysitting because I didn't want to leave my father alone with the children. It was too much for him. And that was the story.

PL: While you were involved with being a new mother, were you also active in the community at this time, or was motherhood your sole focus or main focus?

SB: No, I was the president of the Business and Professional Group of Hadassah, and we used to meet at my house. And then there were two of us who worked and we had a Cub Scout group. Mothers who weren't working didn't have time for it, so after work, we would meet in our basement, Jerry and I, and we would give the little boys – oh, we'd do some chemistry experiments and stuff that was fun. Then we'd march down to the playfield at night with the boys, and they would have their little ceremonies, and then they'd come back. Herb was very good about that. I had my father who would sew the badges on because I don't know how to sew either.

PL: Tell me a little bit then about the second child. Dan was born four years later.

SB: Yes.

PL: Was it a similar experience, or was there anything unique about that child's experience?

SB: Well, it was a different experience because you didn't have—you weren't knocked out. But I thought he was going to be a girl. We tried so hard. And when I found out it wasn't, you could hear me yelling, "Shit," all the way down the hall. By the way, Jon's first word was "shit" [laughter] because I am noted for being short-tempered. That's all. I'm sure it was a great example.

PL: Why is it that you wanted a girl?

SB: Well, my mother had just died. You know. And I thought it would be nice to have somebody to name after her. But it didn't work out. We didn't get any girls until Becky. So, you wait for a granddaughter.

PL: Can you describe some of the roles and responsibilities that you and your husband shared in childrearing?

SB: Well, let's see. Well, Herb was always very good about cleaning up everything. I don't know if he ever diapered babies or not, I don't think he knew how, but he could clean up everything. He still cleans up everything. We did all the housecleaning together. And we did have somebody in once in a while but he was very domestic too. That's why I'm thinking his father taught him to do this stuff around the house. Even though I think they had a maid. He liked to garden and do that kind of thing, which I don't like to do. We did divide things up. And he went shopping. His father had always done shopping, so I didn't have to train him in that. He did very well. And my father used to do very well in the ironing department, so I didn't have to do too much around the house.

PL: So, during this time, would you consider yourself a permissive, disciplinarian, a flexible mother? How would you describe yourself?

SB: Oh, no. I wasn't. Herb was flexible. But I was not. I was tough, because I was impatient, possibly, but no. Quite often, I – Herb would think about what he did, and sometimes I would just lash out. I was, you would say, I was a disciplinarian probably. They seem to have turned out okay. But they don't discipline kids the way I did, and I think if I had to do it over again, I'd probably do the same thing because it's your personality. You can't change it too much. I never hurt them, but I sure was tough on them. But then I was tough on my father-in-law, too, when I wanted to. When Herb went to Korea, his father said, "I'll take over the checkbook." I said, "No, you won't." I said, "I'm perfectly capable of taking care of these things." He meant well, but he and I often had words about it, about things. Because as I said, Herb is a lot like his father in some ways and as I say to his friends, "I'm in charge of his humility." I try hard. It's a big job.

PL: So, how would you say that your children would then describe your parenting?

SB: I wish you would ask them that. I don't know. I think Jon would have said it's okay. I think Dan would have said I was a little too strict. And Dan and his cousin, Bob's son, when they were eighteen, decided they wanted to be out on their own, so they rented an apartment, and they had some money from savings, and I said, "Well, you're out of the house." But then he got a job at Swedish drawing blood, that's where he met Jan, and I said, "You're on your own." I would do it differently now. I didn't pay for his education. Jon had the GI bill. But I think it was a little hard on him. Although, you know, we gave him help too, but not as much. Sometimes, I think they ate a lot of hotdogs with sawdust in them. But we all make mistakes. If I had to do that again, I would see that they got an education. But Jon didn't need it because, being in ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps], they paid for everything. When he came back from Vietnam, they paid for his law school.

PL: Can you talk about as your children grew older, what were some significant experiences that they had that you had with them?

SB: We used to take trips together, and we'd go back to Washington, DC, and we would see the Congress and the Senate and museums and the House. And yes, we always took them on trips and we took them on trips to New York and San Francisco. We didn't take separate vacations from the children ever.

PL: Why not?

SB: I think it was a good idea. We didn't see that much of each other, and I thought it was a good idea if we were going across the country to learn about things ourselves, to let them in on it. In 1964, when they were quite young, we took a six-week trip across the country and stopped everywhere and saw all the monuments, went to New York, and then came back. This was a car trip.

PL: Did you travel the Northern route or the Southern route?

SB: Well, we traveled the Northern route, and we got through the midlands and through Minnesota and North Dakota, Nebraska. I would say then we also got into the New York side of Canada. So, we had a good trip. I can't tell you too much about it except that the boys enjoyed seeing all the museums. I was surprised. Jon especially. Jon has a map in his head and we went everywhere. We went to see George Washington's Mount Vernon, and we saw Monticello. Let's see. What else did we see? Well, we didn't go to the South at all.

PL: Why not?

SB: I've never cared to go to the South. We finally went there to North Carolina as we grew older but, and the Northern part of the country was interesting. Niagara Falls – I'd never been there, and we went across to Niagara Falls, to Jackman, Maine. You get an idea of how cold the country is as you go, even in the summer. I can't make it too romantic because there was really nothing – we did stay in New York at the Waldorf because we won a trip to New York. Not from Seattle, but from – I guess it was from San Francisco. And then we stayed at the Waldorf. Oh, we thought that was going to be wonderful. Well, since it was a paid trip, they stuck us behind the elevator shaft somewhere. So, I never saw the Waldorf until I got a lot older. There was a Rolls Royce in front of the building, and we pictured ourselves in there, but it was just kind of fun because we did fly that part of the trip. We left our little Nash car.

PL: Were there any major conflicts or tensions in the household between you and your sons or you and your husband during their youth before they left home?

SB: Oh yes, I think we always had tensions. Herb always thought that he and his brother never fought, but his brother remembers differently. Sure, our boys fought all the time. They're still in competition. But no, we agreed on their upbringing pretty much, and I don't think we argued about that. We argued about other things. And, of course, when Jon was overseas, there was a lot of tension because he was in the [inaudible] Hanoi,

and there was some bombing of ships there.

PL: This was during Vietnam?

SB: Yes.

PL: How old was he when he went to Vietnam?

SB: Well, he was in ROTC, which was twenty-two, I guess, and he was sent right over. It's funny because both he and I had marched against the war in Vietnam just before he went over.

PL: Was that a march in Seattle?

SB: Yes.

PL: Can you describe that march?

SB: The march was along the freeway going to the university, and we all, people were booing, but we all marched, and we decided that was the thing to do. It didn't matter that you had to do your duty because there was something that was ordained, but he and I have always had the same ideas about things ,and that war I thought was a mistake all the way through. I still do. I don't know how you feel.

PL: I'd like to hear more about how it is that you felt strongly about Vietnam and what was the climate in Seattle at the time?

SB: Well, it was pretty divided. There were those people who would be maybe in your group, not so much in my group because so many people didn't think about it. That said, I thought it was an unfair war and that people were being singled out who had no defense, and there was no reason for it. I think that the government probably got us into the war. But afterward, what can you do, you know? And people here were not too

happy with the war. After these boys came back, nobody gave them the time of day. Korea was different. So was the Second World War.

PL: Which, Herb served in both of those.

SB: The Second World War and Korea.

PL: So, given that you had two men in the family who were serving in different wars, did they have conflicted feelings around military involvement in Vietnam?

SB: Well, Jon did. That's why we marched, but he was made a gunnery officer aboard the – it was a DE. But you know you can't do much when you've taken your education from the country, and you keep hoping, you kept hoping it would be all right. Dan was never interested. Of course, you have to sign up for the draft. I guess you still do when you're eighteen. But I think that he would never have enlisted in an ROTC deal. Luckily for Jon, he got back, and he went to law school on the GI bill, and that's where he met [his wife] Bobbe.

PL: Were his experiences in Vietnam –? Was he able to describe them while he was out there? Did he write?

SB: They never write or talk about it at all.

PL: Even today?

SB: No. In fact, Herb wasn't even – Herb talks about things more than Jon. But no, I still don't know what he did except it was a gunnery officer, and I know he ran up and down the ship and up and down the rigging, too. He wasn't ashore, so I was grateful for that. But still, a ship can be bombed, too. But no, it's funny, people don't talk about their experiences. My friends who were in the camps every once in a while, I can sit down with one of them and hear the story. They can put it on paper much better than they can

tell you. So, no, I can't say that anybody except Herb – he likes to tell stories. He'd be a wonderful interview. He tells stories about what happened, but only the good ones. Once in a while, he'll tell you what happened to his friends.

PL: So, when Jon came back, you knew immediately –? Did you ask him or you knew immediately that he could not, or would not talk about Vietnam?

SB: Well, he was reluctant to say anything so you don't question. It's bad enough that he went. When he came back we met him in Jacksonville, Florida, and the cab driver said, "Oh my god, that's the ship I sailed on when I was in World War II." It's been "frammed" [remodeled] once which meant it was made over once, so it was an old ship then. But no. He came back. He wanted to. I made him move out of the house. I said, "You'll never get married if you stick with me." We didn't do anything for him, but it was just easier. They always knew how to cook and make their own beds and stuff. But I thought it was a lot better, and he didn't move far away. He moved down the block, but he was on his own, and that was important. Herb was so surprised that I did that, but sometimes you have to. You have to know your own kids. So it worked out very well. Then, he went to school, and the GI bill paid for everything. That's one good thing. I guess we have Johnson to thank for that. So, that was the story of Jon.

PL: Just to go back a little bit, how is it that you and your family celebrated Jewish holidays in the home?

SB: Well, I think that Temple wasn't exactly a Christian group, although pretty much so. We were always aware that we were Jewish, and of course, there were a lot of Jewish kids in the schools we went to, and we all went to Sunday school, what was known as "confirmed" there, and I went one year of high school. So we were pretty well aware of what was going on. And, of course, we've always celebrated the Jewish holidays. Mother, Bev, and I used to go on Friday nights, too. My father was not super religious. He and his brother would say if you went into the synagogue, it was so surprising that

one of the pillars would probably fall over. They were not terribly religious. I think it was because they came from Russia and when they got here they wanted to forget.

PL: So, how did you and your husband make decisions about the celebration of those holidays in your home with your children and your family?

SB: Well, at that time, his grandmother was alive, and so we always would go over there, which was on Capitol Hill, too. She lived on 11th [Avenue] East. We would have all the holidays there. After she passed away, her daughter had the holidays, and then my mother-in-law didn't have many. I think once a week, we'd go over there or something like that or be taken out to dinner. But we didn't have – I didn't have the family over a lot because the older folks took things over. My father-in-law kept a kosher home anyway. So, it would not have been good to have him over there.

PL: Well your son Dan eventually became a rabbi so I'm wondering how it is that you kept a Jewish home even through Jewish culture, Jewish history. Did you have Jewish objects or crafts or things that represented a Jewish home in the way that you identified?

SB: Well, they went to Temple. Temple was an excellent educational ground for them. They were in the choir, and both Jon and Dan said they thought often of becoming rabbis – although Jon wouldn't have been a good rabbi. He's a great businessman and a great lawyer. Dan always wanted to go to medical school, but he really wasn't cut out to be a medical scientist. He's a social scientist, and he did very well in that respect. I think that actually, they had enough religion from both sides of the family, not Father particularly, but his grandfather. And also, we made sure that – Herb made sure that he taught Sunday school, and I made sure the kids went to choir every week. I used to sit there pointedly looking at them. I think that's what's nice about Temple. Not the Talmud Torah or those places; although they have their place, they didn't give them a lot of social experience. And so the social experience, I think, made them very aware of what was going on. There was camp too. Camp Orkila, I think it was. I can't remember.

PL: Can you spell that?

SB: No, I don't remember if that's the right one because Solomon Schechter is where the kids go now, but it was Temple camp anyway. And Jon didn't like Temple camp, but Dan did. Dan was a good swimmer, so was Jon. They didn't excel in athletics, but they're athletic enough.

PL: Were there any ways that you, in particular, tried to – or your husband – instill Jewish values in your children?

SB: Well, we think we did by example. But also there was one thing, our kids went to integrated schools. In fact they were bussed in. I felt that was a necessity – that too many people escaped the idea of having racially qualified schools. So, in our time, you could bus kids in. And we did that. They bussed into the Central Area schools, and they bussed into Garfield [High School], and they inter-dated. We never asked anybody who they were taking out, what color they were. All we wanted them to be were just nice bright people. And that was fine.

PL: So when you say inter-dated, can you be a little bit more [specific] –?

SB: Yes, they dated people of color, and they dated non-Jewish people. Probably more than Jewish people, I'm not too sure. I think that's the way you instill in them the idea of community, and that's what I always felt.

PL: Where did that idea of community solidify for you?

SB: It came from where I had been working out with other people, and also, when you get yourself involved in activities outside of the community, well, you begin to understand people. Then one of Jon's buddies, who's a man of color, who lived on this street, he was a young man, eighteen, and we would have him in the house quite often because he had no place to go. And he became quite successful. I say that Jon had a lot to do with

it. But you know, there is a young woman who is still, who had dated, I think Dan, who is still a friend of ours, and we have a young woman that we call our adopted daughter. She married a Caucasian, in fact, a Norwegian. She's a Black young woman, and she still considers us her foster parents.

PL: Your children grew up in the '50s and '60s, and I'm curious if you can relate those relationships of inter-dating and friendships between Jews and other Caucasians in Seattle and Blacks, regionally as well, to Seattle and the relations in Seattle.

SB: Well, the relations in Seattle were—you know, it's hard to tell. The Jewish community is and has always been very, shall we say, into itself. I don't even have a good word. They were very clannish. And I think that was true of the Black community and the Asian community. Jon dated some Asian girls in law school. These communities were sort of – didn't mingle as much in those days. But our kids, I think, were a little different. We didn't stay just with the Jewish kids. I still don't have friends who are just in the Jewish community. I have some women friends, and I like to do things with them within the community because I think it's important. I have women friends who are not Jewish, and they know I'm Jewish, and I think I'm always known as their "Jewish friend." I don't fool myself about those things. But think, if you don't get out into the community the way Herb has – and I have to a lesser degree – people don't get to know you, and you can't do much good.

PL: Why do you think that the Jewish community of Seattle remains clannish?

SB: Because they're more comfortable with each other. It's like the other communities – the Japanese community, the Chinese community – you feel more comfortable with your own. You have to make an effort to go outside of it.

PL: In Seattle, is there something that's helped foster that clannishness, be it that there's an ethos of community here or regionalisms? I mean, the Central District, for example,

was redlined; it was Jewish at one point, and then it was Black.

SB: Yes, well, we've never had ghettoes. We've had people, as you say, it's been "redlined," but people who were comfortable together. And the Black community as it becomes more integrated because of money more than anything else. It was always a money thing. I don't think that anybody was – there was a covenant in some of the places. It can't be anymore, but the Highlands didn't allow Jewish people.

PL: What is the Highlands?

SB: It's a big order. It's a big group of people who live outside of the city, and it was a large community of very wealthy people who have a lot of land out there. they have a Seattle Golf and Country Club, which is a very prestigious club. A lot of their wives belong to the Sunset Club, which still says – well, you can't be selective – but I still think you can't get into that club, I'm sure.

[END OF TRACK 2]

PL: This is a continuation of the oral history interview of Shirley Bridge. Today's date is August 8th, 2001, and this is minidisc tape number three. Can you finish that sentence?

SB: Yes, I think that this particular group I'm talking about, I believe, doesn't have any Jewish members in it at all. It may be because socially, they were not there at the time the club was formed, or socially, they don't associate with those people. Then again, it could be because these people were voted out. There is a club called the Men's University Club that is like that. They always brag they have one Jewish member, "Dr. Doctor." But "Dr. Doctor" was the son of a friend of my father's, and he married a very well-to-do woman outside of the community. But Herb would not allow them to go into it. When he was on the board of Washington Mutual, [he] would not allow them to use Washington Mutual for the Men's University Club as a club headquarters because of that.

PL: I'd like to understand the larger picture of how power, clout, and money factor into –?

SB: The antisemitism?

PL: Well, first, I'd say how it's established in the Seattle circuits, and then there seems to be parallels within the Jewish community, and because you yourself have, I think, maybe, reasons financially in your life, you've witnessed a lot of that. And I'm wondering—

SB: Well, I always had non-Jewish friends; that was the same. It's hard for me to say but I think most of it was – it's a society group, like Broadmoor. That was also a covenant at one time, it isn't anymore. These were people who had the money to get where they wanted, and they thought they were exclusive, and they didn't want to mingle with the "lesser" people, and Jews, Blacks, and Asians were the lesser people. When I first joined the Women's University Club in '63, the Schwabacher woman who – she was very well-known in town, and she was traveling in Europe, and she spoke French. She was a member and the Lindenbergers, who were a banking family. But I had a heck of a time getting in, and I didn't even realize it. Since then, they've let people of color in. The woman next door is a woman of color, and she is in. And the Asian woman I just signed for one of my friends. But a lot of it is money. An awful lot of it is perception. And the city has always had a large Scandinavian population and they are very fair. They may have their prejudices, but they vote fairly, and I think that voting makes a lot of difference in some of the laws that have been passed.

PL: As a Scandinavian city or "blonde city," how has that made being different more obvious?

SB: Not really, because there's a large Italian population here, too, and a fairly large Greek population. When I was growing up, my grandfather had homes on First Hill. That was a Japanese community. I think I told you that when they went to Japanese school after school, and some Jews went to Hebrew school after school. But I think it's sort of a

nationwide type of thing, where people are now beginning to understand that different people are okay. This has always been a very heavily Asian city, too. I must say the Scandinavians may not like Jews and may think a little bit antisemitically, but they're innately fair. They came from a politically active group of people who were kind of put upon, too, and didn't have much money.

PL: Have you experienced the antisemitism that you're talking about either by an obvious comment or by unconscious actions?

SB: Sure.

PL: Can you describe what you mean?

SB: Oh, I was on a bus one day, and some Black people were saying some derogatory remarks about the Jews, and I interrupted, and I said, "They're the best friends you've ever had." And that was all. So, I think that kept them quiet. That's just an example.

PL: How about the Scandinavians in particular?

SB: Well, two of my best friends are Norwegians, and the thing is that they know I'm Jewish, and they also – we love each other – but I also know that if push came to shove, I could depend on one, but I couldn't depend on the other.

PL: So you were just saying, if I can repeat what you last said, "that anti-Semitism is alive and well in Seattle." So you're saying, though, that it's not really an obvious anti-Semitism; it's a quiet anti-Semitism.

SB: That's right.

PL: Was it always that way?

SB: Yes, we're very subtle in Seattle, and I think most people don't even consider that they have any anti-Semitic feelings at all.

PL: I'm curious about how – moving to the Jewish community, how is it that the Jewish community here has dealt with antisemitism? Maybe specifically within Temple or discussed it. Have there been particular events historically that have caused those discussions?

SB: Well, I haven't had any with organized groups, but we do discuss it, of course, in the American Jewish Committee, and we discuss what might happen afterward, not just the reaction to it, not just anti-Semitism, but there's always been – the Washington Athletic Club is a great example of anti-Semitism. During the Depression, they took Jews in because they needed the money. After the Depression, they didn't. Herb had a hard time getting in even though some of his best Jewish friends were taken in during the Depression. So, that hasn't been so many years ago.

PL: What are the benefits to a Jew to belong to a club like the Washington Athletic Club?

SB: They get to know Jews. The thing is, Herb has really done very well. He's gotten to be [Seattle's] First Citizen, and he's gotten to be head of the Club [President of the Washington Athletic Club], and he's also been King Neptune. You know, these are the kind of things.

PL: What's King Neptune? [laughter]

SB: King Neptune. Oh, this is Seafair, and they are supposed to be – he's lord of the seas. You know who Neptune was with his trident? Well, what it is – it's very interesting – he was the King, and the woman who was head of – Phyllis Campbell, who is the head of US Bank, is an Asian American who was Queen.

PL: What are their responsibilities? Did they parade during the Seafair Parade?

SB: Yes. And you ride in a little Corvette, and you get to go the [hydroplane racing] pits and have police escort. Our grandchildren loved it, yes. And you get to see the Blue Angels.

PL: The phenomenon of Seafair fascinates me. Perhaps just for the record, for someone listening to this to understand the context, could you describe what exactly Seafair is and when it began?

SB: Well, it probably began with the old Potlatch, the old Indian parades. And then, gosh, I can't remember how many years this is.

PL: Do you remember the Potlatch parades?

SB: No, I don't remember, I just remember hearing about it. And if you go over to some of the Indian rites that you hear about. But what it is is it celebrates a certain time of year, and it celebrates the opening of boating season and all of that type of stuff. I can't tell you exactly what happened. You have to ask Herb about that because I'm not sure he knows either.

PL: So, as his wife, have you participated in any way?

SB: No. I just watch him. It's not my thing. But he supports me in what I do, and I support him in what he does, sometimes. And we've been honored together in supporting each other in certain things.

PL: Before we start talking about some of your community activism, I wanted to ask you a little bit about issues around money. Can you just talk a little bit or describe your relationship with money and class? I mean, you went to Temple [de Hirsch], and that has its own kind of – it's known in the community as many wealthier people in the community have gone there.

SB: Yes, they used to. It's not true anymore. No, because first of all, I went to Sunday school, and people were nice to me. Secondly, I think that times have changed. I used to be a good student. I got into the University of Washington sorority, Alpha Epsilon Phi, I'm sure only on my grades.

PL: You also had a scholarship as well.

SB: Yes, but that was from the pharmacy. I only stayed in the house one year. My aunt paid for it. It interfered with my lab, so I couldn't come out. The boys never joined any fraternity.

PL: I guess I'm asking about how it is that you grew up fairly poor and how it is that in your lifetime, you have seen gains in status. Change.

SB: Well, I will say this: we all grew up the same during the Depression, and people with money didn't have money then; they had prestige, and that kind of went to their heads sometimes. But I think because after the Depression and after World War II, people were given the opportunity to do something that would bring them better education and where they could do more for themselves in the way of money. But money was never a worry with me anyway. My mother made do with what she had, and Father did too. And his father, they lived much better than we did during the Depression, but I think sometimes you stretch the envelope a little bit. I think it was just a matter of what's happened to everybody. Like the dot-com companies. These are young people, or people who have intelligence, who know how to develop businesses and know how to develop themselves and promote themselves. Herb and I don't – I don't go out with any special social group. I go out with a great many women of all classes. Now, my friends, who are nurses and pharmacists, don't have any money, but we've been together for forty years and taken vacations. I enjoy their company. I'm comfortable with them. Then, I have some younger friends, some of whom have money and some don't. As you get older, you find it's a matter of interests. I don't play cards, I never have. I don't play Bridge or Mahjong

or even any games. I like to join organizations that do something for other people, and I think that makes a difference.

PL: At what point would you say that you felt more comfortable financially, whether it was because you were a dual income or the jewelry business was becoming very successful? What point would you say you bumped up in class and in your ability to give money to causes and things of that nature?

SB: Well, we always gave money to causes. When my mother had no money, she'd give money. I think you learn that in your family. They were very charitable with what they had. Bumping up is a matter of getting an education and associating with people who have educations but it wasn't always money. It was just a matter of making what the people who had the same ideas you did. That was the way I always felt. Money doesn't mean that much to me anyway. I don't have a great many wants. I'm just happy with what I have. I wouldn't want to be poor again, that wasn't fun either. But actually, I can get along a little or a lot.

PL: How would you describe power and clout in the Jewish community? How is it established? There is certainly a group of people that serve on boards and then there are people that are work-a-day. I mean, there's a whole vast difference –

SB: Yes, really, just like the rest of the population right now in Seattle, but if you're talking about the Jewish Federation, it's a patriarchal society, and we are working with a group of women. I started an Endowment Foundation, and we're going to have to get somebody to get us some clout there.

PL: I'd like to hear about the establishment of the Women's Endowment [Foundation].

SB: Foundation. Janet Gray and I started it, and we are now meeting with other people. The young people who are taking over and I think they'll be doing a good job. I can't really tell you much more because we're going to meet tonight again and talk about it.

PL: I want to just understand what it is and why it was necessary.

SB: Well, first of all, the Foundation – there were a lot of women in the community who were not affiliated with Federation. And they wanted to do something, and we wanted to do something for the women in the Jewish community, especially along the lines of domestic violence and so forth. So, we decided to form a little group. We would have women to breakfast and we would ask them for donations, and we decided that we would ask them for a thousand dollars a year if they could give it and more. But the problem is the Federation was not very cognizant of what we were doing. They didn't approve, they'd be thinking it would take away from something else. So what we did was decide that we were going to get ourselves a little more well-known and see if we could get a little bit more money from the women in the community who don't realize they had the means to give. That isn't only the Jewish community. I belong to Washington Women's Fund, and they, too, don't understand that they have a lot to give. I've often talked to some people in that community, and they say the same thing is true. You have to get women to understand that the money they have is theirs and they can use it as they wish.

PL: What need will you be satisfying with the fundraising?

SB: With the fundraising, we'll be able to give more money to women who have been abused, women with children, and women who are divorced. The Jewish Family Service is very good on the bottom level of that, but they need money from us to help with their programs. We don't only want to give to the Jewish community. We give to the non-Jewish community, too.

PL: You've been called many nice things. I was going to say, "many things," but that would be inappropriate. [laughter]

SB: I've been called many things, believe me.

PL: You've been called "a passionate community activist," you've been called "a pioneer in the women's community," and I'm going to ask you to roster your many activities in women's causes. What are they?

SB: Well, do you want me to look at the –

PL: Here's your CV, but you can –

SB: Oh, let me get my glasses.

PL: Sure.

SB: Now let's see.

PL: Especially ones that you'd like to talk about.

SB: Well, of course, I'm very involved with AIDS Housing of Washington. And since we started that with a board of people who were – about thirteen years ago – who had no money and really didn't know that much about AIDS and what was necessary until we started looking around and seeing people were dying, we started Bailey Boushay House. Now, the young woman who is head of it now, Betsy Lieberman, was there, and we needed a fundraiser. So, what we did was get Michele Hasson – do you know Michele? Well, Michele, at that time, hadn't run a fundraiser for anything. She just fundraised out of the goodness of her heart for Federation or for Jewish Family Service, and I said, "That woman is able to do a good job," and we hired her. That was her first job, and we raised a good deal of money. We raised about eight million dollars.

PL: What motivated you to get involved with AIDS housing?

SB: Well, I was on the board of Harbor View, and we saw an awful lot of patients who were AIDS-infected. So, what we did was we got some of the doctors to get together and give some money to a clinic. And then I thought – there was a woman who was a

Presbyterian minister, and she said, “Oh come on, we’re going to start this group because outside of the hospital, it will be helpful.” So, Gwen Beighle got me involved.

PL: Can you spell her last name?

SB: [B-E-I-G-H-L-E.]

PL: Thank you. How has that work been fulfilling to you? I understand that they are about to dedicate cottages in your name.

SB: Yes. You live long enough, and you get something in your name. Yes, it’s been very rewarding. My big problem with AIDS housing in the beginning was that they had a place for single people with AIDS, mostly men. But you know there are a lot of families with AIDS and a lot of single mothers with AIDS whose children, some of whom, have AIDS. I thought it was about time we had something for families [with] AIDS, and it’s not just the cottages. We’re building other units out in Rainer Valley, and condos we have. But it’s a necessity.

PL: Where will the Shirley Bridge Cottages be built?

SB: They’ll be built down near Beach Drive in West Seattle.

PL: Being involved with this organization, what did you witness in the city’s interaction around galvanizing or avoiding the issue of AIDS? Because we’re talking 1987 when people were really just clueing in.

SB: Yes, in Madison Park, we had to meet with people all the time, and even the builders and the construction people were against it. It took a lot of work, it took a lot of talking, and it took a lot of – well, first of all, we told them that it would be an addition to the area, and it was because it brought other businesses in. Then, we also told them that it was a necessity. You can’t overlook it. Some of the doctors came and talked, too.

Then we got a group together to raise money, Paul Schell and a few others.

PL: Was he mayor at the time?

SB: No, that's another story, but he finally gave me some money. He and another fellow and I were co-chairs. It was a necessity, and it's proven to be so. Now, we're going nationwide.

PL: What's that other story, Shirley? Okay, don't want to tell that story. What about resistance, and this is also the time [of] ACT UP, there were other organizations –

SB: Yes, well, they understood. I had friends I used to be with and hold until they died. It's sometimes too painful to even talk about, but these people – ACT UP brings attention, but the wrong kind of attention sometimes. But attention was attention. There is a privacy foundation as well as AIDS Housing, and a lot of organizations now are cooperating. You know Merrily Laytner, she is one of our famous fundraisers, and she was a fundraiser for the zoo too. She's a Jewish woman whose husband is a rabbi who is head of MAPS, the Multifaith AIDS Project. So, it's spreading.

PL: But you've been active, not only in this, but you were also active at the same time with other organizations.

SB: Oh, yes. Let me see. I can't remember what I was doing in '87. I guess I was on the Judicial Review Committee.

PL: What was the Judicial Review Committee?

SB: Well, first of all, I was on the judicial screening committee that screened judges for superior court and municipal court.

PL: Was that a volunteer or an appointed position?

SB: I was asked at the League of Women Voters to be on that. I was a non-lawyer member and was on that for a couple of years. I only excused myself because when my daughter-in-law came in for an interview for a superior court judge at that time, I bowed out.

PL: But your activities with the League of Women Voters, what has League of Women Voters done in this area? Have you been active with them?

SB: I'm fairly active. Just really, I'm at this information desk. I have never been a president or vice president or officer there, but I made a lot of friends, and we think that we're able to influence people because we go out and we talk, and they listen. We study and study and study – and I think sometimes we study too much. I think we do influence voting in a way. It's an organization that's respected very much. I can't say more because I am more proactive.

PL: So you're talking about the fact that the League of Women Voters tends to study things as opposed to going out on the streets. So what are some examples of the times when you have gone out on the streets when you've been proactive?

SB: Well, for NARAL and for abortion. Let's see what else. For women's rights.

PL: When did you feel the call? When did you feel the need to get out into the streets?

SB: I was in pharmacy for so many years, and it gets to you finally when you hear somebody come in and say, "I want to see the pharmacist," and you say, "You're the pharmacist," and they say, "I want to talk with a man." I told one guy, "Well, you don't want to me, just turn around and go out." You have to be tough. I think that kind of starts things going. Let's see what else?

PL: I think I'm just looking at an article that was written about some of your many works here, and one of them was with Voice for Choice. Was that a short stint?

SB: Yes, just a short stint. Voice for Choice.

PL: You served as well on the Seattle Women's Commission.

SB: Yes.

PL: What was the Seattle Women's Commission? When was that and how did you get involved?

SB: That was the one I told you about, wasn't it? The Seattle Women's Commission was started by Mayor Uhlman, and it was about twenty years ago – a little bit more than that. I run out of time. More like thirty, no? And it was started because we thought we needed a voice in the community. Women needed a voice. And so we went, and the Mayor said okay, and we were appointed, and then we decided that we would have an office, and that was when we had a lot of trouble. Women from all groups – from radical women to Republican women got together, and we would meet maybe once a week, and finally, we decided, "Well, unless we get an office, we won't have credibility." So we went down to the City Council. They pushed me there, and so I had to speak. We asked for an Office of Women's Rights, and we interrupted a Council [meeting] until we got it. And finally, they said, "Yes." We started the office and there was a former state representative who became our exec. It worked out well because it served a purpose. It was a group of women who got together outside of politics, actually, but we were very political because we went to Olympia and we talked to the people there. In fact, before we even talked to them, we said we would go into a bank and try to get some money without having to use our husbands' or fathers' names. So I went into a bank, and I asked for a loan of five thousand dollars – and of course, I had a lot more money than that because I was working. So I just turned around the corner and came back, and he was on the phone. I said, "Who are you calling?" "I'm just calling your husband." I said, "Oh no, you're not." I said, "You know, I'm not taking the loan, but next year, at this time, you're not going to be able to do that." So, we got the bill passed.

PL: What was the bill?

SB: It was a bill to make co-management of community property equal. There was always co-management of community property, but the manager was always the man. So, we made either – now we're both managers. And that worked out very well. There was also the fair employment practices ordinance in the city where there was not to be any discrimination because of sex, sexual orientation, color, or religion.

PL: What year was that that it passed?

SB: Around 1970.

PL: Around the same time as the other bill?

SB: Yes.

PL: Who were the other women who served on this commission?

SB: Well, there was Kathleen O'Connor and – let me see. I'm trying to remember whether Helen Sommers served on it. It's pretty hard when you're on so many things that you forget who's on what.

PL: Well, I'm curious about then the coalescence of these players. Because it takes a lot. I mean, you're humble that you said it as if you just walked into the mayor's office and got yourself appointed, but really, it takes a lot to go from being a community activist to getting legislation passed.

SB: Yes, well, we all worked together on it. But you know I can't tell you any more than that. I don't think we did anything wonderful.

PL: What did connections have to do with it?

SB: Well, I was a Treasurer of the 43rd District Democratic Club, and it was sort of a Democratic regime. We just went in there, and we asked them – in fact, we insisted; you don't ask – and we got it passed. We also got a very mild bill for abortion passed in the '70s.

PL: Can you describe what that bill was?

SB: Well, it made abortions legal in Seattle. I don't know about the state. I've forgotten about that. But you know, people used to have to go into back alleys, or there were one or two abortionists, which pharmacists always knew. Some were good, some were not, and then, of course, there were a lot of people who killed themselves, and then a lot went to Japan or out of the country.

PL: As a pharmacist, did you have contact with women or on the sly try to steer women in the right direction?

SB: Well, there were two doctors in town who didn't do it legally, but they delivered children and so forth, and they would give pills to the women. If that didn't work, they would do an abortion. But that wasn't legal.

PL: Do you know what the pills were at that time?

SB: Sure.

PL: What were they, Shirley?

SB: They were ergot, ergoapiol, and quinine. I think they're still used. The morning-after pill is a little different. But if you saw as many desperate or sick women or women who harmed themselves, you would certainly be in favor of abortion.

PL: You've also been very active in other women's health issues and on other organizations and boards. What are some of those women's organizations?

SB: Well, they weren't all women's organizations. We did have a women's health organization, but that kind of fizzled out.

PL: Is that the Women for Health Care Equity Through Reform and Education?

SB: Yes. That is now being taken over by a national company. And then we also – let's see, what else did I have here?

PL: Why did that fizzle out? I'm just curious.

SB: Well, we couldn't raise enough money from the government to keep it going. You really need government funds to keep something going, and that's what this new one will be doing. Let's see. I was on the Diabetes Research Council; we started – geez, it's been a long time ago. Three of us started a group called the Diabetes Research Council, and we started the Williams Chair on Diabetes. Now Dr. Williams was a well-known diabetes doctor. His problem was that he died too soon, but we still kept the chair, and we raised millions of dollars for the chair.

PL: Is that at U-Dub [The University of Washington]?

SB: At the U-Dub. There was one family in town whose son was a diabetic, and I got him involved, and so it grew and grew, and now we have the Diabetes Research Council, which does research on diabetes. I'm off the board, but I know some people who are still on it.

PL: Was there a personal contact that you had with someone with diabetes that impelled you to be involved with this particular organization?

SB: Well, my aunt had diabetes, but no, that wasn't true. I met Dick and Julia McAbee, who had lost a child to diabetes. He was a diabetic. It's interesting. The son who had diabetes had children who didn't – who had no diabetes. And he died. And the son, who

didn't have diabetes, had two grandchildren, children of this McAbee's son, who had diabetes. So diabetes is all over the place, and you just don't know who is going to get it. So, that's what we do. We did fundraising for that.

PL: Were there any other women's health organizations because, as a cancer survivor, did you get involved with cancer organizations?

SB: No. People call me up individually, or some of the doctors tell me they need somebody to give the patient a little bit of a lift, I will call. I think it's a little maudlin to get together and tell your problems.

PL: So when you call, what are they asking you to do?

SB: Well, you just kind of cheer them up and tell them that it's been a long time since you've been alive, and this is a new form of medication, a new form of chemo. And just give them a little pat on the head. I think that's about what they do in those groups, except they go over their problems. And I don't think that's healthy. I don't know, I've always had the ability to live each day and not look forward or backwards. And you have to do that otherwise you don't survive. My first bout was when Jon was four years old, and Dan was a few months old, and they told me I had a twenty-five percent chance of survival. So, what you do is you keep going.

PL: What was your first cancer?

SB: Of the rectum. I've had a colostomy for forty-five years.

PL: What then was the procedure for a colostomy?

SB: The same as it is now. They remove your sigmoid colon and put an opening on your stomach.

PL: So how, as a young woman –? I mean, that's very unusual – is it not – for a young woman to have gotten a colostomy?

SB: I don't know. It's happening more and more. I suppose so, but you do the best you can. It takes a while to get it regulated.

PL: So when was your second episode of cancer?

SB: Oh, I had cancer of the uterus three years after that. And then breast. And then bladder. And then the cecum, which is the lower end of the colon. That one spread.

PL: When you had cancer of the uterus, how old were you?

SB: Let me see.

PL: You had already had your three children?

SB: Two children.

PL: Two children.

SB: Yes, that's all. Yes, let me think now. I can't remember. I'm not very good. I don't dwell on these things. So, it was about 1963, about forty years ago.

PL: Did they advise you to get a hysterectomy, to do chemo? What were the –?

SB: Oh, there was no chemo. They used to sew radium pellets into your uterus, and then you'd have to sit there for four days and not raise your head because you would radiate the room. They stuck you someplace up in the hospital, and then they would take the uterus and ovaries and everything out, which is what I told them to do. I wouldn't have wanted to keep anything. You want to survive, or you don't.

PL: What is it in you that made you a strong survivor? What is that you could put your finger on, your talent for survival?

SB: Well, I had two kids, and I thought it was necessary to raise them or help to raise them, and then also I enjoyed my work. I enjoyed what I did.

PL: But all this time, you were very active, obviously, in the community as well. How did you juggle it all?

SB: Well, every other night or every third night, you have to be home. But you still can go out and do things.

PL: What are some of the – were there other organizations or community services that you wanted to highlight?

SB: No.

PL: I know you're the recipient of a number of awards that you're very proud of.

SB: Well, it's nice to have. I haven't done anything the other women haven't done before me.

PL: I want to ask if you could describe a little bit how it is that – it's very unique. It takes a lot of effort and a lot of guts to get out there and do what you have done. I'm wondering whether these opportunities were also for personal growth of any kind or was it mostly your volunteerism was outwardly motivated.

SB: Well, I think that everything in pharmacy was for personal growth because I enjoyed what I did. Personal growth is important, but I would say it's a combination. I can't just pinpoint it. There were certain things I did a long time ago, like the Seattle Opportunities Industrial Center, which was an organization founded by Black people for work in the Central Area. That's since gone by the way of other groups. Then there was a school,

the Northwest School for the Hearing-Impaired Children, that I was on the board of, and I still support that monetarily. It's a school that got children into the mainstream of high school and grade school because most of these kids were profoundly deaf. I've always been interested in the medical end of things.

PL: What are some of the greatest satisfactions and rewards that you've gotten from your community service?

SB: Well, I've met a lot of good people who have like ideas, and it's given me an opportunity to get out into the community and raise money because I met a lot of people. I think that's very important. Networking is where it's at, especially for women.

PL: Can you say something more about that?

SB: Well, all I know is that if you don't get out there and get to know people, men as well as women, you need to have somebody who is going to be a mentor, and I have a lot of mentors around because I believe that when you get into something, you have to get into it a little more deeply than just on the surface. And so I do that. I haven't given any speeches for a long time but I have been active.

PL: Who are your mentors, Shirley?

SB: Well, first of all this woman who started the Women's Endowment Foundation. That was Janet Gray and Merrily Laytner. These are young women who really have been mentors, and it's hard to believe. And then some of the women out of the School of Pharmacy, [Dr.] Joy Pline, and a young woman, Karen Dawson, who does some of the continuing education out there. And some of the women over at the League of Women Voters too: Betty Sullivan and another one, Nancy Bagley.

PL: What did they teach you?

SB: Well, one of them taught me how to read political activities. Politics is tough, and they did teach me something that I really am not very good at. Patience in reading, digesting, and doing some research on things. I have a tendency to shoot from the hip. I know as much as I want to know, and then I just like to have an activity. But the League of Women Voters has always been known for being very, very proper in the way it looks at everything, and because of that, people respect the League. [RECORDING PAUSED] I enjoy being on the Judicial Screening Committee, and that was the League of Women Voters who put me on that, and then I was appointed by Senator Murray to the U.S. District Court Screening Committee in ‘’97, and I enjoyed that too.

PL: Were you the only layperson without a JD [Juris Doctor] that was on these screening committees?

SB: On the first one, yes. And the other, no. There were others, too.

PL: What were your roles and responsibilities?

SB: Well, you had to interview people for a federal court, and that’s what we did. And we voted, and I didn’t always agree with them.

PL: Did this stem from your activities with the 43rd Democratic –?

SB: No, I think not. I just knew her before. But no, I think it was because I was on the Judicial Screening Committee before.

PL: What has it meant to be part of the Democratic Party? Have you been a delegate?

SB: No, I’ve never been a delegate. I went to the county convention. I like to support individual candidates because I think they need it more than anyone else, and I also like to support the county, not the national Democratic Party as much because I think the county thinks the way I do, and I enjoy them.

PL: So, over the years, who were some candidates that you stood behind and were either excited by your successes or their successes or disappointed?

SB: Well, Pat Thibodeau was a senator in the 43rd District; she's excellent. And then Helen Summers, a representative in I think it's the 37th District, or 36th District, is a wonderful addition to the legislature. She is an expert on finance. Let's see, was there anybody else? I wish I could say something about – well, I do support representatives out of the state. I support Barbara Boxer and [Diane] Feinstein because they're liberal, and they are working hard for women's rights. I always gave to Hillary Clinton, too, but I didn't know her personally, although she came here. And let's see, was there anybody else? Paige Miller [Seattle's first female Port Commissioner] and the people on the Port, we know each other. I think it's very important. A couple of Jewish representatives that I know too.

PL: Such as?

SB: Well, I can get the names for you if you want to turn that off a minute.

PL: We can fill them in later.

SB: Yes, there are two. [Laura] Rudner and then there's another one who is a physician also and is a representative.

PL: How active have you been in their campaigns? Is it through financial support?

SB: Yes, mostly financial support.

PL: What kind of contributions does one make to these campaigns?

SB: Well, you make the limit. I was active in [Mark] Sidran's campaign [for Seattle mayor], too. I gave the limit on that. I don't know whether it will help or not. I hope so.

PL: What is the limit? A thousand dollars?

SB: No, I think it's six hundred for this. And then Ron Sims, too. I've always been active in the County Council campaigns, too. But mostly, he's a good County Exec, and I haven't been too active in the mayor's campaigns or the city council campaigns.

PL: How about the governors?

SB: Yes.

PL: Were you supportive of Governor Locke?

SB: Oh yes, he was a good friend. I supported him when he was the County Exec. I ran one of his campaigns.

PL: You did?

SB: Yes.

PL: Tell me more about that.

SB: Well, what we did was—he is a lot different than he was then. He was shy then. So we got him out among people, and I got a room in a building from Martin Selig and some parking from Joe Diamond, and we had a headquarters. And he was quite good after he got in.

PL: Was this a paid position or was this a volunteer position?

SB: Volunteer.

PL: Go ahead.

SB: We haven't been paid for anything except being on the board of certain organizations.

PL: I'm just curious to understand how it is that one generically gets chosen to be on boards. What does it take to be on a board?

SB: Well, first of all, on the big boards, it's all taken over by people who have been very active in banking and business, and mostly men. But with others, you are appointed by some of the County Council people. That's the way it goes. Then, also you can be appointed by people in the group like senior services, they ask you to come in. Like Jewish Family Service, they ask you to come in.

PL: What's the culture of some of these boards, either generically or vis-à-vis men and women?

SB: Well, most of the boards, and that's the thing about Seattle, there are an awful lot of women in politics and a lot of women in judgeships. And so there are a lot of women on volunteer boards but not a lot on business boards where you get paid a lot of money. I think there's only one woman on the board of Washington Mutual, and there are a lot of very qualified women. Although there is a women's group, and I haven't been to them lately, that is trying to get women interested in investments and banking. But that isn't really my field. I'm not too good at it.

PL: You also served as director on the board of Ben Bridge Jewelers. What does that responsibility entail? How many stores are there now and in how many states?

SB: About sixty-five.

PL: And when you became director, when was that?

SB: Oh gosh, in the very beginning. We only had a few stores. But I didn't ever take an active interest in our business. The board just made decisions for the stores, and we all voted on it. But we pretty much let those who were managing do most of the thinking for their stores. Jon and Ed are the co-presidents of the – one is the vice president of the store. They run it pretty much. They don't ask my opinion anymore because we were bought out by Warren Buffett. He doesn't ask my opinion at all.

PL: When did Warren Buffett purchase –?

SB: That was last year.

PL: But for how many years was Herb involved with Ben Bridge Jewelers?

SB: Well all of his life I guess. Since he was eighteen.

PL: And what was your involvement and relationship to the store? Or even in terms of the name recognition. It's on the corner of a very prominent –

SB: Fourth [Avenue] and Pike [Street].

PL: Fourth and Pike in Seattle. The name Bridge is a well-known name in Seattle.

SB: Yes, I think that opened some doors for you, although it didn't for me, and medicine they didn't know from Adam. [laughter] But it has for Herb, it's opened a lot of doors. And it's nice to be known. All I do now is – people ask me to come in, and I will. If they ask me to intercede for their buying, I will do that. But that's about all.

PL: I imagine, in a sense, though, being a wife of a man who owns such a prominent jewelry store that a lot of women would want to showcase, be a walking advertisement.

How have you felt around images of women and jewelry and your role in –? I mean, you're a fairly simple, tailored woman.

SB: Yes. Turn it off. [RECORDING PAUSED]

PL: So, I was asking how was that you related to the jewelry business yourself as a woman who many women love jewelry.

SB: Well, you know, jewelry is nice and anytime people ask me to intercede on their behalf have come down to the store and help them out, I will do so. What I'm happy about is women aren't waiting for men to get jewelry anymore. You go in, and they'll choose something, and they'll pay for it themselves, and that makes it kind of nice because that shows they're in control. I have been on a lot of boards and commissions where people don't have much in the way of means, and I think it's an insult to people to overdo because instead of – and as a lot of people feel that they like to see these things, but they don't like to see them on you. I would not feel good about it. I'm sensitive to that. I don't sell. I never did in the store, not since my mother-in-law heard me say something about, "Oh, this is just as good," and it was gold-plated. It wasn't gold. That was the end of my selling career.

PL: As you watch the store expand, what it is about the jewelry business that has happened in the last fifty years?

SB: Well, the stores have grown in the mall department and we have our web page too. I don't know whether I would want to buy medicine or jewelry over the web. I think that it may be good for some people, but I like to see and I like things explained to me. I'd like to look under the microscope myself, but I think probably the malls are developing, I think, giving people more of an opportunity to go to different jewelry stores and compare.

PL: It used to be, I understand here in Seattle, that there were a lot of jewelry stores.

SB: There were, uh-huh. Friedlanders and Hardy's and, of course, Ben Bridge and let's see, what else. I'm trying to remember. But Hardy's and Friedlanders were very big. And they were big in china and silver too. And we always were kind of the small people on the block. And Hardy's and Friedlanders kind of just folded up. They were too elegant. People wanted something less intimidating.

PL: And what is it about the Ben Bridge Jeweler that survived?

SB: Well, first of all, we knew "location, location, location," and we knew where to go. I think I give credit to Herb, Bob, Jon, and Ed for that. They knew where to go, and they took advantage of the, I would say, of the new type of developments, which were the centers. And then also Bob and Herb and the boys too were very cognizant of advertising, and you advertise over television when you have people who are able to sit down and look at it, but you have to know your location too. The location of many, especially in California, when you're in a car, you advertise by the radio. So, there's a lot to do. It's a big operation. I don't know how they even keep track of it. We like to keep our people and we do promote from within.

PL: So you said you were bought out by Warren Buffett a year ago. As a director, were you involved with that decision?

SB: No, actually, a lot of us were not involved with it. I think it was mainly Ed and Jon because they were the managers at that time. And they were looking to the next generation who were not interested.

PL: Why do you think that is? It's a family business that your father-in-law started.

SB: Well, his father-in-law started it. He really did.

PL: And your son went into the business, did he not?

SB: Yes, after he practiced law for a while.

PL: So the next generation being who?

SB: His son, who is an attorney, and Becky, who is interested in blowing glass, although she does work down there, and she's very good with display and making things with her hands. But I don't really know exactly.

PL: I'm going to shift gears a little bit.

SB: Go ahead.

PL: I want to know a little bit about how you and your husband, together or separately, spend your leisure time.

SB: Well, Herb likes to motorcycle, and I did for a while, but the last two years, I haven't been able to because once I jumped off the motorcycle, landed flat, and I don't want to do that again because I'm too old. We take vacations together. We take vacations separately.

PL: I'd like to know a little bit more about the motorcycling.

SB: Well, I didn't take up motorcycling until I was sixty-five, and then I said I was expendable, so I took it up, and for about twelve years, I rode on the back. I'm not very mechanical, so I didn't have my own. Herb just recently got a new motorcycle. We used to go on trips to the east of the mountains and down the coast. It was fun when I was in better shape, but I'm almost eighty, so it makes it tough.

PL: Herb is part of this Hell's Rotarians?

SB: Oh yes, and he loves it. He just had a complete knee [replacement] and he still is motorcycling.

PL: What is the motorcycle culture for folks over sixty-five?

SB: Well, what they feel like – I imagine it's the same for everyone – they like the idea of the freedom of having the wind blowing in their hair or their scalp, and they like the idea of the open road. It's not even companionship because we never used to have a lot of people. It's dangerous to have a big group on the road. So, it's just the idea of the freedom to get places and not be encompassed in a car. I think it's kind of a kid thing.

PL: Did you have the little headsets so you could communicate with each other?

SB: Oh yes, absolutely. And you know you can get places faster, and you don't have to worry about parking. But the thing is that it's kind of, I think, for the men, it's kind of a macho thing. I'm not sure. Although a lot of women are riding too, their own bikes. If I were mechanical, I'd ride my own, but I'm not. I can't even do bicycling. I can't keep a bicycle straight. I have to have a tricycle.

PL: Do you have any other hobbies and special interests?

SB: Hobbies, special interests? Well, I used to exercise – my little rowing machine. Hobbies. I don't know. I don't write poetry. But I do have friends. Well, what I do is probably, my hobbies are probably going on vacations, and I don't have any real hobbies.

PL: Where do you like to go on vacation?

SB: Someplace where it's warm. I like to go to San Francisco. I like to go to Hawaii. This is the second cruise I've been on. I'll see how I like that.

PL: Where was the first one that you took?

SB: I went far afield. Well, that was Western Caribbean, and this will be the Eastern Caribbean [laughter], and we'll probably boil in August.

PL: You have also a home you mentioned on Whidbey Island. When did you purchase that?

SB: Well, Jon got out of the service. He still owed about six years, and he had gone to law school, and he was stationed up there. And Herb kind of conned me into it. He said, “Well, what if Jon’s stationed up here.” Luckily, he was stationed up there. He would have heard from me. And he kept the house all that time. He was stationed at the Whidbey Island, up at the air station up there. He enjoyed it and kept the house all going for us. And then they just built a house next door and so we have our little compound up there. It’s relaxing for Herb to go up there. He enjoys it. I do, too, in a way, but there’s not that much to do. He likes to go out and garden and lie in the sun, and I can’t do those things, so what I usually do is help them a little, and then I read.

PL: What kind of reading do you take up?

SB: Well, we have a lot of magazines.

PL: What do you subscribe to? What are some magazines?

SB: The New Yorker, National Geographic, The New Republic, and a lot of magazines from our professions. So, I have a lot of those. And I enjoy reading about those. I also like mysteries.

PL: Any particular authors?

SB: No, not particularly. I like the Kellerman family. I think they write okay. That’s alright. But Neil Marsh is one I like and some of the early writers. And when I’m going to be reading as soon as I can get it is the Graham book.

PL: Oh, Katharine Graham’s new memoir.

SB: Katherine Graham. What is it, Personal Memory or Personal History? I can't remember. That's what I'm waiting for. You know you have to backorder that. I didn't realize that.

PL: Why is it important to you to read her book or her memoir?

SB: Well, first of all, she is an interesting woman. I'd like to know how much – her father was Jewish. I'd like to know whether there was any Judaism in the family.

PL: Why do you think that matters?

SB: I like to know that some important people – Jewish women are important. I wonder if anybody ever thought of interviewing her. Would have been nice. She still has some sisters, but I'm sure they're not as interesting as she.

PL: What about shopping? Is that a leisure activity for you like it is for many women, and Jewish women, [who] love shopping. [laughter]

SB: I don't shop at all. I have a woman, Toshi, who – she has broken her hip – but she is at Nordstrom. I hate to shop. I always have because my father made all my clothes so I didn't have to shop. So she picks something out, and if I like it, she'll bring it up here. She's very nice, and if I like it, I keep it. If I don't, I may go down. No, I don't. I hate to shop.

PL: Because shopping is often a women-centered activity.

SB: Herb likes to shop. I drive him nuts because I go through a store [and] don't see anything I want. Once in a while, we will buy some art, but not a lot, and I like to go to the museum. I especially like the museum up in Volunteer Park, the Asian Museum. I grew up with that one. And I like that. But I don't have any strong collector's desires or anything like that. I do like some of the old books over here, and that's about it. I do

read a lot.

PL: Are there any restaurants or locations in Seattle other than the Asian Art Museum that you frequent? That your friendships and networks enjoy?

SB: Oh, well we go out a lot. There are a lot of restaurants here. There's one down the street, an inexpensive one called Ohana, which is a combination of Hawaiian and Japanese food. And then there are a lot of expensive restaurants if you want to go to them. I just don't usually do that. But I haven't. I like the fish restaurants. But what we usually do is I have some people come in and we talk and some of my friends, we just go to Macrina's [Café and Bakery], you know, the Pat Thibodeau, the senator, likes to go to Macrina's. Some of the others just like to go up there to the Cherry Street Grill. It seems to me it's kind of a fun place to meet people from the neighborhood.

PL: I was going to say you've moved to Belltown or you've been in Belltown for a while.

SB: A long time.

PL: It's shifted a lot. What have you witnessed about the change in Belltown? It's really where a lot of growth has happened.

SB: Yes, too much, I think. I think they're over-extended. I've found that the apartments are – this apartment is still full, but an awful lot are going to be empty, and they aren't even going to be. There are apartments that are rented and apartments that are condos. I think that they're going to have a lot of trouble renting them. For AIDS Housing, we have to go up to Madison [Street] to get something that's cheap enough. But an awful lot of people are crying, especially those who sell commercial properties. There are some in this building that are doing that. So, I've noticed that it's over-urbanized now, too much. I think Capitol Hill has stayed pretty much the same. I like it, especially on 14th and 15th [Avenues]. And, of course, the [Volunteer] Park is wonderful.

PL: Do you enjoy some of your leisure time with your grandchildren? How many grandchildren do you have?

SB: Well, they're teenagers now. I don't see too much of them. They come over here when they want to swim or work out. And we do go on vacations together to Hawaii, Jan and Dan and the boys and her folks and I. And Herb usually goes skiing then. Herb has his activities, and I have mine.

PL: Can you describe what those are?

SB: Well, he likes to ski, and he likes to motorcycle. I used to motorcycle. I don't ski anymore. And then he'll go to Hawaii with me. Part of that is business. And then we go up to Vancouver or Victoria. I do that with the women, too. We go to Nevada. We go to Las Vegas because we have stores there. We have a store in Las Vegas. Yes, we've taken them to Las Vegas and Reno. But now that they're grown, we go to Hawaii. Our grandkids, when they were younger, lived in California, and I used to go down there and babysit, but now that they live on Queen Anne – one is fifteen, one is eighteen, one who lives on Magnolia is twenty, and she's going to school, and so is the eighteen-year-old. The thirty-one-year-old is in Boston. So I don't have too many to babysit. The fifteen-year-old comes over once in a while and stays overnight.

PL: Well, we talked about your relationship to mothering. But I'm wondering if your relationship to grandmothering was different or similar.

SB: A little bit different. Becky came over to me every day after school for about a year, and we did our math together and so forth. That was interesting. And then Zack did, too, I think, for a little while. It was more tutoring than anything else. Then, we'd go shopping. They like to shop. And they would drag me around and I would try to be pleasant because that is a lot of walking around because they look at everything. So I have a good relationship with them. It isn't real, real close. They don't confide in me

except when they want to ask something. They don't even ask a medical deal anymore. But I don't have this clingy type of relationship that maybe some grandmothers have, and I don't call them every day. I call them when they're home alone, usually, to make sure they're okay. But they have their own lives to lead, too.

PL: Well, talking about Becky and your daughters-in-law. Both of them are very prominent women.

SB: Right.

PL: How have you felt about your children's marriages and their partner choices?

SB: Well, they seem to have wonderful partner choices. I think it's perfect for them. I think I'd choose them. I'm very proud of them, and I like what they do. They seem to be happy. They agree on most things. They have their homes, and they have summer homes where they want them, and it's swell.

PL: What are your relationships with your daughters-in-law?

SB: Well, they're very friendly. I love them very much. And they're close, but they're so busy, too. I support them in what they do, and they support me in what I do. They're always there for me. And when I'm sick, my other daughter-in-law, who is a physician at the U [University of Washington], is there to listen to the tests and go right into the lab people. Yes, they've been very supportive. I don't know, you know, exactly how other families were, but I would say that they're close, and we get together a couple of times a year for vacations, and we also get together for holidays, and we go out to dinner.

PL: Are they both Jewish?

SB: They were converted. They were both converts.

PL: Was that something important to your family?

SB: Yes, it was to Dan especially. Her father and her mother are not Jewish. In fact, her grandfather was a Methodist minister but they're very nice people and very supportive, and they were there when she converted and everything. My other daughter-in-law and her mother both converted. They were Catholics, not very devout apparently.

PL: Her mother-in-law converted?

SB: Her mother.

PL: Her mother, excuse me. Was that at the same time?

SB: A little bit later, after they were married quite a few years.

PL: What have you noticed about the relationship between these women as converts to Judaism in your family? Often, they say converts are really a blessing to a family because they understand so much more than those who are born into the tradition.

SB: Yes, well, my daughters-in-law are both very academic so. Bobbe's been president of AJC and all this stuff. She's very devoted to the Federation, and she does her thing. Yes, I think she's a good daughter-in-law, and she's a good Jewish woman. The other one went to Israel with Dan, and she learned how to speak and write Hebrew, so she's pretty good at that, too. She's quite religious, I think.

PL: And have they instilled that in your grandchildren?

SB: I think so. Yes. And Becky is kind of "eh." [laughter] But she is a counselor at camp, and she has been for years. And the other ones – yeah, they are pretty Jewish. A rabbi's son would have to be. But she's very supportive of him, and he's supportive of her. She's very busy. They have marriages similar to ours but not as much argument, but they do their own thing sometimes, and they have their own activities. Personally, I think that's healthy. I wouldn't want somebody to be doing everything with me. I need

my space. I know Herb does, too.

PL: So, is that the survival and the success of your marriage?

SB: I guess you could say it's a success. I don't know. We'll have to find out. [laughter]

PL: Well, to wrap up the interview, I want to go to a much broader arena and ask you some questions about being someone who has really witnessed changes nationally, internationally, and in Seattle for a good part of the 20th century. I didn't know whether or not there were particular events, landmark events, that really had an impact on you that we haven't discussed. We did talk about the Depression and Vietnam and things like that, but I didn't know if there were things that I'd missed.

SB: I was here when the State of Israel was formed and when the first war went on. We were all out by the Masonic Temple, raising money. That's when we all worked together, Jews from all walks of life. And let's see if there was anything else that was really shaky around here. Well, of course, the death of President Kennedy was quite earthshaking around here because this is a very Democratic county, and I was the treasurer of the 43rd District Democratic Club. They had me on the hookup talking to Ladybird Johnson, and we exchanged views and questions.

PL: What was the substance of that conversation?

SB: Well, it was just how the Democratic Party was going to get along and survive, and I think there was nothing very academic about it.

PL: Where were you when you learned that Kennedy was shot?

SB: In my house. I was off that day, and I picked up the phone, and of course, he was dead. When I could get it, I called the president of the 43rd District Club, and we talked a bit about it, and then she said, "Just hold tight. Don't get too excited. Things would go

on." And they did. It was quite a shock. We didn't know too much about his private life, but we thought that he had done a good job, all but the problems with the Cuban missile crisis. But it's too bad that that happened. It was a big wake-up call for America, I think.

PL: How so?

SB: I think that people realized that not only were people vulnerable, but Presidents were vulnerable, too. I don't think it taught us a lot about who we should have as Presidents, but I think it taught us to be very wary of people who were liable to do you harm, maybe too much so. I don't know if it allowed the Presidents to grow or not. But that was kind of a sad wake-up call. You were too young to remember.

PL: You mentioned the formation of the State of Israel. How did you feel that you, yourself, personally or the Seattle Jewish Community, felt the impact of the Holocaust?

SB: Well, of course, many of my friends came from Germany and were in the Holocaust. My aunt in Russia, who never got over here with my father, was [with] my grandmother over there. They were killed at Treblinka. So we know that it was close. My friends, many of them, would never talk about the Holocaust until just lately, Gizel Berman, who wrote a book but would not talk, and her husband, who fed the dogs – and that's how he survived. And then Klaus Stern and his wife. These are all people that were in camps. They seem to be doing all right. Most of them were fairly young when they were in the camps, so they wouldn't have survived. Their families are all gone. And then Betty Zollshan and Lillian Eisler who were good friends of mine. Betty still is. But they died – both she and her husband died, but I think it was hurried by the fact that they had no family left.

PL: Hold on [END OF TRACK 3] We're continuing with the oral history interview of Shirley Bridge. This is minidisc tape number four. I was wondering if you were involved with the State of Israel and its impact on Seattleites. Being that it's far away from the

East Coast and where a lot of people were immigrating to.

SB: Well, we had, I must tell you, that when Herb's grandmother came here, Grandma Bridge, in 1880, her sister went to Palestine. So we have relatives in Tel Aviv. We had relatives on moshav and relatives on a kibbutz, and we had relatives in the city of Tel Aviv.

PL: Have you visited them?

SB: Oh yes. Jon and Bobbe and Dan – Dan and the boys, when Jan was taking her exams, took a ten-month sabbatical and went over to Israel and they were there for ten months, and the kids went to school there. So, we would go over a couple of times and see them. And we were there when there was the first Intifada deal, and we were in the American Colony Hotel. That was quite an experience because they were mostly Arabs and they were Arab sympathizers. we tried to get a cab outside the Arab section, and they were very angry at the cab drivers, who were Arabs who drove the Jews around. So yes, we've been there. It was frightening, even in the beginning, and this was a long time ago.

PL: What year are we talking about? The late '80s?

SB: Early '80s, I think.

PL: What do you feel that your investment to Israel is as an American Jew? How identified do you feel with –?

SB: Very identified. I think that we've made some mistakes there. I don't know if we're going to survive it. But I do feel very dedicated to the causes, and we give money there. We have a space in the John F. Kennedy Forest. We've given a lot of money to that, too. I believe in land reclamation.

PL: I think I read somewhere that there's a forest, a Shirley and Herb Bridge Forest.

SB: There could be. I don't know. I'm sure there's something. [inaudible]

PL: How much do you feel Israel has factored into Seattle's Jewish identity?

SB: Well, with Federation, I think quite a bit. In fact, they're trying to – Jon hasn't been over there for a while, but Dan had to take a group of kids over. I don't think it was wise. I don't think there's any way you can protect these children, no matter where they go. That was to show solidarity because I think you push the envelope too much when you do that.

PL: You're talking about the recent cause Dan's, the director and rabbi at Hillel? U-Dub Hillel?

SB: Yes, he's been there for a long time.

PL: So he just took kids this summer to Israel?

SB: No, he didn't take anything off. He'd had a couple of weeks with two groups of kids who wanted to go over. And they had a hard time trying to keep them safe. But in the meantime he visited his relatives in Tel Aviv. But it's kind of hard, you know, to make a judgment but I may make one and say I think that it's kind of counterproductive to go over there and say, "Here I am." You're preaching to the choir. You don't want Jews to go over there as much as you want other people to go over and see. They really are losing a lot of business because of the problems there. I have no solution to it. It just seems to me that the Arabs want everybody to disappear, all the Jews, and the Jews want the Arabs to disappear, and I don't know what's going to happen. If you have an answer, you tell me.

PL: So, I guess my last questions are around issues around women's networks and aging. I'm wondering whether or not images of women, Jewish women, have changed over the course of your lifetime.

SB: Not enough. I think young women are much better suited to become important in their own rights. But no, I don't think it's changed the—I don't know whether you can tell from the way you've interviewed, but I imagine that these women are just the same as they were fifty years ago.

PL: How did you feel about feminism and women's lib [liberation – call it what you will – at different times?

SB: I've been in favor of it all my life. And I figured that more Jewish women should be involved in that. They seem to be too protective, or maybe it's the community. I know people in certain communities, and I think mostly the Sephardic communities that don't even like women to do investing or do anything in business. It just seems to me that's the wrong thing. They expect them to do the domestic things and listen to what the men say. I don't know whether that's just part of their culture or whether it's a Middle Eastern culture or what. I don't know if you've noticed it at all.

PL: Do you have any particular cultural heroines?

SB: Some of the women from the League of Women Voters you know, who have started – what do you mean? Golda Meir was very interesting. She was one-of-a-kind, though. Our group is called "Golda Meir" in Hadassah.

PL: How is she one of a kind, in your opinion?

SB: Well, I don't think there was any other Jewish woman of her generation who would have been interested in politics. There are a lot of Jewish businesswomen, but there are some women who are involved in research, but not a lot. We have to leave it to you kids

because, hopefully, kids will take up the gauntlet of being a modern Jewish woman in a modern world.

PL: So what advice do you give to those women, to our generation?

SB: I tell them to do what they want to do and be independent and be able to take care of yourself and not be dependent upon some guy for everything. That's the worst thing. To be dependent upon anybody. That's why my daughters-in-law work. I think it's very important to be independent. You never know what's going to happen.

PL: Are there any other significant experiences in the last ten years of your life around aging, around witnessing the process of aging, that you'd like to close this interview with?

SB: Well, aging is not for sissies. Old age is not for sissies. There is no doubt about that. But I think if you're lucky enough, and it has nothing to do with the physical body – if you're lucky enough to still have your mind, well then I think that's all you really need. You have to keep that active. But I'm sure that you've seen it with Meta [Buttnick] and with Sara Efron.

PL: Are there women's groups or organizations –? Some women have book clubs and things of that nature that keep their minds active, where you talk around issues of health and things like that.

SB: We have Kathleen O'Connor, who writes for the newspaper on healthcare. She wrote a book, and I'm critiquing it. But no, I don't know too much about that type of thing. Ask me the question again and I'll give it a little more thought.

PL: Well, I guess I'm wondering how it is that you, compared to the previous generation of women, cope with issues of aging, with health. And women are very active in

women's networks.

SB: Yes, they are. There's one thing about the Bullitt family. I don't know if you know them or not. Dorothy Bullitt owned King Television. And she was bemoaning the fact to Ancil Payne, who was her manager, that she was getting old and everybody was dying off, and he said, "Stop complaining. Just get yourself younger friends." And that's what I have done. I really have friends among women in their fifties or younger. And we go on vacations. As much as I care for my older friends, it's just impossible to go places with them because they are even in worse shape than I am. But you know, we all try to keep our heads on straight. We've been lucky. My oldest friend in this group is ninety-two, and she's sharp as a tack. So, what do you do as far as getting older is not bemoan the fact.

PL: Shirley, with those words I'm wondering if you have any final comments, or are there things that we've missed that are important, or if you want to make a final statement?

SB: Oh, no, I think you've hit everything, and I think you've been very pleasant and patient with me because I'm not a great one to be interviewed. Thank you for coming.

PL: Well, it's been a pleasure. Thank you for being part of the project.

[END OF INTERVIEW]