



# Trude Kranzler Transcript

Jean Freedman: This is an interview with Trude Kranzler. It's April 28th, 2002. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. And, I'm Jean Freedman, recording this for the Jewish Women's Archive, "Weaving Women's Words" Project. OK. I always start out my interviews the same way. And, that's by asking the person to tell me their full name, and when and where they were born.

Trude Kranzler: My name is Trude Kranzler, and I was born in Germany, Heilbronn, which is near Stuttgart.

JF: And when was that?

TK: That was July 11th, 1926.

JF: OK. Can you tell me a little bit about your family and your childhood?

TK: Well, we were three children. My father was a very active and a very prosperous businessman. And we had a dry goods store. And my mother was helping him in the business. We had a Kinderfräulein, which is a governess.

JF: What did she do? Was she in --?

TK: She would take us to the park, and she would take care of us. And, we had a maid and a Jewish cook. And just all the help that my mother needed to keep the kind of home that was expected. And we had a lovely childhood. I went to public school until we were expelled. That's when a Jewish school was formed -- when all the Jewish children were expelled.

JF: And that was --



TK: And that probably was 1934, I imagine, I don't recall the exact date. Maybe 1935. And, there were not enough of us to have regular classes for everyone. So, we were taught in one big class, together with different levels. And, we got a Jewish education, plus a secular education. We had wonderful teachers. In fact one of my former teachers is still alive, and lives here in Baltimore. And, was my children's teacher. We had a very open house. And, we belonged to an Orthodox synagogue -- which was the Austritz Gemeinde - -which means, it separated from the regular Jewish community -- because there weren't Orthodox enough.

JF: I see, and in what way -- "not Orthodox enough?"

TK: In their observance-- the German Jews were very assimilated, and they didn't keep many of the Jewish traditions. So, we belonged to that group. And, it was a very close-knit, and wonderful kehilla community. And, I just have very, very fond memories. My father and mother were very active in the community.

JF: Do you have any specific memories that you'd like to share?

TK: Yes. So, we have many memories of our hosting the teacher every Shabbat because he was single. And we couldn't afford a rabbi at that time, any longer -- so he would be our Ben Bayit -- which means, a guest of the house. He would be spending Shabbat with us, every single week. Oh, we had all the Jewish affairs in our home. We were very Zionistic, and wanted to immigrate to Israel.

JF: Was this true, even before Hitler came to power?

TK: No. No. My mother was pure German. And, by "pure German" -- she was German-Jewish. My father was born in Poland. So, we were on the Polish quota. But, back-tracking a little bit to the time when we wanted to go to Israel -- there were communities forming to go to Israel, and one community that my parents wanted to hook up with -- was Rexingen, which was a Jewish community -- a small Jewish community, where the



whole group went together to Shavev Zion. That was a -- I think it must have been a moshav. I'm not quite sure. You were able to take along or transfer a lot of your wealth into material things such as refrigerators, etc. Things that were needed. It was a kibbutz, ok?

JF: Mmm hmm.

TK: And my father thought, that this way, he could transfer some of his money -- plus other things, in terms of material things. However, my mother who didn't want to leave Germany -- because she was of the thought that this would blow over. This is just a temporary. She had family that was going to America, and she was vehement and did not want to go to Israel, because she felt she needed her family, and wanted to connect to her family again. As much as she loved going to Israel -- but it would have been our family alone, with this group of people -- rather than with other members of her family that emigrated to America. So, that she actually became ill. And that nixed this plan, because there was a limit and deadlines that had to be followed. And, her belief was all along, she really wanted to stay. She was very educated. She had a great love for German literature. And, she had very good schooling. She was convinced that could not be her Germany. And that she wanted to stay. However, my parents -- my father was a very smart man. He saw the writing on the wall. And, he felt that there was really not much hope. Actually, on Shevuos, 1938 he went to Vienna to say good-bye to a sister of his who lived in Vienna, and was going to Israel. And while he was there, he was shopping on the main street there. And, they took trucks and put them on one side of the street, and on the other side of the street.

JF: And who is "they"?

TK: The Viennese government, or the Viennese people.

JF: The authorities?



TK: The authority. And they collected all of the Jews into the trucks while they were shopping. The shop -- where they, my parents, were at that point -- hid them in the back. They were buying some jewelry and the jeweler said, "Go to the back so you're not discovered". And when my father came back to Germany, he said, "If this is so bad in Vienna -- it is just going to be coming to Germany. And this is a sign for us that we really have to get moving." We were on a Polish quota, as I said before, because my father was Polish.

JF: He had never become a German citizen?

TK: You couldn't become a German citizen.

JF: Oh, I see.

TK: You could not become a German citizen. So, we were on a Polish quota. But, he had done that prior already. But he stepped on it, and he really saw to it that everything was in order. That we could leave as soon as possible. The red tape takes a long time. He was very instrumental in opening the eyes to many other families in the community, and helping them. In fact, in New York, I meet people now with their children and with their grandchildren -- who are forever thankful to him that he was instrumental in making them step on it, and get their affidavits in order, and their visas, and their ship tickets. Whatever was needed. This was from -- I guess June through the whole summer that he was busy with other families, with his own -- to get his own things in order. And then, in October, 1938, was the Polish Aktion. The Polish Aktion -- which was that the German government first wanted to cleanse Germany of its foreigners. And since we were on the Polish quote. Anyway, we were hauled to a--a cell, to police headquarters.

JF: The whole family?

TK: The whole family -- without any notice, and had to stay overnight in a cell. And, the next day we were sent home. For us children, it was really traumatic.



JF: What did you think as a child?

TK: It was horrible. I was the oldest, and I had a younger sister, and a younger brother. And, we were terrified. Then we were sent home to pack one valise with belongings. And, we were shipped to Stuttgart, which was the next town, where the Jewish community was wonderful, and had lunches ready for us, and was supportive. But, I remember standing one on one up staircases being interrogated, and fingerprints taken and God knows what.

JF: Did they interrogate the children?

TK: Yes, we -- the whole family -- and, it was just a very traumatic experience. And then, we were put on trucks. This was a Friday evening.

JF: Did you know where you were going?

TK: No.

JF: And, we had our Shabbes clothing on. My parents saw to it that we had our warm things on, and it was Shabbat. So that we would be dressed properly. And, we were sitting on the truck. And, because my father was well-connected in the community in Germany -- There was a call -- Neumann family. -My maiden name was Neumann. We were asked to come down. What we were asked then by the officials -- the police chief came from Heilbronn -- to Stuttgart, to see to it that we would not be shipped away, because my father apparently had contacted someone to contact him that we had everything ready to leave. When we were called down, we were asked to sign away our bank accounts-- I mean, my father was asked to sign away his bank accounts. He was asked to sign away his house, his business. Just all our belongings. And he was very willing to do it. But, this was Friday night. And he said, "It's Shabbat" -- which was ridiculous actually, because in order to save a life, Bekuach Nefesh you are allowed to do anything. And this certainly was the fact that, it was a life-threatening situation. The



police chief said, "I vouch for Herr Neumann. And he will come tomorrow night, and he will sign it." So, we were put up in a hotel. But, if I tell you -- the next morning we heard goose-steps. I remember this so clearly, to this day -- outside of our hotel room. We were sure we were being picked up again. And, it was just a very traumatic situation. But, thank God. My father went at night, and signed everything away. And, we were sent home. We were sent back.

JF: To Heilbronn?

TK: To Heilbronn. And actually, this whole shipment of Polish Jews from Germany were shipped to Spongeen , which was a border town between Germany and Poland. They were shot at from the Poles, and from the Germans. And, no one got out from this whole transfer. So, how we got out is just a miracle. It's not to be believed. What it showed us that we really had to step on it, and get out of Germany. This was sometime at the end of October. My father tried to wind up his business, and my mother tried to pack up. Of course, all the German help had left us -- because they were no longer allowed to work for us. I remember our Putzfrau which was a cleaning lady said -- "Mrs. Neumann, I'm very sorry, I cannot work for you any more, because my son will turn me in, if I continue working for you." And, this is a woman who worked for us for years, and years. So, it was just a very difficult situation and my poor mother, who was not used to working at home, had to pack up a whole household. And we were really not allowed to take out that much. Actually, my parents had bought new furniture, and new things to take along to Israel at that time. Later we thought we would take it to America. So, of course, none of that could be taken, because my father had signed it away. They were able to take some older things along.

JF: Could he take any money?

TK: No. He was not allowed to. He had the foresight to smuggle some money out prior which, unfortunately -- we'll get to it later -- was used up by relatives, who needed it.



(laughter) You paid a very high price for people to smuggle out money for you. Because he saw it was so dangerous, he had paid probably 100% to see that he had some dollars or some money in Belgium with a relative. But, that's beside the point. They needed it for the business later. So that wasn't there. It became much worse in Germany -- and to this day, I hate big demonstrations, and big marches, and big gatherings. (Even though I went to the rally in Washington -- which was very important to me for Israel -- because we are still very Zionist.) It was getting very bad in Germany. And all these rallies and the Hitler Youth, especially.

JF: Do you have memories of seeing these demonstrations? Oh what were they like?

TK: Yes. Oh it was horrendous. The cheering of "Heil Hitler!" and the screaming. It was unbelievable. But, so -- we -- my mother packed up. And, actually, we were still in Germany on Kristallnacht. And, my father went into hiding. He had good customers.

JF: Was his store destroyed?

TK: What?

JF: Was his store destroyed on Kristallnacht?

TK: No, our store was not destroyed. But the synagogues, and the goose-steps we heard outside of our home. It just was a -- unbelievable, frightening situation. My father went into hiding. And my mother was left without cash. (We didn't have charge cards the way we have today)-- she had to wind up everything at home. I recall, very clearly, very good friends of ours-- an engaged couple, came from Stuttgart came to Heilbronn to bring my mother cash. So she would be able to finish up paying everyone, and seeing that everything was in order.

JF: Were these non-Jews?



TK: No, it was a Jewish couple, and they risked their lives, actually. They live in Detroit. And we are good friends with them. (laughter) It was for my mother a very, very hard time. We were -- I was barely 12 at the time. My sister was 10, and my brother was 8. And we didn't understand the commotion and -- I mean, I understood. But you know, it was just very, very difficult time for us.

JF: Do you remember how you felt at this point?

TK: Oh, it was just devastating. My mother was heartbroken to leave this beautiful home, and the beautiful things. We did pack a lift which, incidentally, was addressed to Baltimore. For an interesting reason -- because there was a rabbi here. My father wanted again to begin belonging to a Jewish community. And there was a rabbi here -- a Rabbi Schwab, who formed a congregation here-- Shearis Israel. And, my father felt he wanted us to grow up in an Orthodox community. He had his lift addressed to Baltimore. Coming back to the things that my mother prepared. We could not take out money. So my father was in the dry goods business. So, there were seamstresses that sewed a whole trousseau for my sister and myself. And they initialed everything. It couldn't be new things that one took along. It was only some of the older things that we had. So, we did pack a lift. Or, my mother did pack a lift. That again, was a very traumatic experience. And, we left. My father came back. At Kristallnacht, all the men were called in and sent to concentration camps. He was able to avoid it.

JF: How did -- who was he hiding with?

TK: He was hiding with customers -- in-town customers who liked him very much and they took care of him. But, we left, and we went to Paris, one night, and to Le Havre -- the French port. And we left with the Normandy.

JF: If I could go back just a bit -- you were very young when Hitler came to power. But, you have some memories, as you've said of before that -- of going to public school and





having a normal life in Germany. And, I wonder if you could tell me something about that, and then how things changed after Hitler came to power?

TK: Oh, it was incredible. I recall that friends that I had wouldn't even acknowledge me. They weren't allowed to play with me. They weren't allowed to be friends with us. And, like I said before, our help wasn't allowed to work for us. My father had help in the store -- they weren't allowed to work there. And, it was just a very difficult time all around. And that really sort of made the Jewish community stick together. And I formed many good friends in the new school, where I went -- and our family life -- we tried to go on as normal as possible -- you know, from '33 to '38 -- as much as possible. But, it was a very, very difficult time. The antisemitism was so strong. We didn't look particularly Jewish. So, you know, we were blond and sort of blended in the community so that we, personally, didn't feel that much. Then, again, you saw so much in the streets, and you heard so much where friends of ours were hurt, and they were beaten because maybe someone had a beard. Or someone looked very Jewish. It was very frightening to see the newspaper, *Der Stürmer* which had caricatures of Jewish people posted all over. We did not have meat. Because there was from 1933, I think to '38 -- because they did not allow for the Jewish slaughter. Ritual slaughter. And I recall, you just made do. And, we survived.

JF: Was -- did your synagogue continue during this period?

TK: It got smaller and smaller -- because we were anyway a small synagogue that separated from the larger synagogue. And, it got smaller and smaller as people left -- or as people were pulled into concentration camps, and were shipped away. That's why we could not afford a rabbi any longer, and we had this teacher who was with us -- so, it was a very, very trying time. It left its mark on my mother. Imagine that you are rooted in a country, and are educated, and in the middle of life, you just have to pick up and just leave and take your kids and leave. (My mother was the one that studied English, and



we thought she was wonderful when we came to the United States, knowing some English. In the meantime, she never really learned to speak English well. Whereas my father who was out in life learned to speak much better.) So, it was a very difficult time.

JF: Did you continue to celebrate the holidays and observe Shabbat?

TK: Yes, we did everything. Always. My father's business was closed on Shabbat. I think the strength of our religion kept us through all of this. I found a lot of my friends who were not religious had much more trouble. We had a strong family life, and a strong religious life -- and Shabbat was carried on the way it always was -- with friends and it helped us. It helped us through the time.

JF: Do you have any memories of before '33? Of going to the public school and things you did for fun?

TK: I do. Actually, for restitution -- they gave us a trip back.

JF: What was that like?

TK: Very difficult. I had a friend who claims she was my friend, but wasn't allowed to speak to me any more. She was very bothered by it, so she said. I mean, if you can believe it. My husband went through the same trauma. My husband was 10 and a half years older than I was. And, he was in a doctoral program in Germany. And he was so close to some of his colleagues, that the professors would think that they copied from each other, because they thought alike. His very best friend turned against him. It was unbelievable. He also was in Germany until 1938 to finish his doctorate. The antisemitism that he experienced was incredible, because they just turned -- the most wonderful professors turned against the Jews. The best friends that you sit on a school bench with -- where your thoughts are the same that you're accused of plagiarizing turning against you. He was extremely lucky. The Jesuit priests who were in the same university -- that's the Maximilian University in Würzburg - -had to take, for their order,



their exams. And, he decided, not knowing what the situation would be -- that he would go in with them to take the exam with them -- even though he did not need to take exams in order to pass a doctorate. But he wanted to substantiate that he had gone through all the courses and that he did all the work. So, he went in with them and took the exam. He said it was incredible that your best friends just turned against you. And, he stayed in Germany longer -- in order to finish his doctorate. And, his family emigrated earlier. And he taught English. He took ten years of Greek, and 12 years of Latin, and Aramaic, and all the -- he was in the philosophy program -- and education program at the University. He taught Portuguese to the Jews that wanted to go to Portugal. That's how he had his pocket money by teaching English and Portuguese. He prepared himself one lesson in advance. He had incredible experiences being alone in Germany without his family. He wanted to finish his doctorate, which they did not give him, because there was a decree that no Jew would get a doctorate from that university any longer. Actually, he then later -- resubmitted his thesis and all his credentials. They awarded him the doctorate retroactively, after he had gone to Columbia, and gotten another doctorate. He had an experience when he left Germany right after Kristallnacht. He did not have an exit visa. All along the way you needed exit visas and entrance visas. Exit visa out of Germany. He saw it was so bad after Kristallnacht, that he just wanted to leave. He left with a friend of his -- the family is here in Baltimore. A young man who had all his papers and they got to the border of Germany. My husband did not have the exit visa.

JF: To the border with France?

TK: No, he went to Holland.

JF: To Holland. OK.

TK: So, he got to the border. When they got to the border, he had no entrance visa, they looked at my husband -- who probably looked like a poor student, and they said "Kranzler, go." And they took the other fellow off the train and he never made it. He



came to Amsterdam, the family of this young man was awaiting for him, and my husband appeared. There was no rhyme or reason -- for any of their dealings, or for why he was let go and the other one was called down. There just was no reason for any of their actions. So you know, we are very lucky that we are here to tell the story.

JF: You said something interesting earlier. You said most German Jews were very assimilated -- but your family was not.

TK: Yes.

JF: Why do you think that was?

TK: Why? I actually -- my mother's family already was Orthodox. In Germany, actually, the small communities stayed fairly Orthodox, because the community kept them together. They did not have the strong education. When a lot of my mother's family came to the United States, they started working on Shabbat. Whereas my mother had a very good Jewish education. Also she married my father who came from a strong Jewish background -- Orthodox background. Even though there was a Depression at that time when we came to America, and there were no jobs available (we'll get to that later) my father would not desecrate the Sabbath. I guess they valued the culture which was very, very beautiful. My mother valued Schiller and Goethe and all the literature, valued music, and the theater. But when there wasn't a strong Jewish educational background, a lot of the German Jews really wanted to be part of the society, part of the community -- and, therefore, gave up a tremendous amount of their Jewishness.

JF: When you say when there wasn't a lot of education -- you're speaking about Jewish education?

TK: Jewish education. Oh, there was a lot of culture otherwise. Oh, it belonged to every wonderful Jewish family that you needed to learn an instrument. Culture and education was an extremely important part of Jewish education. But, the bulk of the



German Jews were very assimilated.

JF: You also mentioned that your family were very strongly Zionists.

TK: Very.

JF: But, at the same time, your mother didn't want to leave Germany. Was there --

TK: There was a conflict. My parents worked very hard for Israel. But, you know, my mother was very rooted. And, it's just like we, Americans, are very rooted. You know, it is very hard for Americans to pick up and transform, and start a new life. And, you know, a lot of our friends are doing this, and moving to Israel. But, it's not an easy thing. It's not an easy thing to leave everything you have and when you love the culture, and when you love everything that it had to offer, and it offered tremendous amount of wonderful things, then, that sometimes was stronger. So, I think it was the combination of that. My mother was very much pro-Israel also. But, it was more of the family that pulled her. So, that she did not want to be alone. She wanted the connection to the family -- which is understandable. The extended family was very important in Europe. And, I think it is a very important ingredient which, a lot of us miss here.

JF: That's true.

TK: She was very family-oriented. And, that was really the main reason that we didn't go to Israel at that point plus she became ill at that point. Whether this was imagined, or real. One never, retroactively, we can't ask.

JF: Were you close to your mother growing up?

TK: Yes, yes. I was closer to my father.

JF: Why was that?



TK: Because -- because the role I had to play in -- at home -- because my mother really was not used to housework, and not used to the daily routine and having been spoiled by all the help. And, it's -- I just was closer to him in his views and his --

JF: When you had the help in Germany, was your mother -- what was your mother doing? Was she helping your father in the business?

TK: She was helping him in the business. And, she was busy managing the help (laughter). So, when she came America, she did not miss that -- she did not like to have that many people to manage. But, she really had a very hard time adjusting -- because she was mainly home-bound, and had to get used to routine housework, and not knowing English very well - and just the whole process was very difficult for her. It was difficult for all of us, but it was my impression -- that she had the hardest time.

JF: Ok, so when you came here, you said you sailed on The Normandy? Right?

TK: Right.

JF: And that was the autumn of 1938?

TK: No, that was Thanksgiving. We arrived on Thanksgiving.

JF: Oh, Thanksgiving. And where did you -- you came to Baltimore?

TK: No, we came to New York. Our affidavit-givers were people who were my mother's relatives, and they lived in Flushing. And, they received us on Thanksgiving Day. It snowed. It was a wonderful feeling to come. To see the Statue of Liberty and to arrive in America. It was an unbelievable experience. And, they were wonderful people.

JF: Did you stay with them, at first?



TK: No. No. They had rented two rooms for us something with a family in Manhattan. Again, because they knew we were Orthodox, and they were not we lived in -- on 146th Street in Manhattan, which was a wonderful neighborhood at that time. We were put up with a family until we would find our own apartment. And, they were lovely people. Our relatives offered my father immediately a job in their store, but he would have to work on Shabbat.

JF: Even though they were Orthodox?

TK: They were not.

JF: Oh, they were not?

TK: They were not Orthodox. And, my father wouldn't do it. It was a very, very taxing time, jobs were extremely hard to get -- and it was very difficult. My father went out every day looking for work. And there were hundreds and hundreds of people applying for the same jobs.

JF: So, what finally happened?

TK: We took an apartment -- I just recall that my mother was the one that spoke a little English, she would send us with shopping lists (laughter) to shop for food.

JF: Did you know any English?

TK: Nothing. They did not have the English-as-a-second-language, the ESL classes at that time. I was a big 12-year-old, and I was put in first and second grades in the back of the classroom -- to sink or swim. It was a very hard time.

JF: What was that like?



TK: It was very hard. It was extremely hard. And, also my father going out every day and not finding any job. He did have a little money -- it just went one, two, three. And he finally had to take just very menial work. For a man that had stature in the community and was a big businessman - that was very difficult.

JF: What was he doing?

TK: He sold Fuller brushes.

JF: Mmm hmm

TK: So, that was one job he took at that point.

JF: Were you living in Washington Heights?

TK: This was a little lower down -- it was 145th Street. It was around that area. And, he started it with another friend of his -- a congregation with Rabbi. Biberfeld. And, it was thriving -- we had a wonderful, small community of people we felt comfortable with, amongst them were my mother's siblings.

JF: That's nice.

TK: And it helped us in our transition to have a community. I recall -- being put up in the classes. You went from 1st, to 2nd, to 3rd, to 4th -- no one had time for us. The teachers had a rough time keeping up with the classrooms, and they had these few refugees sitting in the back. And we were just left to ourselves.

JF: And, this is public school?

TK: This was in public school. There were no Hebrew schools at that point in that neighborhood. My father did employ a gentleman -- a Dr. Ullman -- to teach us, and to give us private lessons to continue our Hebrew, because that was so important to him.





He would come to the house and teach the kids. And, later, actually -- it was just a year or two later -- my father felt my brother needed more of a Jewish education. He wanted him to go to a yeshiva.

JF: How old was your brother at this point?

TK: At that point, if he -- well, at that point, he must have been 9 or 10. My father wouldn't trust him to travel on the train, so we moved to Brooklyn -- because the Yeshiva Torah Vodas was in Brooklyn.

JF: What was the yeshiva's name?

TK: Yeshiva Torah Vodas was in Brooklyn.

JF: And, where in Brooklyn was that?

TK: That was in Williamsburg.

JF: Williamsburg.

TK: So we moved to Williamsburg which, again, was an interesting community at that time. We took an apartment in a four-family building. We were on the top floor. The community had Orthodox synagogues. They had some of the immigrants settling there, and they had the yeshiva. But then, it was a very integrated, normal Jewish community at that time. It was a very wonderful community. It was not Chasidic the way that --

JF: That's what I was going to ask.

TK: Yes, it was not Chasidic the way it is today -- until later when the whole influx of Eastern European Jews came in. The rebbes came in. So, we moved there. Actually, the friend that started the synagogue together with my father, also moved there.

JF: So --



TK: For the same reason.

JF: So, did the congregation move with you?

TK: No, no. The congregation didn't move at that time. But, you know -- my parents were very happy there. Again they joined the Orthodox community. Orthodox synagogue that also mainly started with people who came over from the other side. A lot of Viennese people. Again, an Orthodox community.

JF: So, your father felt it was very important for your brother to have a yeshiva.

TK: A Jewish education.

JF: A Jewish ed --

TK: A good Jewish education. My father felt -- look what happened to us. Look what happened to the money. Look what happened to all of the wealth, and to everything. It went to the German government. What you take with you is your education. And, he felt that was uppermost important to him. And, you know, to my parents. And to my mother, education was everything -- because she had a very good education. So --

JF: Did your father feel it was as important for you and your sister to have a strong Jewish education, as well as your brother?

TK: Well, we didn't have it at the time, because there were no Jewish day schools. There were no Jewish seminaries the way there are today. I told you that we had a private teacher?

JF: Right.

TK: In Washington Heights? Later, the people came from Eastern Europe, and started only afternoon classes. I went to the public school in Brooklyn, and finished public



school, and then, went to Eastern District High School. And, then we had in the afternoon, Hebrew classes by some of these rebbetzins that started the afternoon classes. That was a precursor to all the seminaries that started later. Later, the influx of Eastern European Jews was much stronger.

JF: So, the yeshivas were just for the boys?

TK: Yeshiva was for the boys. There were no girls' schools at that time. That evolved a little later. So --

JF: So, what do you remember of school in New York? Can you tell me any memories?

TK: By the time I went to Eastern District, I was doing well in my classes, and it was wonderful to be a part of a group, and I had many friends. I was very active, and loved my classes. We tried to be as American as possible. You wanted to really become American -- and, that was my main goal. But we lived through very hard times financially. I had to babysit, as a very young girl. I was babysitting in the summers -- in the hot summers. We did piece-work at home in the summers to make extra money -- stuffing envelopes with the fans going. I mean it was totally different than what our children's lives are like today. We worked every summer. That was the way of having the little money for the one dress that we had for Shabbat, or the little something that we needed. So, it was very hard times for my father. He had a very rough time in getting a job. He became a delivery boy of groceries, and had a heart attack, the first Passover night.

JF: And, what year was this?

TK: This must have been -- right in the '40s. Not, '40s -- yes, early '40s, '41. Later he worked himself up, and became foreman of a large leather goods factory because the boss realized he had a reliable, capable man. If I think of my parents, I thought they were elderly -- they were just in their 50s. (laughter) They were not that old. The boss



liked me, and I was only a teenager. I would go in in the summers and do payroll to make extra money. So, you know, it wasn't the kind of summers that our children spent. It was difficult. The community then became increasingly more Orthodox, because of the influx of the Eastern European Jews was very strong. We still had our own nucleus of people. We kept a very strong connection with them.

JF: You mentioned you thought the transition was the hardest on your mother.

\_\_: [telephone rings in background]

\_\_: (break in tape)

JF: OK. You mentioned earlier that you thought the transition to America was hardest on your mother. Can you tell me how that worked its way out?

TK: She spoke English -- and did her little shopping and so on. But, really never Americanized the way that my father who was out amongst people in business and, with people and learned English very well.

JF: Did she make friends in the neighborhood?

TK: She had the friends from the synagogue. But, she was so much a family woman, that was her day. She would cook, and she would shop and she would read. And you know, education was important to her. She didn't have the opportunity to get out and do the things that she could have done. But, to her, raising the family was very important. It also was a chore, because she wasn't used to doing it. And, it wasn't like today where you have the washing machine in the house. You had to take the laundry to the laundromat there was the little corner grocery store, or the little corner fruit store. So, she did her little shopping. She adjusted. But, she was really so much for the family, and, that was her life. To see us successful and to see everyone being taken care of, including my father who then had a heart condition, and was put to bed at that time, bed



rest was for the heart. That was a very trying time for her. But she really was, a queen in her house, so to say. She --

JF: Did she miss Germany?

TK: She missed the culture. She missed going to the theater and -- because we couldn't afford it. (laughter) Or to the symphony or the niceties but she realized we couldn't have stayed. She was cognizant of that.

JF: And how about you? You were a teenager at this point. So what was it like?

TK: Well, I really wanted to Americanize as much as we could. And, I recall my brother really wanted to deny my mother's Germanness.

JF: (laughter)

TK: (laughter) It bothered him, you know? He would have been happy to sell his German origin. (laughter) For a price --

JF: What did you speak at home?

TK: With my mother? German. And, the interesting thing is -- she did learn English. But it never became part of her. I would have a group of friends in, and she would start talking German to them, not even realizing it. But, she was ok. She managed very well. And, after my father passed away, she took care of everything, and was able to handle everything. So, you know, for her it was much more of a culture shock. Children integrate much easier, anyway.

JF: Do you remember what you did for fun? At this age, you're a teenager.

TK: For fun? What did we do for fun?

JF: Your friends?



TK: We would study on the roof. (laughter)

JF: (laughter)

TK: I remember studying for regents on the roof. We would go for fun. I -- yes, there was a movie, in the neighborhood where we would go to every once in a while. If something appropriate was playing. And, we would later take my parents to visit old friends in different neighborhoods, trying to keep contact. It was very much family-oriented. On Sundays, we would travel to visit the relatives that still didn't move to Brooklyn, but still lived in Washington Heights. So, the Sunday was spent traveling somewhere. That was really mainly it. And, the Shabbat we met only the people in the neighborhoods. Because we didn't travel. So, that was mainly it. And, we were really busy studying, and becoming adjusted.

JF: OK. So, you went to high school, and graduated in what year?

TK: I graduated? Oh.

JF: (laughter)

TK: 1944.

JF: And then what?

TK: I got engaged.

JF: Oh, so how did you meet your husband?

TK: My husband had an interesting career. He came to the United States. He was very active in the Hatzolo work -- in rescue work. He worked together with Mike Tress. And, actually, my father went to Hatzolo to try to get people out of Germany. They needed affidavits, they needed people to vouch for them. So, he knew my husband, because we



lived in the same community. He knew the Kranzlers -- my in-laws -- again, from this community where we lived. Actually, my father actually went to his parents that he had a young lady in Washington Heights that he wanted to introduce to him. And, he was told that my husband had different interests. (laughter)

JF: (laughter)

TK: So, that was -- at that time -- --you know, my father said, "What do you mean? My daughter's so young." And he was told that he had seen me. My brother went to the same camp where he was head counselor, and the families got together and we knew each other. So, that was the answer my father got.

JF: How did you get to know him?

TK: Then we were introduced officially at a wedding. This was in my last year of high school -- which was on Hanukkah of that year -- which was winter of 1943. We got married in December of '44. So, anyway, we were introduced, and that was the beginning -- at that point, my husband was assistant principal in the Yeshiva Torah Vodas. And, he actually ran the high school -- because the principal did mainly fund-raising for the school. He was the academician, and ran the school. He taught English, besides running the school. He had a class where he taught. Dr. Lamb who is the head of Yeshiva University today, and prepared him for his regents and then at night, he came over to my house and prepared me for my regents. (laughter)

JF: (laughter)

TK: So, but this is really off the record. But, and then we got engaged as soon as I graduated high school.

JF: What is your husband's name?



TK: Gershon.

JF: Gershon?

TK: Oh, in English it was George. His doctorate and his college degrees -- his doctorate which is one from Columbia, and one from Germany -- is George. You know? And then, he did a lot of writing -- under the name of Gershon for banks of Jewish background, and then, George for the secular ones.

JF: And, his doctorate was in what?

TK: He did his first doctorate in philosophy. And did a comparison between the three religions. Compared Maimonides, Abelard, and Averroës.

JF: Wow.

TK: And then he realized he needed an American education if he was going to deal with American kids. And, while he did the Hatzolo work, and while he worked at being assistant principal, he went for a doctorate at Columbia University in the evenings. And, got a doctorate in education and sociology.

JF: Wow.

TK: So, he was a sociologist, mainly. His minor was education.

JF: Wow. Fascinating.

TK: So we got engaged right after I graduated high school. And, he was right at that point, he was writing a lot, actually, after we got married in December of 1944. He tried to finish his doctorate at that point, and only was writing at that point. And did a total Jewish history for the Lubavitch under a pseudonym.

JF: Why? Why under a pseudonym?





TK: It is called Our People -- because it was supposed to be a committee.

JF: Ah.

TK: And, it became a committee of one. And he would go every Friday, and deliver reams of written material to them, and he would get his little check off which we lived.

JF: And you said this was for the Lubavitch?

TK: Yes, that was because they offered him to write

JF: So, when were you married?

TK: In December of 1944.

JF: December of '44?

TK: Right. So I went to college. Went to Brooklyn College. And my son was born in 1946. So --

JF: And, what's your son's name?

TK: Chaim. And then, my husband thought he really had to start looking for a job.

JF: (laughter) So at this point, he was no longer the assistant principal?

TK: He became principal in a school in the Bronx, which was called Zichron Moshe.

JF: Could you spell that?

TK: Zichron is Z-I-C-H-R-O-N. Moshe. M-O-S-H-E. He became principal there.

JF: Did you move to --



END OF CD 1

JF: This is disk number 2. The interview with Trude Kranzler. It's April the 28th, 2002. We are in Baltimore, Maryland. I'm Jean Freedman, recording this for the Jewish Women's Archive Weaving Women's Words project. OK, so -- you're 20 years old at this point. You just had a baby. Your husband has taken a job up in the Bronx, and is commuting from Brooklyn?

TK: Right.

JF: OK. So, then what happened?

TK: Then, I continued -- I mean I took care of my baby, and in the evenings I continued going to Brooklyn College.

JF: What were you studying?

TK: Actually, I just took the courses that I liked. (laughter) That was a foolish thing to do. (laughter) I just went for my enjoyment. Having a baby and being involved -- my parents two family lived nearby. It was a first experience for them. So that was -- all-consuming.

JF: First grandchild?

TK: Yes, the first grandchild. Actually my mother-in-law was very ill at that time. And so, that took time. She passed away about a year and a half later.

JF: Did you help take care of her?

TK: No. They lived in Borough Park. My husband was busy studying, going for his doctorate, and I had to be sure that he could accomplish what he needed to besides traveling. So that was an ordeal.



JF: So, he was still studying for his doctorate and commuting to the Bronx?

TK: And commuting.

JF: Oh wow.

TK: And writing and seeing his family. So, it was quite a busy time. And, having a newborn baby. You know, that was a hard year. But, we managed. We always had young people in for Shabbat. So, we were very active. My husband was extremely active in groups that were pro-Israel. And, actually, the night before I gave birth, we had a meeting in our house. And, people couldn't believe I gave birth the next day.

JF: (laughter)

TK: We would have groups over Friday night to -- for discussions. And we were active in the community.

JF: That sounds very lively.

TK: It was a very lively time. And, then actually, after commuting became difficult and time-consuming, he was offered a position in Brooklyn. They had at that point, a girls' seminary and high school. And, he became the English principal 'whereas before, there were no Jewish schools. Now, there was this seminary and he became their English principal.

JF: What neighborhood was this in?

TK: This was in Brooklyn -- in Williamsburg.

JF: In Williamsburg.

TK: He became their English principal. The girls would come to our home for guidance, and we would entertain them. He put on plays with them. And put out newspapers with



them.

JF: What kind of plays?

TK: H. M. S. Pinafore. Oh, he would do all kinds of interesting things -- he would teach creative writing classes. Besides being principal. And, he was very involved with the newcomers who came over-- and went through the Holocaust. We helped their adjustment, and, we opened our home to them. I was active in helping and I had a second child by that time.

JF: Oh, when was your second child born?

TK: Actually, two years later. And, --

JF: Boy or girl?

TK: And her name was Chani.

JF: Chani?

TK: Right. And, we were just very -- very involved in the community with, you know, the young people, mainly.

JF: Were you still going to Brooklyn College?

TK: I was -- whenever I recuperated from childbirth -- I was taking courses going at night. My husband would be home writing, or doing his work. And, I would be going to school. That was always a main focus. I had moved by that time, to the same building as my parents. So, my mother would help out. My parents loved my children. It was the extended family -- which I thought was very important. I was fortunate being this enabled me to go to school, and be active and help my husband, in what he had to do.

JF: Can you tell me what a typical day was like?



TK: A typical day? My goodness. (laughter)

JF: Well, a typical day--

TK: The week really centered around Shabbat, always. Because I always would have guests for Shabbat. A lot of the girls needed homes to come to. They would live with families, and sometimes be happy or not so and needed a place to come to.

JF: These are girls who went to the school?

TK: To the school. We actually, (in order to afford a bigger apartment, in the same building where my parents lived) took in a boarder. An, Indian girl.

JF: Mmm hmm.

TK: A girl from India. And, not an Indian girl -- a girl from India.

JF: From India, right.

TK: A Jewish girl from India.

JF: A Jewish girl from India?

TK: Yes, from India. Right.

JF: Was she ethnically Indian, or?

TK: She was, yes. And, let me tell you -- the perfumes,-- everything was different. (laughter) You know? But, she was a very interesting girl. Actually, at that point, we and my parents before that, had to struggle financially and took in boarders in order to pay for their rent. So, I had this young lady living with us. We would have a lot of the girls coming over on Shabbat discussing their problems. My husband was their advisor. And I was their surrogate mother away from home. A lot of them had lost their families.



JF: Were these refugees?

TK: Yes. And, he really helped them integrate into the American society. And, they were very thankful and appreciative. To this day, we get calls. "Fifty years ago, I got my diploma from you" -- and she was a valedictorian. And my husband would quote her speech --

JF: Wow.

TK: (laughter) So, it was a very strong, warm connection to these students that we had. I don't know whether we could do this today -- I mean all that's going on. Whether this wouldn't be suspect. (laughter)

JF: I know.

TK: You know, it was a different society. And, we were just very involved with them. Also, with the -- with Zionist movements that supplied Israel, the kibbutzim, -- with means. My husband really also wanted to go to Israel.

JF: How did you feel about that?

TK: Also very much. Because his parents came to the United States, he felt he had to come here. They wanted him to come here. But, otherwise, he would have been in Israel. He was very pro-Israel, very, very active.

JF: Could you tell me more about that? About the organizations that you worked with?

TK: It was- Zionist organizations,

JF: Which ones were --they?

TK: My husband actually was already in Germany very much --involved with the Ezra Movement.



JF: Ez?

TK: The Ezra Movement. They worked for Israel and kibbutzim. He was just very involved with that. His first love really was to go to Israel. But, since he was then in America -- this strong feeling was always there -- we always had meetings in our house. Intellectual discussions, and our home was sort of the center for the young people that lived in that area. It was a very interesting and productive time in that sense. Both with the students, and with these young people -- young couples, who were alone and didn't have family. They would come for Shabbat, or wherever we went on a Sunday, we had people coming with us. (laughter) When we went to the park on Sundays with two little children, we had friends coming along.

JF: It sounds as though you were surrogate parents to a lot of those girls.

TK: Right. It was a very hard time of adjustment. The students were very appreciative of the personal attention. He was more than a principal. It was just that he looked out for their good and saw that they adjusted and integrated. There were a lot of students -- not only refugees -- that was just one part.

JF: Mmm hmm.

TK: The school -- a lot of the students traveled from different neighborhoods. We're still friends with many.

JF: Now, what were the Zionist organizations you were working with in this country?

TK: In Germany, it was called Nor Agudati and Ezra, then here it was Poale Aguda. Poale Aguda. Which is not Aguda -- which is more Zionist than the Aguda. My husband worked very hard for Kibbutz Chofez Chaim.

JF: Could you spell that?



TK: Kibbutz --

JF: Kibbutz, I've got.

TK: Right. Chofez -- C-H-O-F-E-Z. Chofez Chaim. C-H-A-I-M.

JF: Ok. Thank you. Supplying funds, or helping?

TK: Supplying funds and helping otherwise we would have the people from Israel come and stay with us. Those that came collected funds here, etc. We had very interesting people always in our home. A gentleman that was very active in teaching Americans about hydroponics. We have had army sergeants coming to us at that point. I mean, it was just a very interesting time, I remember. My little son imitating this army sergeant. So, we kept really, very much in touch with what was going on in Israel, and were active.

JF: Now, this was before the establishment of the state of Israel, or after?

TK: No, this was -- during the whole time when was Israel established?

JF: In '48.

TK: This was before and after.

JF: This was after?

TK: We worked all along. That was our first love. (laughter) Plus my husband's students. He then switched schools and went to the Lower East Side, and became principal there. The school was called Bais Yaakov, of the Lower East Side. He started the Esther Schonfeld High School.





TK: He started it actually -- because they did not have a high school. He was principal of the elementary. He felt that a high school was needed, and he started teaching a handful of students by himself at first -- until he would hire all teachers. And so --, again, he was extremely successful there. He actually wanted to start a girls' college.

JF: Ah, ha.

TK: He had made all the connection to -- I am just trying to remember -- he had the whole plan worked out where he would have the girls go to school, and then, take their English classes, and get credit from a college. Some of the rabbis thought it was too progressive, and they did not want it. (laughter)

JF: Why was it too progressive?

\_\_\_: [telephone rings in background]

\_\_\_: (break in tape)

JF: Ok. So your husband was working with this women's-- with the idea of forming this women's college.

TK: Forming a women's college. Even before Stern College --

JF: --Ok. That's what I wanted to ask--before Stern College?

TK: It was before the Stern College started. But, some of the rabbis nixed it.

JF: They thought it was too progressive?

TK: He had hooked up with Pace College.

JF: With Pace College?



TK: With Pace College -- which is right at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge, I think. And, he had all the plans worked out, and it was nixed for whatever political reasons.

JF: Now, why did they think it was too progressive?

TK: You know they -- some of the extreme Orthodox don't want that much secular education. My husband thought it was very important. And exactly what Stern College did, afterward; the girls would have where to go if they didn't want to go to the regular college campuses, and that there was a need for it.

JF: Mmm hmm.

TK: He just had terrific visions.

JF: It sounds as though he was really committed to women's education.

TK: He was very much committed to women's education -- and, really was very instrumental in seeing and helping people with their doctorates, former students with their doctorates. Reading them, giving advice. Professionally -- without pay.

JF: Was that unusual at the time? Was it considered that educating a woman wasn't as important as educating a man?

TK: At that point it was already much more prevalent that women should go to college. Look, I went. Even though I was tied down with children, I went in between each child. He and our family was totally committed to in education and equal education.

JF: Was your family unusual in that?

TK: Yes, right. You know, thank God. (laughter)

JF: (laughter) Yes, ok. So, keep going. Don't let me stop you.



TK: He continued his work there. And, then, he was offered a position in Baltimore to become principal of Talmudical Academy. And that's --

JF: And what year was that?

TK: It was in 1955. By that time, I had four children.

JF: Ok. Tell me when your other two children were born.

TK: Ok. Elli was the--? He's just 50, so he was born --

JF: In 1952?

TK: In '52. And then, our Shari was born two years later. Shari. So, it's a boy, girl, boy, girl. The well-planned American family..

JF: (laughter)

TK: As if we can control it.

JF: Right.

TK: They were a lot of fun.

JF: So, tell me more about what you were doing -- with the children, and your school --

TK: We moved to Baltimore. And, I had four children. (laughter) My husband had a very responsible job running Talmudical Academy. And, he, thank God, was extremely successful in bringing the school up to a wonderful level. The boys still call it "The Golden Years".

JF: Was it just for boys?

TK: It was a boys' school.



JF: A boys' school.

TK: And, my both sons went there. And, the girls went to Bais Yaakov, which was the only girls' school -- because there were no other schools available at that time. And the boy's school at that time was Talmudical. At that time, Ner Israel was only a Rabbinical College.

JF: What was that like? Moving from New York to Baltimore?

TK: It was a hard decision for me -- especially because I was used to always having the support group of a family. The extended family, and the love of the extended family for my children -- which I think is a very, very important ingredient, and I think we're really missing this today. Baltimore was very, very different than the communities where we lived.

JF: How so?

TK: Oh, very much. Today, there are a lot of young people living here. There is -- the extended family in the young community. You know, they help each other. At that point it wasn't. Baltimore was much more clannish, but being in the sort of position that my husband was in -- we didn't have any problem. People were seeking our friendship. Of course, again -- our week -- or my week, was made up of helping my husband. That he could do what he was doing. He had assumed a very responsible job. Again, entertaining a lot of the out-of-town students. They would come to us for Shabbat and lived in the dorms during the week. My week really started on Monday, with worrying, how I would manage to have a lot of people in for the weekend. Every Shabbat we would have Friday night, and Shabbes lunch lot of guests, and a lot of singing. We had wonderful times with the students, and with friends. So, that I was extremely busy with the family. That was really my week -- and with all my children's activities -- extra-curricular activities. Music lessons-- whatever -- some days would be spent with music



lessons, and taking them skating and taking them to symphonies, etc. We didn't have a TV (not for religious reasons). We lived in a small house, and we wanted the kids to study and to read. And, it proved to be so -- they became avid readers. And they had a lot of extra-curricular activities music lessons etc. I did take them to the symphony. I took them to ball games. We went skating practically every Sunday afternoon. We spent wonderful summers in New Hampshire. We would just have a lot of fun together with the children.

JF: Where did you live when you first moved to Baltimore?

TK: We lived near where our lift was addressed to originally -- near the Shearis Israel, the synagogue. And, we lived there for quite some time, until we moved here to this apartment.

JF: And was that near the Talmudical Academy?

TK: No, it was not near the Talmudical. They would have liked me to be there -- I thought it was much healthier -- not to live on top of the school, rather, to live a little further away. So my husband would have some time --

JF: Of his own.

TK: Which he didn't -- because he was always involved and, forever writing. He wrote many books. Children's books, as well as adult books, and sociology books. And, he later, (after Talmudical Academy), became professor at Towson University.

JF: Professor of sociology?

TK: Of sociology. Yes. And, at Hopkins -- so he was a professor -- afterwards. But all the years, he was always into some writing of some sort. And, he published many many books.



JF: Were these mainly scholarly books?

TK: They were scholarly books as well as a lot of children's books, and children's novels. He passed away 2 years ago and the last novel had come out just then. Another book that came out after right after he passed away. It's called A Look Back -- and it has articles that he wrote over the last 50 years.

JF: Oh.

TK: In different magazines. Well, basically my job was -- that I saw to it that he had the peace of mind to sit down and write -- and, that he was taken care of - like a typical European housewife.

JF: (laughter)

TK: The wife takes care her husband. I don't think he would have been able to accomplish all that he did. I guess I left off where his mother -- (laughter)

JF: (laughter)

TK: I started where his mother left off. But, it gave him also the freedom of doing all this extra work, besides working all the time with students and people -- and -- it gave him time to write and to develop, I think today's women want much more. I don't know how to put it. Like my granddaughter said, "It should be 50/50." It would be wonderful, but it's never is 50/50. (laughter)

JF: But you continued with your education, correct?

TK: I continued with my education.

JF: Can you tell me about that?

TK: I finished my Bachelor degree at Towson State University.



JF: What was your major?

TK: Actually, at that time it was education, because I went into teaching. And, I continued at Hopkins, and I have a degree, a Masters. And another degree called CAS -- afterwards a Certificate of Advanced Studies, another 30 credits beyond the Masters -- from Hopkins.

JF: And, what is that in? What is that degree in?

TK: That was in counseling, and in psychology.

JF: Oh, great.

TK: Psychology and counseling.

JF: So, you did work, in addition to --

TK: Oh, besides that -- when my husband needed teachers, he always called. (laughter)

JF: So you taught at the --

TK: I actually taught kindergarten for a while.

JF: At the Talmudical Academy?

TK: Right. I taught already in New York for a while. I was always called in on an emergency.

JF: Could you tell me more about that?

TK: Yes.

JF: Your teaching -- how that started?



TK: It started -- I taught -- I taught in New York, because I had very small children - very sporadically. But here, when the children were all in school, I taught at Talmudical Academy. And --

JF: And, you say you taught kindergarten?

TK: Kindergarten, nursery, and kindergarten and subjects, substitution. And then, I went back full time to college after that, and finished. And, I went to Hopkins. This was really after my children were all in school. Because I felt my time was very much needed with them at home as they were growing up. So, I finished my education. And, I unfortunately, had to take all the subjects that I didn't care for.

JF: (laughter)

TK: And, finish up my Bachelors, and then, I went to Hopkins. So, I went really to school, practically all my life. Straight through. And then I taught at -- as my kids really became bigger, I was called into public school in —they needed someone, they needed a teacher and I taught at Baltimore County public school for 18 years.

JF: What subject?

TK: First, I was called in as a German teacher. I did that and then, I also taught English as a Second Language. And I was their counselor. I became a counselor for the foreign students. That was a very gratifying role. Because my degree was really in counseling from Hopkins. Counseling – but because they don't like to transfer from one discipline to the next the counselships were also harder to come by. But then, as I was needed as a counselor in the field -- I filled that position and I was very happy that I had that. Because my kids went to colleges, and we needed the extra income -- especially when my husband left the Talmudical Academy and went to college teaching at a loss. Actually, Hopkins came along, and made up the difference, and he was teaching there in the evenings.





JF: And teaching at Towson during the days?

TK: At Towson during the day. And at Hopkins in the evening. And, at that point, my children went - -my son went to Hopkins, and actually both boys went to Hopkins. And, both girls went to Goucher. So, at that point, we had all the college students in our home. (laughter)

JF: (laughter)

TK: Every Shabbat.

JF: How nice.

TK: And so again, every week was going to school, or teaching -- and, the importance of Shabbat and the music that was going on in our house. On Shabbat -- the college students would come. And, spend Shabbat with us. After my husband left the Jewish school he started a group called Yavneh, which was a college student organization -- which was already in New York. He wanted the college students to have a Jewish experience. Today they have Hillels. He wanted them to be able to socially and intellectually get together with other Jewish students.

JF: Was this for all Jewish students, or Orthodox?

TK: Well, mainly a healthy mix Orthodox. If others wanted to join, that was wonderful.

JF: They were welcome?

TK: Absolutely. Absolutely. And in fact, some of them became Orthodox from this organization. My son would bring home a student with a Druize cap - and they would say, "What kind are the Kranzlers having now?" (laughter)

JF: (laughter)



TK: Today, he is part of the black hat community here and we're certainly not. So, you know -- we had all kinds of students. Oh, all types of students in our home, all the time. And, my older son went two years to the University of Maryland Medical School. He would have the medical students and professors in. So, we always had a lot going on - and a lot of music, always.

JF: Did you all play or sing?

TK: My husband played the violin, and viola already in a quartet in Germany. My children all took music lessons, and because I was in that in-between generation, where we came to the United States, and we didn't have money for music lessons -- I missed out on that. But the love of music was always there. We saw to it that there was music in the house. And, in fact, my one son is very much involved with music today.

JF: Could you tell me more about your teaching? Memories that you have of teaching—this was in the Baltimore County public schools, right?

TK: Right.

JF: Could you tell me any memories – you were there for a long time?

TK: It was a very gratifying, and a very interesting time. Because, again, the students needed personal attention. And, I had my degree in counseling, and I told my principal that I wanted to switch to counseling. And, I was offered a city job in counseling. And he said to me -- "Trude, you're doing such good work in your classrooms as a counselor, and as a teacher. Why look somewhere else? Why not stay with us?" And then, of course, I became the counselor of Baltimore County. It was very gratifying, working with students, and helping them, and especially I found when I taught ESL, the foreign students were so motivated, to want to get ahead, and wanted to go to college. They would do everything to get into good schools and to help them was really my main goal. I helped many of the students. Actually, my husband was my best teacher, because he



was so wonderful to his students that this taught me so much. How every person was important and had potentials.

JF: Are there any particular memories of teaching, of students, that stands out?

TK: There're many. There are so many. I remember having students who tried a double suicide attempt in my classroom. The boy was deformed. I integrated him back into the classroom. I don't think he would have done that without my help, because he couldn't face the students. The only class he had attended at first was my class in order to integrate him slowly into coming back to school, to be accepted by his peers. There were many wonderful instances where I helped a lot of the Russian students, and got them into good colleges, saw to it that they passed their exams and gave them extra support, and extra help. That was very gratifying. Besides that, I find that having had all these students in our house, in our home all the time -- we gave this generation a tremendous amount by being there for them, supporting them and, helping them through critical times. Whether it was professionally -- where to go to school, or what jobs to take, or who to marry? Or with their personal problems. And, it was never a question that we didn't have time for them and I always thought to myself -- gosh, you know, we were more than the psychologists and counselors for them. One woman said once to my husband--he used to do translations for people. In the Hatzolo work and in his work helping refugees. My husband said to her, "Why don't you take it to this, or that place? They'll do it for you." So answered him, "But, Dr. Kranzler, you do it free of charge." (laughter)

JF: (laughter)

TK: And, this was our home. It was done because we loved the kids. And it was never -- there was never a charge for sessions. (laughter) And, so it was just a way of giving of yourself. I think our children got a lot out of it - because they're carrying on now the kind of work and have the kind of homes that we used to have, with people in, and with



the kind of Shabbat. With different people from all walks of life coming through. We had this Yavneh organization where we had speakers. All kinds of interesting intellectual stimulation, and my son was the president, a whole organization evolved in our house. (laughter) So, there were always interesting things going on. Carlebach, a personal friend, would come to our home, and we would sing the whole night through -- my husband brought him to Talmudical Academy. While my husband was at Talmudical Academy, he would write cantatas and we had a friend, a choir conductor coming down teaching the boys -- the choir. They put on magnificent performances. We had just very wonderful times that we shared with our children and a whole generation.

JF: What synagogue did you join?

TK: We were at Shearis Israel.

JF: What made you decide to do that?

TK: I think it was because it was the same type of -- I mean, it was the Orthodox synagogue that was near us.

JF: Are you still a member?

TK: I'm not -- I used to walk down but now I go to other synagogues right up here or I walk over to Greenspring Avenue—that's another neighborhood -- Things change, you know?

JF: That is actually one of the themes of these interviews. How things have changed. And, perhaps you'd like to comment on how things have changed in Baltimore since you have been here? For quite a long time.

TK: Quite a lot. Many more Orthodox people moved in and it has become much bigger. Actually the whole Upper Park Heights area stabilized because of this influx. (This was



the theory of my husband's doctorate for Columbia University.) We knew everyone at one point and that's no longer so. We didn't have restaurants -- kosher restaurants. And now, we have -- I don't know how many here. (laughter) There's a choice of synagogues to go to. It just has changed tremendously. Tremendously. And this neighborhood has become much more Orthodox. Well, you know, the schools have grown tremendously. And the yeshiva has grown tremendously. Ner Israel has grown tremendously. Bais Yaakov has grown—There are new schools, Ramban, which is a wonderful school. Beth Tefilah. There are so many -- today, you have a choice where you want to send your children whereas we didn't have that. And, so the community has evolved and become bigger. And the needs are being met of a community that's bigger, and has more demands.

JF: Why do you think the Orthodox community has grown so much in recent years?

TK: It's an easier lifestyle than New York. It was, at one point, much more affordable. I think it still is. But, it definitely is more affordable than New York and vicinities. As much as all my children settled in New York. (laughter)

JF: Oh did they? (laughter)

TK: Each one of them, except one in Boston. And so, it has -- it has evolved -- What was your question again?

JF: Why do you think the Orthodox community has grown so much recently in Baltimore?

TK: Because it really is nicer living. People can afford homes they couldn't afford in New York. They move here with their friends. Now, for instance, in this area -- a lot of the parents are moving in from Washington. Because they have their children living here-- or, from all over actually. In my building there are families that moved here because of their children. But other condos in this area have a lot of the parents who moved in. One



sees more of the three generation of families now. In my days, that wasn't so. There were the Baltimoreans, and their families -- and they stayed. Today, you have a lot of out-of-towners. And, as they're comfortable here. I wish it would be so in my case. In my case, it's unfortunately (laughter) the other way. We always went up to our family up in New York, because we were very family-oriented. And, so therefore, they got stuck up there.

JF: (laughter)

TK: You have more available in New York. It's still an overgrown small town.

JF: (laughter) Baltimore. Baltimore.

TK: Baltimore, I mean, it -- I shouldn't say this --

JF: (laughter)

TK: It's still much more small townish in the sense - in comparison to New York.

JF: Oh, it's much smaller.

TK: It's much smaller. And you have much more available in New York. They're in the suburbs. They moved there because of logistics, their positions -- or whatever. So, I guess they got their education in New York or rather their post-graduate education. So, they got stuck there.

JF: Ok.

TK: So, my two sons went into psychiatry, and went to Einstein and into psychiatry and I have two daughters that are artists.

JF: Oh.



TK: So one teaches art in a girl's high school.

JF: In New York?

TK: In New Jersey.

JF: In New Jersey. Mmm hmm.

TK: And, one daughter lives in Boston.

JF: And what -- does she also teach?

TK: She teaches also. And, she actually was in a doctoral program for art history at Columbia.

JF: Mmm hmm.

TK: So she always says why weren't we more practical --

JF: (laughter)

TK: Why were the girls not taught to be more practical? So, I said, "You chose." We were very liberal in letting our children choose what they wanted to do. (laughter) So, art history -- that's a very difficult field.

JF: Yes, it is.

TK: So, but her husband teaches at Harvard in Boston -- so that's where she is.

JF: OK. I'd like to go back just a little bit in your own personal narrative. You said you taught in the public schools for 18 years. And, what made you decide to stop?

TK: My husband retired. And, he was writing full-time -- which he enjoyed and loved. And, my kids said that I shouldn't be sorry that I kept working, and that I should have



more time for him. Besides he was ill for ten years with lymphoma. I felt that -- the time we had together was very important. Not having to worry about being able to join the children at this point. They all had their own big families. And for them all to come for a holiday to us was very difficult. And this way we were more mobile to go to them for the holidays. And, we could enjoy our grandchildren. Whereas before, everyone always came to us for all of the holidays -- which was wonderful. But, since that wasn't possibly possible because of logistics -- or because they were busy -- Erev Yom Tov, which means that the day before a holiday -- they couldn't take off to come, it was becoming too hard to have the whole family together. We were so used to having that. So, my children just felt that -- don't be sorry that you worked, and didn't have the time for all of these things. I'm so glad that I did that.

JF: And what year was that?

TK: That was in '92.

JF: '92?

TK: Right. And, actually, I did work then -- part-time teaching, in a community college.

JF: Oh.

TK: And did some counseling for foreign students. And, that was very gratifying. I did it part-time. And I had a wonderful boss who let me adjust my schedule to when I had to be out. And, so that -- kept me busy. And, let my husband do his writing. And, I still could go away as I wished, so that was wonderful. I also went back as a counselor in Baltimore City public schools--retired teachers and counselors -- were called back. Retired counselors. I did this for a while in the inner city. It was very gratifying to work with children and help them, and give them a little hope and help them achieve in the classroom -- that to me was very important. So, I enjoyed the part-time work very much. Just to keep busy. To keep-- to feel that you're doing something for others. That's a very





important part of my life -- to do for others -- rather than for yourself.

JF: OK. Now, you mentioned when you were living in New York, you were very involved with Zionist organizations.

TK: Yes.

JF: How about in Baltimore?

TK: In Baltimore too -- we -- and our children -- were always involved in really working for Israel.

JF: And you were involved in Hadassah? Correct?

TK: Not Hadassah, itself.

JF: OK.

TK: I was more Mizrachi.

JF: Mizrachi?

TK: Yes.

JF: And what did you do?

TK: The main thing is that -- first of all, we donated. But besides that, just being pro-Israel and being active -- and, while my children were home, I did not have that much time for organizational work. Because it rather went to the students and to the family and to my husband's place of work. In later years, I was more active than when I had little kids. I should have done, or could have done more perhaps. I was so involved always with the students and the groups, and the people -- managing a house where a lot of intellectuals came through, and a lot of meetings always pro Israel, and a lot of music. It



all takes preparation. And, you know, it all takes energy. Having people in for Shabbat to us was very important. And, having them see what a Shabbat is like -- and -- that really was a good part of my week -- all through my life. Besides always having Israeli guests, we were instrumental in sending students to Israel (including our own) way before it became popular. We also went to Israel whenever possible. Is there anything else?

JF: I have couple of more questions. One of the things that -- since this is a project that focuses on women - one of the things that we are particularly interested in -- is how things have changed for women in the past and ensuing years. And, I was wondering if you want to comment on how your life is different from, say your mother's, or your daughter's, or your granddaughter's -- in terms of being a woman?

TK: Oh, ok. It has changed tremendously from the point of view of my mother who was only home. Where that was her main focus. Where I already had seen to it that I got out and I needed intellectually more, and saw to it that I furthered myself as far as my personal education. However, not at the price of any one of my children. My husband, and my children came first. And, that I think is slightly different than what this next-- this new generation is like. (laughter) Where it wasn't only the me- generation. Whereas, I find today's generation is much more focused on -- what can "I" do? And something has to suffer. And, something has to give. And, I found that I was a partner in the sense that I was always very independent. I was able to do anything I wanted. But I felt my first obligation to my children -- to my husband. And that my husband had the time and the peace of mind to accomplish what he had terrific gifts for. This bothers me in a way with this generation. That, it's only the "I" -- what I can do. Something has to give. You can't have the cake and eat it also. If you don't give your husband the peace of mind, and the kind of home that he can accomplish, the books wouldn't have been produced. If I don't have the time for my children to expose them to all the things -- to the theater, and to the music, and to the sports-- they'll never appreciate that part. It's all time-consuming. I find,



today, the mothers are so busy with their positions , and where to go -- and that something gets lost. The family life isn't there. I don't know how many people are actually functioning without a Shabbat, without a day of rest of family togetherness.

JF: You're very tired.

TK: A day of family. And, a day of togetherness, and a day of going to synagogue together. Having discussions, or having music together, zemirot, [table songs] singing together.

JF: How do your daughters, and then, your granddaughters feel about this?

TK: My daughters run the same kind of house that they saw we had. And, which is, in a way, in today's life -- burning the candle on both ends. Which means they're working. My daughters teaches art, and is busy intellectually furthering themselves. They run a wonderful home where anyone could come for Shabbat. But, all that takes a lot of energy and time and is a wonderful -- they're great mothers. And, my daughter-in-laws are the same way. The next generation -- my granddaughter says, "I want it 50/50." Is there such a thing?

JF: There's the question.

TK: And, it's wonderful. I think my sons are much more helpful than my European husband was.

JF: (laughter)

TK: He had other fortes, right? You know? But, on the other hand, you know, if a partner has such wonderful strengths and qualities -- you have to sacrifice something to let them be developed. And, for a person to be able to produce, it doesn't come by itself. They must be given the peace of mind, or the home where this can happen where there's



a partnership. But it's a hard act.

JF: It is. Yes, indeed. OK, well, you have lived through some incredible world events. You have lived through the age of Hitler, also through World War II. And then, in this country, you saw the McCarthy era. The Sixties, and you saw the whole growth of the state of Israel. And the troubles that are still going on there. And, I wonder if you could comment on any of these events. How they've affected you?

TK: Each event has its effect, for sure. Yes, that's for sure. And, I find that a lot of -- I saw Haight-Ashbury, in its heydays -- my husband being a sociologist. We saw it first-hand. And, I think this whole generation became much more spiritual. And, I think a lot of the trend toward Judaism has been affected by this. A lot of people think there's much more meaning to Orthodox life -- (from my point of view). I think a lot of those people were searching. And, I think Orthodoxy had something to give. I think our home was instrumental in this. There's a lot being done now in the Kiruv work. You know what Kiruv is?

JF: Not really.

TK: With helping people -- bringing them back to their roots. I think our home was the precursor to this. (laughter) It wasn't done with an organization. It wasn't done the way the Lubavitch do it. Screaming from their trucks or whatever. But, it's -- by showing people what a Jewish home should be -- and what it can be. And, I think that was the main accomplishment in that I and my husband did for a lot for young people. They grew up through him in the schools, and then coming to our home, and being part of that community.

JF: It was an example.

TK: The only teaching you can do is by example. You can't do it by preaching. And, I'm extremely proud of my children - because they're carrying on in this tradition. My son



does a lot of -- besides being a psychiatrist, he does a lot of the Shabbat services with singing. And, he was just quoted as -- "If anyone wants to experience Shabbat, they should come and hear him."

JF: That's lovely.

TK: That was quoted in the article. And he just had for this weekend, a whole group of people in. And you see a continuity of what was established in our home. And, you hope that your grandchildren will carry this on as well. I have one grandson who just went into the Israeli army. He made Aliyah. And, I have another granddaughter who married an Israeli. He was called in, just now, to the army during the crisis. And I have another granddaughter studying there and making Aliyah. Prior to her already, two other granddaughters who went to the seminaries there. So, in a way, I see my husband's work living on. You feel a continuity and our work for Israel being realized. You feel as if they're doing it. I have a grandson who is finishing his rabbinical studies at Yeshiva University. And, wants to become a rabbi. I said to him, ""It is such hard work. Why would you want that?" And he answered, "If I don't do it, who should?"

JF: What a good answer.

TK: And, you know, he has scholarships everywhere -- so he could do anything. So, I see the continuity. I see that my husband is living on in all that he did. And, I think that's very important to me. That you see this growth in your grandchildren. And I see that my children are the same family people.

JF: That's lovely.

TK: Yes.

JF: And, you've been committed to Israel all your life?



TK: Right.

JF: And now you have several grandchildren living there. How do you feel about what's going on now?

TK: It's very upsetting. Very, very. Someone said to me, "You're possessed with the news." It's our brethren. Were you at the rally in Washington?

JF: Pardon?

TK: Were you at the rally?

JF: No, I was not. What was that like?

TK: It was very interesting and heart warming. No matter where we are, we're one. When you see today's antisemitism, it is very, very scary. I didn't think that my children would have to live through this again. I didn't think that in my generation-- it couldn't happen again. And, for us, especially -- who went through the Holocaust -- to see this again -- is horrendous.

JF: Did you experience much antisemitism in this country?

TK: I personally didn't, but I know it exists. We cannot sit back and sleep. I think we could have saved a lot more people. We must be activists!

[END OF INTERVIEW]