

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRIEDA FINKLESTEIN FELLER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Frieda Finklestein Feller, joined by Miriam Segal Lipton, both of Douglass College Class of 1941. This interview is being conducted on March 27, 1998 in Highland Park, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and Elizabeth Wyatt. And I'm going to let Elizabeth Wyatt start this interview.

Elizabeth Wyatt: Okay. Well, let's start with your parents. We'll back up to them. They were both born in Newark, right?

Frieda Finklestein Feller: Yes.

EW: Okay. Your mother, her parents were of German and Bohemian decent?

FFF: Right.

EW: Okay. Do you want to tell ...

FFF: About them?

EW: How much do you know about your grandparents coming over and your mother's childhood?

FFF: Well, my grandmother Klein, my mother's mother, came from Frankfurt am Main in Germany. She came here in 1865, the year that Lincoln was shot. And she said that the idea was that everybody would come to this country and find gold in the streets. She said that she found black crepe all over everything. Every building in New York City was covered with black crepe. So it was very dreary ... it didn't auger well somehow, but she did very well. She first went to Cincinnati. A lot of German Jewish people, particularly, went to Cincinnati. And then she came back to Newark and she met my grandfather. Her name was Bobetta Steinhardt and his name was Ralph Klein. He was from Prague, or the Prague area in Bohemia. And it's interesting today, I don't know if this is the time to say it, but his ... brother's grandson is now in Prague, the representative of the Czech Republic to NATO. We've been able to follow him and follow the family since then. He used to be the Czech Republic representative to the United Nations, but now he's back there to NATO ... we have a family tree and everybody writes to everybody else and it's very nice. Let's see. Now my father's family, my grandfather Finklestein, came from Romania. He passed away when we were very little. I say "we" because I have a twin sister. She lives in Princeton now. My grandmother, her name was Rose Lehrhoff and her family were big in the bakery business. If you've lived in Newark, you may have heard of the Lehrhoff Bakery ... My mother was one of nine children and two adopted, eleven children. My mother was the youngest and the only girl. My grandmother insisted that she was going to have babies until she had a daughter! My mother was born when my grandmother was forty-five, which is why my grandmother was a good bit older. But she lived until she was about ninety-two, she passed away my Christmas holiday of my freshman year. She helped raise us, an older lady and "with it" to the last minute.

KP: ... It's such a great story, about her coming to the country and Lincoln's funeral.

FFF: Oh, yes.

KP: And seeing the black crepe.

FFF: ... She talked about it a lot. She talked about a lot of things that impressed her. She never could understand how Germany turned the way it did. She said, "It wasn't like that! People were good to each other. People were kind to each other." This was all something new. What was very disturbing, and a story that she talked about a lot, was the Dreyfus case. We heard about that Dreyfus case, almost every time we went to visit her, which was regularly because she always lived near us.

KP: And so for her Dreyfus ...

FFF: Was a living experience.

KP: It almost sounds like you distinguished France from Germany, where in fact, for her culturally ...

FFF: It did. Well, it was Europe.

KP: Yes, it was Europe.

FFF: And that was the big "to-do," it really affected people, apparently the world over. Very horrible experience.

KP: Did your grandmother speak German very much?

FFF: She spoke German with my mother. And we heard it, as in most families, so we picked it up a little bit. But her English was perfect. She read the *Newark Evening News*, we'd go and visit her and she always had the paper there.

KP: Did she ever read the German press?

FFF: No, not as far as I know.

KP: ... Because Newark had a number of German

FFF: German, yes.

KP: Papers. Because I've done an interview with someone who's grandmother, in the early 1900s, read the German language papers.

FFF: It's possible.

KP: But you don't know if ...

FFF: By the time we were there, no. We were the youngest grandchildren, no, the very youngest, almost the youngest. But we were the closest because she was always close with her daughter. She was widowed early. My grandfather was diabetic and in those days they didn't know about insulin; he passed away in 1917. The only good thing about that she said was, the fact that Germany and the United States were at war would've broken his heart. It was terrible.

KP: It sounds like ... your grandmother, and he, very much identified with Germany, culturally.

FFF: Culturally.

KP: And that they have a lot of fond memories.

FFF: ... There was a synagogue in Newark, B'nai Jeshurun, which was ... my grandfather was an early member. Which was founded early on, I think even before. They talk about his being a charter member, I think maybe when the building was built up because it originally was founded in 1848 and they're just celebrating their 150th anniversary ... They all congregated together and helped each other, when they first came over. It was not easy ... but he developed a wholesale butcher business, which he sold and it still going on today. Anyway, what else?

KP: Oh, no, I ...

EW: Then your ... father's mother was born in Austria-Poland?

FFF: Yes.

EW: Okay.

FFF: Yes. She said it would depend on which day of the week it was on where the border was. One day it was Austria and the next day it was Poland ... Four grandparents born in four different countries ... And my husband's family came from another country, so my children are a mixture.

KP: How observant was your family growing up?

FFF: ... In the Reform tradition, which is what the Germans were.

KP: Yes.

FFF: Mostly, we would attend synagogue every week.

KP: You didn't keep a kosher household?

FFF: We didn't keep a kosher household ... My father's family did ... Whatever you were, you did what ... everybody enjoyed each other's ways and when my grandmother, my father's mother,

came to our house we would have certain foods for her that she would eat. You know, she would eat hard-boiled eggs and bananas with sour cream and cottage cheese, things that came out of a package.

KP: Okay.

FFF: ... With us, my grandfather started the business and he had all kinds of meats. He sold bacon and ham and whatever, though we didn't have it in the house.

KP: So you wouldn't have bacon? You wouldn't have ...

FFF: No. No, we wouldn't have ... You just didn't do it, it didn't seem to sit well. Was it the same with you? It just didn't sit well. We bought meat in the supermarket and whatever.

KP: Yes, yes ... maybe if you could talk a little bit about your mother, who went to Drake's Business School.

FFF: Yes, and taught there ... Did I tell you about these things?

KP: She seemed to have had a fairly active career.

FFF: Oh, she did, she became secretary to the president of a bank, which still exists.

KP: Still exists?

FFF: Broad National Bank still exists, in Newark, New Jersey. And I know a lot of the names of people, but you know, were presidents since then. We would walk into the bank and everybody would get up as if we owned the place. She's bring her little twins in ... and everybody got up. It was very nice.

KP: So your mother worked while you were growing up?

FFF: No, no, not after she was married.

KP: Okay.

FFF: But afterwards, during the war, she went back to work. She worked in the Office of Dependency Benefits.

KP: In the new Prudential Building.

FFF: Right.

KP: Which is not new now, but then it was.

FFF: Right. But then it was a new building in Prudential.

KP: And what led her to go back to work during the war?

FFF: Because everybody helped in the war effort, nobody stayed home, nobody at all. Everybody tried.

KP: So she, in many ways, went back to work not so much 'cause she wanted to go back to work?

FFF: No, no. Because she wanted to help.

KP: Did she work after the war, then?

FFF: No.

KP: So it was very much for the duration?

FFF: Oh, absolutely, for the duration, yes.

KP: How did your parents meet? Your father was a teacher at the Drake's School?

FFF: ... Drake's Business School. Well, he was working his way through law school. In those days you didn't have to go to college to go to law school. You left high school, he went to night high school, his father and mother were really quite poor. It took them a while to make it, his father had a retail butcher shop ... A lot of people couldn't afford meat the way they do these days. And my father started working, he said, when he was six years old, he would take the little red wagon and deliver orders before he went to school. We don't realize how easy we have it now. He put himself through night school and night law school. And because of his training at Drake's Business College, where he went first, he transcribed his complete notes of the law professors' lectures and put them into books, and that way he got tuition free.

EW: So did they meet while they were at Drake's, she was at Drake's?

FFF: At Drake's, they were both teaching.

EW: Oh, okay.

FFF: Yes, he did very well, he had the Gregg Medal for being the fastest typist in the country. You should see him - he could carry on a conversation and type!

KP: And just keep typing?

FFF: Keep typing away. And if I tried to type he'd take it away from me. "I can't stand it, I can't stand it," [he'd say].

KP: How long did your mother teach and how long did he teach? Do you have any idea?

FFF: I know he always had two or three jobs because all of a sudden there were twins. And that wasn't easy!

KP: ... He did become a lawyer?

FFF: Yes, oh, yes. He was. In fact, he had to wait until he was twenty-one to take the Bar.

KP: What law school did he go to?

FFF: New Jersey Law School, which is now Rutgers.

KP: Part of Rutgers-Newark.

FFF: And interestingly, now they give a JD, which in those days he had a LLB.

KP: Really.

FFF: They sent him a diploma as a Juris Doctor without ever ... finishing that, some fifty years later, from Rutgers.

KP: From Rutgers?

FFF: I have it upstairs, from Rutgers. Well, there were a lot of interesting people in his class. He tells the story of lending Samuel I. Newhouse \$5.00 to pay for his diploma 'cause he didn't have the money! He was in his class.

KP: That is a very good story. Who else did he mention?

FFF: I think so. Oh, there were a lot ... of people in his class.

KP: ... Did you know, at the time, the ... Lowenstein family?

FFF: I know of them.

KP: Yes, I know at the time in the thirties, his father ... was number two person on the Board of Education and Al Lowenstein ... is a prominent corporate team. So I was just wondering if you knew them.

FFF: I just know them because ... my mother passed away in 1956 and my father remarried and his second wife was related to the Lowensteins.

KP: Oh, okay.

FFF: So that's the only way.

KP: ... Not at the time growing up?

FFF: No, but he knew everybody in the Board of Education.

KP: Oh, okay.

FFF: ... My father went back to Mayor Raymond. I have pictures upstairs.

KP: Of him?

FFF: Not of him, but I have so many of the various commissioners and meetings, Mayor Ellenstein. I knew Mayor Ellenstein very well.

KP: Oh, we need to ask you about Mayor Ellenstein.

FFF: Oh, and all sides of Mayor Ellenstein?

KP: Well, since you brought him up. I would've asked a little later, but why don't you [talk about him] since you're mind is on him.

FFF: Well, there was a time in Newark, where they used to say, "If you needed anything, there was Ellenstein, Reichenstein and Finklestein." Ellenstein was the mayor, Harry Reichenstein was the city clerk for years and years and years, in fact, Bob and I never went to get our marriage license, he sent it home with my father. And the other people have to take a day off and appear, we never had to do that. I shouldn't say that, but they're all gone now. ... My father started in the city ... at World War I. He had become a lawyer and had opened an office. It was a big deal to open an office and buy some law books, and then the war broke out. And he said, "What'll I do if I'm called up ... what'll I do with my office, all this investment?" So he took a job, he closed the office, I think he closed the office, and he took a job as an identification clerk doing fingerprints in police headquarters and he worked his way up. He was a lawyer and they promoted him from one job to another, until he became personnel director of the city. So, we knew everybody. We knew Addonesio, we knew people who came later. But all the mayors coming up. And my father used to do ghost writing for political speeches.

KP: Does any of his papers survive, your father's? Because you mentioned you have pictures.

FFF: Oh, I have tons of them. I can get some out, I just have to get upstairs, I have a big box I put things in. I have lots of things, which I don't need.

KP: Well, it would be something that Special Collections of Rutgers University Libraries ... would really like to have.

FFF: The police chief, Macrell, Jack Harris, I mean, we used to sit on their laps.

KP: So you spent a lot of time at City Hall.

FFF: And police headquarters. When we were little, I guess we were seven or eight years old, my father took us to police headquarters, on the first floor, where there was a cell, a holding cell for people before they went off to jail. And he said, "You look in there, come on, I'll show you, inside. If you ever end up in there, I'll see that you stay there." I'll never forget that.

KP: You mentioned there were, just to follow up on Mayor Ellenstein, you mentioned there were a number of sides to Mayor Ellenstein.

FFF: Oh, yes.

KP: Could you maybe say what some of those sides were?

FFF: Well, he was a dentist. He was a lawyer. And people loved him. If someone didn't have money needed to have teeth, or needed to have work done, he would take care of them, he wouldn't charge them. He really was a very good person, for a long time.

KP: ... What else do you remember about Mayor Ellenstein?

FFF: He was a handsome man. Oh, tall, big shock of white hair, no balding for him. ...

KP: I've read that Mayor Ellenstein was very popular and he was Newark's first Jewish mayor.

FFF: Right. Right.

KP: And so he had a lot of that being "the first."

FFF: Yes.

KP: You also mentioned, though, that you had memories of Mayor Raymond?

FFF: No, my father started under Mayor Raymond.

KP: But you never met him?

FFF: No.

KP: ... What did your father think of him, 'cause Mayor Raymond has a reputation for being one of Newark's best mayors.

FFF: Yes. Oh, yes.

KP: What did your father say after working under Mayor Raymond?

FFF: He was proud of having worked for him. ... That's how I remember his name because he thought so well of him.

KP: Were there any mayors who your father thought less than favorably?

FFF: Yes. I won't.

KP: You won't? You're being so polite, they're all passed away.

FFF: I know them so well, no. Why should we speak ill of the dead?

KP: Well, maybe in a general term.

FFF: Well, no, a lot of them would come and go and there were other people who ran the city.

KP: Who were the people that ran the city? It sounds like your father was one of the people.

FFF: Yes, he was one of the people. Well, there was a Leo Cleusman, he was in the social work end of things. There were people there for years and years ... the various department heads really ran the city and advised at meetings. I have pictures of some council meetings where they are, it's just like when a lawyer sits with somebody who is testifying. Well, at the meetings the commissioners, we had a commission form of government, they would bring the heads of the departments, they used to call them administrative clerks, they would bring their administrative clerk with them to help answer questions.

KP: How long did your father stay with the city government?

FFF: From 1917 to 1973.

EW: Fifty-three years?

FFF: Fifty-three years.

KP: So your father really saw a number of changes.

FFF: Oh, absolutely.

KP: What led him to finally retire? It sounds like he was ...

FFF: Well, they didn't want him to retire, he was supposed to at age seventy. And it was mandatory and they passed an ordinance, a city ordinance, so that he should remain.

KP: Oh, I'm so sorry I never got a chance to interview your father.

FFF: Oh, yes. I'll show you pictures. He always looked very young, at least to me.

KP: One of the reasons I ask about Newark, the mayors, Newark has a reputation, partly deserved, partly undeserved, of ... there being a lot of corruption.

FFF: There was during Prohibition. They used to say there were people in government who got a certain amount of money for each barrel of liquor that went down ... the Passaic River. So, that may have been, but there were some really good people.

KP: No, well that's why I'm partly asking 'cause one alum ... said that Newark had the best government that money could buy!

FFF: Yes, well, it's true in a lot of [places].

KP: So there were, in fact, some commissioners who were the less than honest?

FFF: Oh, sure. And some less than bright and some very bright.

KP: Since your father was in city government, so long ... , you mentioned he admired Mayor Raymond, what other mayors did he think were very effective?

FFF: He enjoyed Mayor Ellenstein and ... Brennan, Supreme Court Justice Brennan's father, William J. Brennan? He loved him, he was really very special. And there were, a lot of them were commissioners of public safety, that we knew better than mayors ... That was our area.

KP: So your father was involved with Public Safety until 1973?

FFF: Yes, yes. Well, the whole city, later personnel director for the whole city. What he did was, he standardized salaries, like a secretary in one department would earn a different amount of money from a secretary in another department. And he said that was ridiculous, and so he spent a couple of years actually standardizing salaries for whomever, policemen, firemen, secretaries, maintenance people, etc. And then he became personnel director. He did a couple of important things, he started the Newark Police Academy and I was there and I have pictures of him with J. Edgar Hoover, who came. He was the main speaker at that. ... They had a city chemist who was used, I mean, everything was scientific. And they trained cops. I have pictures. And I have some books that were autographed by J. Edgar Hoover. And what else? And he also started the radio station; the radio, two-way radio that had never been utilized before. He was a big radio buff and we used to go to WOR.

KP: Oh, in the Bamberger building.

FFF: In the Bamberger Radio Station, on the top floor of the Bamberger Department Store, do you remember that? Every once in awhile they would have ... parties and I remember meeting Kate Smith and various other people who entertained or worked at WOR.

KP: So it sounds like you had a pretty good time growing up?

FFF: Oh, we enjoyed it! We were part of it.

KP: Well, it sounds like you got to meet dignitaries.

FFF: Yes, well, they didn't have babysitters in those days, the way they do now.

KP: What about Newark Airport?

FFF: Oh, yes. We were there. I remember the old Newark Airport.

KP: Yes.

FFF: And then they bought the land, there was a big "to-do" because that was marshland with mosquitoes and this wasn't going to happen and people were going to make a lot of money. That was under Mayor Ellenstein. He started the airport and I remember the first administration building, in fact, then they had a new one, Eddie Rickenbacker came and dedicated it. So we met Eddie Rickenbacker. Now that I think about it, they were interesting people.

KP: No, you met a lot for someone who was very young.

FFF: Yes.

KP: I mean, through your parents, but still.

FFF: Sure. Well, they took us everywhere. You got to know everyone else's children too. It was fun. And I'll have pictures for you.

KP: ... And I won't even put it on the record, but I hope you would consider donating them to Special Collections.

FFF: Oh, yes. You can have them.

KP: Especially if you ...

FFF: My sister is in a small apartment now. She's widowed and her children aren't [near].

KP: And any papers that he might have left.

FFF: I don't know about that.

KP: But they'd be very useful to historians.

FFF: But these pictures I think would be ... they were interesting people.

EW: So your father was employed through the Depression?

FFF: Yes! Well, he did keep up a law office, his, I don't remember if he closed that original one or not, but he had a younger brother who became a lawyer. And so they had S.B. & L.A. Finklestein. And my uncle had a law office right next to city hall and my father used to go there lunchtime and after ... four or four-thirty, whenever he finished. He was the lawyer for a lot of the policemen and firemen ... He would help them buy houses and what-have-you, and if, God forbid, anything happened to them, that he would never charge a widow, and he kept his word, he never did. But everybody, if they had a problem, "Just ask Sam." The ... Police Department, the Fire Department, they knew he was a lawyer and that he was honest and that he would take care of them. ... You said during the Depression, when other people lost jobs, in the city they kept cutting salaries until my father was making \$1200 a year. But the only ... good thing was that we didn't lose our house. My parents had had a house built and ... Dad was able to pay the mortgage. And sometimes things were skinny. I remember sometimes they would give us meat, and they would have eggs for supper. But we got through the Depression; we weren't hungry. And Dad always had a check.

EW: Did you have a garden?

FFF: Yes, we had a garden.

EW: Did most people have gardens?

FFF: Well, we didn't have what you'd call a "Victory Garden," we just had a flower garden. We didn't have vegetables.

EW: So you didn't grow vegetables?

FFF: No, no. We went to the store.

EW: Okay. You said he was making \$12,000.

FFF: \$1200.

EW: \$1200. Do you remember what the salary was before the cuts started happening?

FFF: No. Probably \$1800 or something like that. It wasn't a lot of money. The thing about the law practice, no one could afford to get a divorce or buy houses. Or they lost their houses. It was really very bad. I remember soup kitchens downtown in Military Park. People talk about that probably. People brought their pots and they'd fill them or they'd just get soup.

EW: Do you remember changes like in your clothing or in different aspects? Because you were younger.

FFF: Yes, I do.

EW: What do you remember from your own life?

FFF: Well, since we were twins my mother tried to keep us dressed alike. We're not identical, but then we realized that we could have twice as many clothes. And we were in different classes, so I would wear the dress one-day and my sister would wear the dress the other day. We're the same size. I remember my mother had a coat, and we needed coats, and my mother knew somebody who would cut down her coat and make two coats out of it. And I remember those, they were black coats with little white collars. It was originally my mother's coat and I felt very badly about it, but you've got to be warm walking to school.

EW: Do you remember different things with classmates and how people were dealing with it and how you compared to your friends?

FFF: We didn't talk about it. I don't know. Did you?

Miriam Segal Lipton: I don't recall it ever coming up.

FFF: Did you talk about it?

MSL: No, I don't think so.

FFF: No, we just had to be in school. And we were good, we didn't talk that much. I'm still doing it, we had to sit with our hands folded. Did you have to sit with your hands folded?

MSL: At times. Yes.

FFF: And we didn't talk. If you looked sideways ...

KP: What about during recess?

FFF: What recess? No, we didn't have recess.

KP: Your mother retired from working outside the house when you were born and growing up.

FFF: Yes.

KP: Was she active in any organizations?

FFF: Only, as I remember, the Women's Masonic, Order of the Golden Chain. And that was the only thing. She was chaplain for years and years. But she was never a card-player. A lot of the women went out and played cards. She never did.

KP: Was she active at all in the synagogue? Any sisterhoods?

FFF: No, not particularly. She always had my ... grandmother as sort of a responsibility. She cooked for everybody and cooked for my grandmother, and helped clean her place.

KP: So your grandma lived with you?

FFF: No, no, she would never.

KP: Really?

FFF: Never. She said, "I don't care," she said, "I could have ten or eleven children. I would never live with any of them." And she lived by herself until her last day.

KP: Wow! She sounds like she was a tough woman.

FFF: A very tough lady. We would get calls from the bank, "Mrs. Finklestein your mother's down here. Do you want to come get her or do you want her to get back on the bus to go home?" She said, "I'll come and get her." She was quite a lady.

KP: You grew up, having lived in Newark, some of the institutions, I'm partly asking because I ...

FFF: ... You know them?

KP: Well, I mean, one institution is the public library.

FFF: Oh, I love the library.

KP: Which is still wonderful ... in Newark.

FFF: On Washington Street.

KP: Yes.

FFF: Sure.

KP: Do you have memories of using the library?

FFF: Sure, but mostly the Newark Museum.

KP: That was my next question.

FFF: With Louis Bamberger, I knew Louis Bamberger. I'm an old gal, I mean, I don't feel old.

KP: It's just because I interviewed Allen Lowenstein and he had very fond memories of Louis Bamberger, particularly his father knew him well.

FFF: And he had a sister.

KP: Felix Fuld.

FFF: Helen? Helene? Helena?

KP: I can't remember her.

FFF: Helen. Helen.

KP: Yes, Louis Bamberger was a very modest man.

FFF: Very quiet.

KP: And very quiet. He was a very generous man. And very modest.

FFF: Extremely ... I don't think he ever married. He would come down the side of Bamberger's, what was it? Halsey Street?

KP: Yes. I think it is.

FFF: I don't know, the one that comes into Market Street. Right beside Bamberger's, not Halsey.

KP: I'm not sure.

FFF: It's something else.

KP: I know.

FFF: But he would come in the side entrance and he would have a gray homburg, in light gray or dark clothes and a cane with a gold tip, a walking stick, I shouldn't call it a cane, it was a walking stick. And he would walk into his store and the employees adored him. When he passed away he left money to every single employee. Yes, every one that had worked there for a certain period of time, they all got money. And his sister, who married Felix Fuld, they also endowed a lot of things.

KP: Well, the Fuld's were a little more open, whereas Louis Bamberger, I've been told, would often ...

FFF: Very quiet.

KP: Would simply help the Y, the YWHA.

FFF: Right, the YMHA.

KP: He didn't want to be the public

FFF: No.

KP: And I even think of him as endowing the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. He didn't put the "Bamberger Institute for Advanced Study."

FFF: No, no.

KP: How else did you know Louis Bamberger?

FFF: Well, simply from having seen him. You know, we would walk through the store and he would come in. And I still have trouble calling it "Macy's," it's still Bamberger's to me.

KP: Well, ... when I lived in Newark, that was the time that they closed that store.

FFF: Oh, that's sad.

KP: We were sad to see it go.

FFF: Oh, yes. It was a great store, I mean, it was the kind of place where they really cared about their customers. There was a lady in the shoe department who used to call my mother when new shoes came in, ... to say that, "I have new shoes and I have them in your daughters' sizes. So come in." Because, you know, she wanted to get two alike. Two pairs alike. "I have them, come now." I can't see their doing that, maybe Nordstrom's does that today, I don't know.

KP: Well, mostly I'm curious, ... I take it you favored Bamberger's, but there was also Hahne's.

FFF: Hahne's. We loved Hahne's, you'd have lunch in Hahne's. They had a nice lunch place, and nice quality. And I think Lord and Taylor bought Hahne's.

KP: Yes, I'd actually been ... in the Hahne's before it closed.

FFF: Oh.

KP: But when I was living in Newark it had already been closed.

FFF: And Kresge's.

KP: Yes, Kresge's I don't have any memory of.

FFF: Well, my grandmother, speaking of my grandmother, she was quite a lady, she was the first sales lady at what was called L.S. Plaut & Co., P-L-A-U-T. And Kresge bought them out. ... My grandmother was really supposed to help ladies buy hats, but they found out that she had very good taste, and women would come to her and say, "I have a party," or "I have a function to go to" and she would dress them. So Kresge, before they closed, before my grandmother passed away, they made a party for her at a Newark restaurant. They gave her flowers and perfumes and said, "You know, you were the personal shopper before anybody ever thought of having a personal shopper."

EW: You shopped in Newark, did you ever go into New York City?

[ring]

FFF: Ah, rarely.

KP: Memories of, you mentioned the Newark Museum, you had even more memories. You talked about Louis Bamberger.

FFF: Bamberger donated that. We loved that. And the Planetarium that's in there. Wonderful. There was a Mrs. Coffee who was in charge of it. She was such a nice lady, loved to have the children come. My father used to go there too because she, too, was a city employee.

KP: Did you ever do any arts and crafts at the Newark Museum? Or any activities, besides going to see what was on display in the exhibits?

FFF: My sister mostly, because she's an artist. She ended up teaching at Parsons' School of Design in New York. She was the one that got involved with art.

KP: One of the other things you probably remember well is the Morris Canal.

FFF: Oh, yes.

KP: And the creation of the subway, which I have a feeling your father has some directing [in].

FFF: Well, there was water. There was the Morris Canal and they covered it over and made it a trolley line.

KP: Well, it's basically a elevated street car ...

FFF: Streetcar type thing.

KP: It's called "The Subway" because it is underground.

FFF: Well, maybe part of it is.

KP: Yes, yes.

FFF: And you know what else we used to love to go to? Was Branchbrook Park to see the cherry blossoms.

KP: Which the Fuld Family was responsible for.

FFF: Were they? Now, that I didn't know.

KP: So going back.

FFF: Newark, they were Newark.

KP: Now that's something I ...

FFF: But they gave with such a full heart!

KP: Because I have the same memories of going there.

FFF: Going there?

KP: The cherry blossoms. But I didn't go the first two years I lived in Newark, but then the final year, when I knew I was moving, I said [that] I'd better go see the cherry blossoms.

FFF: There are more than there are in Washington.

KP: And that's when I had the regret that I didn't go sooner.

FFF: Sooner.

KP: And I've taken my wife, and I've taken some of my students at times to see the cherry blossoms, actually it will be soon.

FFF: Soon. Yes. They've started in Washington, they've opened in Washington. My son and his family live in Fairfax, Virginia, which is just fifteen miles south. "Where are you? The cherry blossoms are opening!"

MSL: Well you saw, what blossoms did you see just recently?

Maurice Lipton: Oh, when we were in California. But that's California.

FFF: They have a son in California and daughter in Paris.

KP: Oh, wow!

FFF: A son here, another traveling.

MSL: Always traveling!

FFF: They just got a new grandchild in Paris they haven't seen yet. Exciting.

KP: Newark also had great movie theatres?

FFF: Oh, wonderful!

KP: The Paramount.

FFF: And you know what? My sister and I went free!

KP: Why?

FFF: So we went every single week! Because there used to be a sign, maybe there still is, for safety from the Department of Public Safety ... As a courtesy to the families of people from the Department of Public Safety, the ... heads of the departments and their children could have passes. So every Friday afternoon after school my sister and I, we'd go to the movies.

KP: So, which movies do you remember? You saw a lot of movies.

FFF: We saw all the good movies, Loew's mostly. That man was really a friend of my father's ... they got along really well. "Send your daughters down!" you know. And the Branford and the RKO Fox. Those were the three big ones.

EW: What movies do you remember?

FFF: Oh, everything.

EW: What were your favorites?

FFF: *It Happened One Night, Gone With the Wind*. I don't know, we saw everything.

EW: What were your favorite actors or actresses?

FFF: We weren't into that so much. We just went to enjoy it. And then when I was in high school we had a PhotoPlay Club and I ended up at president one term and my sister was president another term. We would write reviews for the school paper. So we'd bring a lot of people with us, it was part of our English assignment. And Mr. Lewin was in charge. His brother was the Albert Lewin who was the producer/director out in Hollywood. And Mr. Lewin used to go out every summer and meet Clark Gable and others and come back and tell us all about it. It was exciting. Nobody had money, but we did exciting things. We also enjoyed Weequahic Park, which you can't go into anymore. It's not safe.

KP: There was also a great amusement park near ...

FFF: Olympic Park.

KP: Olympic Park. Did you go to Olympic Park?

FFF: Yes, we used to ... particularly when my father was working on the Lindbergh case. He lived down there, on the property, and he didn't come home. My mother used to worry about what she could do with the girls on the weekend, so ... we would take a trolley car and go to the end of the line, which was Olympic Park. And get off and look at the funny mirrors and things. They were outside, I don't think we ever had the money to go inside. And then we'd get back on, it was all one fee, one price, since you didn't get off, really. Then we'd go back home for the nickel for each of us. It was a great outing. Olympic Park with the funny mirrors, you'd look fat and skinny, that's what I remember.

KP: ... It sounds like you did a lot did a lot for fun, what else did you do for fun? You went to the movies, you went to parks, you went to museums ...

FFF: Well, when we were twelve years old we got bicycles and tennis rackets ... We would go to the park and we would bike around the park. They had tennis courts and, being twins, we always had somebody to do it with ... we did everything together.

EW: Would you go with other classmates or friends from school?

FFF: Sometimes, but we'd go together, too. We don't look alike and we're different. She's artistic and I'm not, so it was always interesting. You've met my sister?

MSL: Oh, yes.

FFF: She's sort of blondish and I'm dark, you know. We were friends. Always good friends, still are.

KP: You only had a sister?

FFF: That's all.

KP: No brothers?

FFF: No. In those days they didn't have cesareans and my mother had difficulties, we were tiny, but she still had difficulty. I think we were seven pounds something, together. But, the doctor said that she should never have any more children. So at least that's what she said. So that's it. We ... were very well cared for.

KP: You mentioned, oh, no ...

FFF: No, I was just saying, we did with little, but we always had books. There was never money for anything, but if we wanted a book, nothing would stop my father from finding a book for us if we wanted it. We learned the value of books that way. To this day I can't dispose of a book, this house, the whole basement.

KP: I should put on the record that in back of us in the dining room there's a ... number of books. Stacks.

EW: Spanish and French books.

FFF: That's the basement, all walls, upstairs and in the bedrooms, books. The garage, my father's law books. I ought to pull them out, not doing anyone any good now, everything's on computer.

KP: Those books are still...

FFF: Are they? You want them?

KP: They're still useful for legal historians, so don't [get rid of them].

FFF: If you have any, I invite them.

KP: Well, I can make inquiries.

FFF: Would you? Sure.

KP: ... To find the proper home for them, 'cause some people would want them and some would not. You would be surprised.

FFF: Really? ... As a historian, before you leave I'll show you some interesting books that were his, up here.

KP: ... The Newark Public School System was really valued, and was one of the preeminent school systems in the country, and you went through it.

FFF: We were lucky. We went to Maple Avenue School the first day it opened. We went to Weequahic High School the first day it opened, Brand new schools! You can't do any better than that!

KP: And Weequahic especially has a reputation, and well deserved, for being one of the best public schools in the country.

FFF: And it was. Never had a good football team, but basketball ... and a wonderful band.

KP: Could you maybe talk a little bit about your teachers, both in elementary school, but particularly, and you've even alluded to a few teachers, [in high school]?

FFF: Oh, we had wonderful teachers. The principal was Max Hertzberg, who I think was related to a Hertzberg here at the Eagleton Foundation? I think they were related. He was an English teacher and wrote English textbooks. Very nice man. Then, my homeroom teacher was Julius Bernstein, who became superintendent of schools in Millburn ... I did supervision at Rutgers and he did supervision, it's funny, at Newark Rutgers, in the Graduate School of Education ... We had wonderful French teachers, English teachers, history teachers. They were very kind.

EW: Did you start taking Spanish and French in high school?

FFF: French, in high school. I started Spanish at Douglass. You did, too?

MSL: I did too.

KP: It sounds like it was pretty much set that you were going to go to college, is that correct? That your parents really had expectations?

FFF: Well, there were no boys and my father and mother valued education so much. One way or another. My sister wanted to be an artist, so, "You'll go to art school." She did well and the school asked her to remain to teach there.

KP: Growing up, what did you want to be?

FFF: I didn't know, I knew I couldn't draw.

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE-----

KP: You didn't know because what were the options?

FFF: What were the options? Secretary or a teacher? Nurse?

KP: And you didn't want to type.

FFF: I didn't want to type. It was boring.

KP: You had your father.

FFF: My father, he typed my papers while I was in college. He did! I used to mail them to him and he would type them and send them back. He didn't know what he was typing because they were in French and Spanish, mostly. But he did just, did the letters, it was wonderful.

EW: And you couldn't make any mistakes back then.

FFF: Yes. He never made mistakes. I just put in the accents.

KP: And you ... couldn't draw, you mentioned.

FFF: I couldn't. She is so good. I'll show you some of the things she does. She's wonderful.

KP: And ... you didn't want to be a nurse?

FFF: No, I couldn't stand it. It gets me in the stomach if I see somebody suffer. Oh, I couldn't do what you must do. I just couldn't do it. So I just didn't know, and my mother had a friend, who was a French war bride, she married my father's best friend when he was a doughboy in WWI. And she had two little boys, close together, not twins. And my mother had the two little girls. They used to push the baby carriages together. And she used to speak, her French was beautiful. She had been secretary to the Minister of Finance of France and was a graduate of the Sorbonne, and she was really quite a lady. My mother and she hit it off and the two men were friends, so we started hearing French from the time we were tiny. She used to say, you know, "Maybe Frieda would like to get into the government. Maybe she'd like to go on with the French." And I did well, you do what you do well in. I don't think I ever got less than an A in a language. So where you get As, that's where you go. You figure that's where you're doing well.

EW: So your interest in the languages began very early.

FFF: Yes, that's what happened. You, too?

MSL: I can't [remember]. I always liked languages.

FFF: Liked languages.

MSL: Starting in high school.

EW: What did you do in high school ... with your friends, as activities?

FFF: Golly, what did we do? We had little clubs, you know, everybody had clubs ... We would sort of meet at different ... girls' houses. It wasn't much, we had lunch, their mothers would make us lunch or something. We'd play cards, nothing exciting. We'd read a lot. I can remember spending summers reading. That Osborne Street Library, I think I read every book there.

KP: ... Did you have any sororities?

FFF: My sister belonged to one that they called a sorority.

KP: A high school sorority.

FFF: Yes, and they still see each other. Little ladies. But we were in different classes, so ... she had friends, I had friends, and we had friends together.

KP: So you had separate lives even though you were so close?

FFF: Yes, yes. Oh, yes.

KP: What about social activities? Dances? Any dating in high school?

FFF: No, when we had a prom everybody would ask somebody, "You go with this one, and you go with that one." It was nothing like that.

EW: Did the boys always ask the girls, or were the girls figuring out who they wanted to go with?

FFF: I don't even remember. If somebody knew somebody, they'd say, "Oh, you take this one, we don't want that one to stay home." Or something, how was it with you? We didn't have ...

MSL: I don't remember.

EW: So did you go ... just as friends or did you go as a romance?

FFF: Yes, friends, never romance! Nobody had romances in high school. No, we were young, too. I was sixteen when I got out. We used to be younger.

KP: It sounds like you got a promotion, did you skip any grades?

FFF: Yes, I did. I skipped six half years in elementary school. Well ... first of all, we started a little later. I had an uncle, a doctor, and he used to say, "Too much for these frail little girls, I don't want them to go to school." So my father went down to the Board of Education and got some books, and my mother would teach us. Now we didn't start school 'til we were seven, so we spent three days in the first grade, and then we went into the second grade ... I can remember ... my mother said to the principal, at the time, Mr. Hambright, "My girls can read, what are you making them spend so much time in this grade for?" So, he thought he would trick her, and he fetched some eighth grade books, and he brought the books in and we read them! He said, "I guess they can read." She had really taught us. Every morning we would sit at the little table in the kitchen and we had our lessons and we read ... if she scrubbed the kitchen floor she'd put newspapers down, on the floor, and we'd have to crawl around on the papers and read words and read the stories to her. I mean, she had us reading, and reading, and reading. So anyway, then they had summer schools. Who had money for summer camp? So, every time you went to summer school you skipped half a year ... Aside from the other I skipped six half-years. So I got out early.

KP: So you went to school in the summer?

FFF: It was in the morning, only the morning.

KP: You say you never went to summer camp?

FFF: Later, when I was in high school I went to a Girl Scout camp.

KP: Oh, okay.

FFF: I used to go to Girl Scout Camp. That was \$10 a week.

KP: Which was a lot of money then.

FFF: Which was a lot of money. One year they paid me, I had a scholarship from my troop.

EW: ... What about the Girl Scouts? Did you meet every week?

FFF: Oh, yes! Every Tuesday night.

EW: How was it organized?

FFF: It was at the Temple, in the basement. And we had everybody.

EW: Were the mothers involved, or was it just the daughters?

FFF: No, we had a leader and an assistant leader and we would go, yes, that was really childhood, Girl Scouts. We used to go on hikes on the weekends, we'd go to South Mountain Reservation and hike six miles and come back exhausted.

EW: Did you have a uniform?

FFF: Oh, yes. I still have it, you want it? With all my merit badges.

EW: So you had all the projects to do?

FFF: Oh, yes, surely.

EW: Can you tell us about some of the different projects that you did?

FFF: Oh, golly, sewing, and swimming, reading, I'll get you that [uniform], I really do have it upstairs.

KP: I just interviewed from the Class of '42 Douglass, Mrs. Kramer, Vince Kramer's spouse.

FFF: Oh?

KP: And she...

FFF: He was '41, Vince Kramer.

KP: Yes, he was '41, Rutgers. And she mentioned the sort of Golden Eaglet.

FFF: That was later. They've changed the name so many times. I didn't quite make it 'cause I couldn't swim that far, at the time. Well, I didn't have the opportunity. We would go over to the Y [YMHA] on Sunday afternoons, but you didn't have the training like you do now. My kids, my grandchildren are competitive swimmers, and they're eleven and thirteen. Twenty-five hundred meters to practice before they ... really swim. I mean, it wasn't like that. So I just missed out. I was first class. But they had Golden Eaglet. But when my daughter made it, it was Curved Bar, so they changed the name. And I think it's back to Eagle again.

EW: Mr. Feller was in Boy Scouts, wasn't he?

FFF: Yes, yes.

FFF: That was what you did. You were scouts, that was our childhood.

KP: Your Girl Scout Troop, was it mainly girls from the synagogue?

FFF: No, anybody.

KP: Anyone?

FFF: Yes.

KP: So you had people who were non-Jewish in the [troop]?

FFF: Not many, but there were, you brought your friends. But it used to be that if it were a Jewish Troop, I found out later, the numbers were the same. Like we were, ... there would be like Troop 55, we were Troop 11. That was their little clue ... to know where you came from ... I found that out later, I didn't know that.

KP: Really?

FFF: And even the Boy Scouts. Arthur, our son, who was an Eagle Scout in Troop 55 in Highland Park, which is still going.

EW: Did you sell cookies?

FFF: No, we didn't have cookies.

EW: No?

FFF: No! You know that!

MSL: I remember that.

FFF: My daughter, our daughter, sold cookies. No, we didn't sell them.

KP: I guess that's what ... we identify with the Girl Scouts.

FFF: That it was forever.

KP: Forever, but in fact, it wasn't forever.

EW: ... I did it as a Girl Scout.

FFF: Did you? She did, too. We bought a lot of cookies.

MSL: My daughter used to try to sell cookies when we had company.

FFF: Have a captive audience.

MSL: Which was not really a nice thing to do.

EW: Was there any type of fund raising then, like to fund raise to pay for things?

FFF: Nobody had anything.

EW: Okay.

FFF: You can't believe how little there was. I mean, you managed ... we would walk from temple to home, which was several miles to avoid the nickel car fare.

KP: So your parents didn't own a car?

FFF: Oh, they did. In 1925 Dad got a car ... The first one was a small Buick, but after that we always had a Chevrolet. We never had anything bigger than that. But we had it, we would go for Sunday afternoon rides.

KP: Where did you drive to?

FFF: We'd go ... up the mountains, South Orange or Caldwell, or Essex Fells. ... Wyoming Avenue in South Orange was so beautiful, we'd go to look at the houses. Particularly at Christmas time, the lights were just magnificent. We'd ride, it was nice, very tame.

KP: Did you ever go on any vacations? Family vacations? And where would you go?

FFF: We'd go to Canada. We'd drive. My sister and I were both allergic, so ... my father would try to get us to where it was cooler. And we would go to Ottawa, or Montreal, or Quebec. For his two weeks vacation in the summer. We actually made friends with some of the people who had cabins up there. We'd stay in cabins. And they would stay with my folks when they came in this direction in winter on their way to Florida.

KP: Oh, wow.

EW: Did you go out to eat when you went on vacation?

FFF: Oh, sure. We ate out. Things were much cheaper then. It isn't like now and you could get a meal for twenty-five cents as I remember.

KP: Did you ever have any jobs growing up?

FFF: No, I tried to get them, but I couldn't, no.

EW: That was because of the Depression?

FFF: I even went down to the Pru once and I thought, "This is Newark? Maybe it'll get me a job." All they wanted was typing and I couldn't type.

KP: You mentioned your father having involvement with the Lindbergh case. What was his involvement?

FFF: He took the depositions of Betty Gow, the nurse, and various other people. In fact, when they showed that picture on television of the Lindbergh case, he is there typing away in the garage. They had a whole lot of people set up with an office with typewriters and he is sitting there typing away. So when they show it, I always look for that part to see his picture. He lived there, I believe over the garage, for six weeks.

KP: Did he attend the trial in Flemington?

FFF: I don't remember. I know he knew Dave Wilentz who was the lawyer. He was from Perth Amboy.

KP: I heard a number of Wilentz stories because the Fishkin family probably.

FFF: I remember our gym teacher used to pull me out of gym and, "What's new? What's going on?"

KP: Did you remember any other famous cases since your father was a law enforcer?

FFF: That was the one that stands out.

KP: Stuck out.

FFF: I remember that there were some gangsters that they use to talk about. Longys, Zuillman, and people like that who were very good people. I don't know what they did. They must have done things that were wrong, but I understand that he and some other people paid for these soup kitchens they had in Lincoln Park.

KP: Is there anything that we forgot to ask you about Newark because you had such wonderful stories.

FFF: I'll think of them after you leave.

KP: Put them in writing, please. It sounds like you very much enjoyed growing up there.

FFF: Yes, we enjoyed. My father was the one who was in fraternal organizations. He was active in the Masons, etc, Order of the Golden Chain and the Salaam Temple Masonic Orders.

KP: What about the Mosque Theater, when did you go to that.

FFF: Oh, sure, that was beautiful. It was a big, big theatre. Well, you were there later, for orchestra and symphony.

KP: What about New York? It sounds like you never went to New York very often.

FFF: We would go in once a while by bus and by train. Once in a while, very rarely. My first play was when I was in high school. I remember I saw something called *The Two Bouquets*. It was very, very sweet and we only went because our girlfriend's mother loved the theatre and she got tickets for her daughter and for my sister and me. But we weren't exposed to theatre like my husband, who grew up in New York and you did too.

KP: So did I.

FFF: Did you go to the theatre? We didn't even know it, just radio.

KP: Who were your favorite radio programs?

FFF: *Myrt and Marge*, *The Shadow Knows*, and whatever. *Amos and Andy*. My folks listened to *Amos and Andy*. Oh, *The Goldbergs*, with Mollie Goldberg.

KP: There was quite a bit of in the 1930's quite a bit of (inaudible) activity. Even in Newark there was some. Do you remember any of it or do you remember the Minute Men at all?

FFF: No.

KP: You don't remember the Minute Men?

FFF: No, that's new to me.

KP: Do you think your family has culturally very strong connections in Germany?

FFF: Yes.

KP: You mentioned in the very beginning of the interview that Hitler was really stunning to your grandmother.

FFF: Oh, she couldn't understand it, just horrible. She said the only good thing about the fact that my grandfather passed away when he did was that his heart would have been broken. I think that her father has some sort of a role in politics in Germany. I don't know whether he was a mayor of a small town or something and she said the people were good to us. These were apparently rebel rousers that got control of men and people. It happens here and we have malicious and not a great big country.

KP: In the 30s, did your family have any contact with relatives in Europe?

FFF: I had one letter, which I found where ... somebody asked if they would sponsor somebody and I don't know what happened. I have the letter someplace and I sent it to my cousin and he sent it back. The one who does the family tree.

KP: But that's the only contact that you know of?

FFF: Yes.

KP: In the 30s, what did you think in a general sense of what was happening?

FFF: We were in high school and we were studying about this in history but we didn't know how bad it was. We just knew that they were arming. I can remember getting a Weekly Reader of some kind. Did you get one, too, where they would talk about how Germany was arming and Japan was arming. These people were arming and there would have to be some outlet for that, that all the money was going to armament. But that's what I remember. We didn't know what was happening, no idea.

KP: Why NJC, have you thought of other colleges?

FFF: I had thought of other colleges but first of all, NJC was close. Second of all, it wasn't too expensive. I had applied to Smith and my mother had an idea it might be nice because my grades were very good and I got a letter back saying something about the quota being filled, the Jewish quota.

KP: I was just ready to follow up.

FFF: For that year, they would put me on the waiting list. So I came down to Douglass, it was NJC. Eunice Davidson who you probably know, interviewed me. She interviewed you, too. She was Director of Admissions. She said, "Why are you coming to NJC?" I said, "Because I think maybe they would like me and want me." She said, "We want you." I was glad and I never regretted it for one minute. We made wonderful friends.

KP: Were you surprised at the Jewish quota?

FFF: I was shocked.

KP: You didn't know that.

FFF: I never felt that because in Newark it didn't matter what you were. We had friends, everybody, of every persuasion, and it didn't matter.

KP: Well, back then the commissioners were also very well balanced.

FFF: They were, and my closest friends were Catholic. On the way home from school they would go to Blessed Sacrament, and I would go with them and they would go with me. We never thought anything of it. You just stopped on the way home from school. So this was very strange, very strange to me.

EW: How did you pay for NJC?

FFF: My mother had saved an inheritance. She had \$2,000 from my grandfather's will. He had property, and my mother and her one brother were executors of the will and each of the children got \$2,000 and she never spent it. So she decided that was going to pay for her children's college education.

KP: That actually pays for the college?

FFF: Our tuition was \$175 a term.

KP: That's what I mean it's like a princely sum.

FFF: In fact, I have here, did you see the book from our class, our fiftieth reunion?

KP: I don't think so, no.

FFF: You have the book. That was a tremendous undertaking. What was the name, who wrote the book? Name was Pearl Paterson Thompson. [pause in tape]

EW: Did you know that you wanted to major in French and Spanish before you went to NJC?

FFF: I knew I wanted to major in languages, French particularly. I had taken Latin and French and I loved them.

EW: When did you start Spanish?

FFF: Freshman year because I figured that French and Spanish were related, and that if I went on I would need Spanish too. Then I never left it because the department was so sweet and you couldn't leave them. They were so nice.

EW: You lived on campus?

FFF: Well, I started on what we called, "Douglass Campus," it's now called "Corwin," for a year. That's where I met my husband. He was with a friend visiting the girl that I went through school with, but anyway, visiting her so we all went to dinner together and that was it.

EW: Why don't you tell us.

FFF: I think we did when you interviewed Bob.

EW: Oh, but let's hear your love-life. Tell me about it.

KP: I do remember your telling your husband and your telling me.

EW: I have that part of the story and you have tell me this.

FFF: I lived at Douglass D and Natalie lived up at Q, I think. Anyway, she was further up the horseshoe and her cousin came to visit. He was a male cousin and he brought Bob along. I use to go back and pick Nat up, and we would walk to Cooper for supper. So I went up normally to pick her up and we were introduced, and Bob said, "You know, there are some people coming over to my house tonight." He played the piano and he said, "We are going to play the piano and sing. Why don't you come too?" So I came. That was very pleasant and I didn't hear from him. Then there was a dance. We used to have lots and lots of dances. I wasn't going to go but that didn't happen in those days, everybody went. So Nat, was it Nat told Eva Fuld something that what about that Bob Feller, he was so nice and we had hit it off? I said, "I wouldn't call anybody," and she called him up. She said, "You are taking Frieda to this dance." Nobody ever stayed home and that just didn't happen. We made sure that everybody went to the dances and had a good time. There wasn't this hanky panky that they have now. Anyway, we went and we've been going out ever since, fifty-five years later. I have to thank her wherever she is.

EW: So you lived in what was New Jersey College for women, now Douglass College?

FFF: It was then a Douglass Campus and now it is Corwin Campus. Then, sophomore year I lived in the Spanish House. Then in junior year, the French House, and then senior year, Doris and I had a little suite. We were roommates. We just had a regular, we were in a regular house.

EW: What was it like to live in the house?

FFF: It was wonderful. First of all, when you cross the threshold in the house, you had to speak that language no matter how broken or how ungrammatical it was, you had to speak the language. Since we were on the honor system, we did. And then we had language dining rooms. There was one big room on one side of Cooper dining hall for language people. There was a French table, Spanish table and a German table. Oh, in each of the houses, there was a native speaker, a mademoiselle, or a señorita, or a fraulein, who would speak with us, would eat with us, three meals a day, and correct us.

MSL: On the faculty.

FFF: Yes, they were on the faculty. They would also teach classes, but they were paid for living with us, I think, or they had the room and board, whatever the arrangement was. Then other members of the faculty would come and join us for meals, often for dinner. Like Madame de Visme, who would come to dinner with us. She was widowed, and it was very pleasant to join us. We were her girls. Herr Hauptman would come with Fraulein. Yes, she was Miss.

EW: Did you take German?

FFF: No, no, I should have taken some. We would learn songs and we would sing at the table. We would sing German songs when the German started in, and we would sing French songs, so we learned all *Happy Birthday* songs, remember? We would sing a lot, it was nice.

EW: Did you do cultural activities in the house? Culture of France, culture of Spain?

FFF: Oh, yes, not like they have now. I understand that they have satellite dishes, newspapers, and what have you. But summers I went to Middlebury, because Madame de Visme's husband was a founder of the language schools. I can tell you a lot about that. The language department people were brought over, some of them, from Penn State to NJC, when the college was founded. Later Madame's husband, Hiram passed away, and she took over. He was an American. Hiram Parker Williamson was his name, and he married Alice de Visme during World War I, and he took her name. You knew that?

KP: No, I didn't.

FFF: You didn't know that?

KP: He took her name.

FFF: Her name, because there were no men to take over the name and her family tree went back to the ninth century and she was really a Countess and he felt that it was important to carry on the name. In fact, I have their Bible here. The picture that's over the piano was hers and you can go in and see it. She was wonderful. In fact, when my children were little she used to come every Monday afternoon and speak French with us. My daughter became a French major.

KP: So there is a strong family tradition.

FFF: Well, just with that, because the children loved her so much. They use to call her "Grandmere." Grandmere would come on Mondays. She would have lunch with us and sit and talk with the children.

EW: Now you were the vice president of the French club?

FFF: We had a French club at NJC and you probably remember something.

MSL: I remember taking minutes.

FFF: Taking minutes, and you were secretary.

EW: You were also in the education department?

FFF: Yes.

EW: Had you thought about becoming a teacher?

FFF: Well, you always took something to fall back on and you couldn't do anything else. You had to have some profession, so most all of us took education. You couldn't major, and you still can't major, in education with the college.

EW: So, did you take teaching classes?

FFF: Yes, student teaching. Yes, I had to do student teaching and I did it in New Brunswick.

EW: So you were fully trained.

FFF: Certified. It's a good thing, oh, yes. I ended up teaching in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers, but I taught at the high school, I taught at the middle school, and I taught in Newark. It worked out and I could have done other things, I guess.

EW: What kind of activities did the clubs do?

FFF: We put on plays and we met with the Rutgers Club occasionally. We learned songs. I remember, too, not just clubs but the teachers were so good to us. I remember that Senor Salas took us into New York, remember? We went to Columbia University Spanish House. Our teachers were wonderful. My survey course, sophomore year, was taught by the sister of Federico Garcia Lorca. Salas took us into Columbia to meet Francisco, another brother. Garcia Lorca, remember that? They would take us places and do things. We had wonderful teachers. What else did we do. A lot of singing, I remember. I couldn't carry a tune, but I loved the singing because there were so many of us and I could hide my voice. They made sure that we

were exposed to whatever the culture was at the time. The interesting thing when we were talking about this the other day is that freshman year was during the year 1937, during the Spanish Civil War and we had people on one side and people on the other, remember on the other side on the faculty? The Spanish faculty wouldn't talk to each other, except on school business.

KP: So who were the two faculties? Do you remember any names?

FFF: The Franco supporters, Fascists, and the Republicans.

KP: Which faculty?

FFF: Isabel Brugada was a Franco person and Salas and Romero. They were Republican, but I remember Brugada. She was my freshman teacher.

MSL: She was unpleasant.

FFF: She was very unpleasant. I remember writing a special paper for her.

KP: Who were the Republicans?

FFF: Senor Salas was the Chairman of the department and we had Senorita Romero.

MSL: She and Brugada were very opposite of each other. They would throw darts at each other.

FFF: But we felt it. Oh, yes, we felt it.

KP: Did the divisions extend to other faculty members, like history people?

FFF: We don't know.

MSL: We weren't that close.

FFF: We lived with these people.

KP: So you really knew.

FFF: Oh, we really knew, sure. But I started to say with Brugada I wrote a paper. I had had a lot of French and a lot of Latin. We went to some sort of a theatre production and we had to write a review, and it was my first year in Spanish. I wrote it and she sent it back to me and told me I didn't write it. Where did I get it, and who wrote it for me? I was so hurt. There were words I hadn't studied but I can use a dictionary. I mean, I had been trained all this time. I couldn't convince that lady that I had written it. I feel sick when I think about it even today. People don't realize that they should confront you and ask you personally and not write it down on a piece of paper.

EW: Were there native speakers in your classes?

FFF: Not many, I don't know. Yes, from South America. She wasn't native but she had lived there. There was a girl whose father had worked for an oil company in Cali, Colombia, Meyers.

MSL: Oh, I was thinking of someone else who was really Spanish.

FFF: Peggy Saenz.

MSL: No.

FFF: Not like today.

EW: So you were all learning a language?

FFF: Yes.

EW: What about other activities on campus?

FFF: Oh, there were dances, lots of dances and concerts. Bob is the one who can tell you about the Robeson concert. He opened the concert series originally in 1932. Bob was at that first concert. I heard Helen Traubel. I heard Rudolph Serkin, I remember. They got the best, really the best. In chapel, we got the best, who?

BF: Vladimir De Pachman, who's the pianist who used to cheer himself on as he played. When he would complete a particularly difficult run, you could hear him if you were close enough saying, "bravo." And Nelson.

FFF: Nelson Eddy. Oh, there were lots of them. There's one expression that I learned at college. Someone who looked at people with "supercilious condescension." I'll never forget that, was that Corwin?

MSL: I don't remember.

FFF: Doesn't sound like her. It was somebody. We were cautioned at the very outset that many of our parents had never gone to college. When we back home, we were not to look down on them with supercilious condescension.

KP: They told you?

FFF: They actually told us, "And remember, they are paying for you to come here. They worked hard so that you could come here." Things stick in your mind.

EW: Well what about the dances?

FFF: There was every excuse, freshman sock hop. Junior prom, Senior ball. What was freshman, something? Freshman mixer. There were spring dances and everybody went. Everyone in the house made sure of that.

EW: So you went out and got a new dress for each of these?

FFF: No, you had a formal dress.

EW: You wore the same dress.

FFF: And you wore them to concerts too.

EW: What was your dress like?

FFF: Long dress.

BF: The first and the last Rutgers concert of the series, the women and the men came formal.

FFF: The same dress, or we would share with other girls. One would wear one and then the other would wear it.

EW: So if you had seen the dress before it wasn't a social ...

FFF: No, as long as you went. That was important.

EW: Well, what was it like? Tell us, did you wear gloves or a hat or what kind of shoes?

FFF: In town, you had to wear gloves and a hat.

KP: It was a rule wasn't it?

FFF: Oh, yes, you couldn't go into town.

BF: Below Commercial Avenue, on George Street.

MSL: Right.

FFF: We wore high heels, and we wore, a lot of the girls who worked in home economics made their own dresses.

MSL: We wore hats to go downtown. Yes, hats and gloves.

EW: You wore dresses to class?

FFF: No, but you had to wear a dress or a skirt to dinner. But you could wear slacks to breakfast and lunch, but skirts you had to wear to dinner. We didn't get dressed up particularly because we were all girls. But on weekends that was the fashion time.

EW: What did you do on the weekend?

FFF: Movies.

EW: And you had to get dressed up?

FFF: What did we do? Downtown you did.

BF: Do you know how many movies there were that we missed the last fifteen or twenty minutes of because of the fact that they had a curfew.

FFF: Freshmen, we had to be in at 7:00 unless we went to the library and then we could stay until 10:00.

EW: How did they know you had been at the library?

FFF: Honor system. Nobody ever told a lie, you didn't.

EW: So when you came in, say, to the house or to the dorm you would just tell them you had been at the library.

FFF: No need. I'd stay and work at the library because it was noisy at the house. Bob used to pick me up and we would walk back to campus.

BF: In a manner of speaking, "pick her up."

EW: Could you go into the dorm? Were you allowed into the dorm?

FFF: Not upstairs.

BF: I was allowed into the downstairs hall.

FFF: The living room.

BF: In the living room and that's all, as a matter-of-fact.

FFF: If you were a brother, you were allowed up on Sunday or a father.

MSL: My father use to carry my bag upstairs.

BF: As a matter-of-fact, when she was living on Gibbons, there was a particular campus mistress.

FFF: Oh, yes, it was Brown. You remember when it was Brown?

BF: Unfortunately, before we met and started to get more or less serious I had gone out for a period of time with another young lady from Douglass who Miss Brown knew.

FFF: You ...

BF: She and I took opposite forks in the road and then as a matter-of-fact, Vera was in her class I think or whoever it was that introduced us.

FFF: She was my junior sister.

BF: When Miss Brown heard.

FFF: You had to sign out at Miss Brown's house and tell with whom you were going.

BF: When Miss Brown heard that she was going with me, she called her in and gave her a very serious lecture of warning, "be careful."

FFF: No, I really shouldn't go out with you. Maybe we'll go out once.

BF: Then later on, a group of us took her down to Washington and Miss Brown was extremely upset.

EW: A co-ed group?

FFF: His sister came along.

BF: We conned her into the fact that my sister, who was the class of 1935, was going and she would supervise, little did they know.

FFF: She did go with us. Because you said your mother was going to go too and I remember your sister took a picture with your mother in front of a tree at Passion Puddle at the Ag School. It has to be one of the pictures we brought back, that's right, because we were going down to Virginia to the Skyline Drive or it was Washington?

BF: Skyline Drive was another.

FFF: Was another one.

BF: That was the trip that we went with my sister and Alene and Stanley.

FFF: Oh, well, we all came back safely.

BF: By that time, we had a car, so they had to depend on us.

FFF: All right what else do you have for me, that's it.

BF: Meanwhile, back at the ranch.

FFF: Back at the ranch.

EW: What did you do dating, like on the weekends? What types of things? Did you have a car? Did one of you have a car?

FFF: Later.

BF: Well, that depends. In 1938, after commencement at Rutgers, my family finally decided to go for broke and ended up with a four-year old Chevrolet.

FFF: A '34.

BF: A '34 Chevrolet which cost us as much to maintain for the thirteen months that we owned it as it cost us to buy it.

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO-----

KP: This continues an interview with Frieda Feller joined by Miriam Segal Lipton, with occasional comments from Maurice Lipton and other comments also joined by Robert Feller.

RF: Rutgers '38.

KP: This interview continues on March 27, 1998 in Highland Park, New Jersey.

BF: Hold it for the moment, the car.

KP: As the tape was cutting off, you were saying that the car was not in the best of shape. You mean it was passed onto you for college?

BF: No, no.

FFF: No, in college he had a sixth interest in a Model T.

BF: I had a sixth interest in a Model T Ford Coupe, which cost me \$3.00, for the sixth interest.

KP: Rumble seat.

BF: No, this was a business coupe. You sat about fourteen feet above street level. It was so high, and it used to run about twenty-five miles to a radiator full of water. It was incredible. Who had the money to do the repairs?

FFF: It was fun having to make do.

BF: That included six square tires.

EW: Did you know how to drive? Did you have a driver's license?

FFF: Yes, yes.

BF: But she never drove because she didn't pay for an interest.

FFF: No, no ... my father said the law was seventeen but his law was eighteen. We couldn't touch his car until we were eighteen, and a policeman took us for our driver's license.

MSL: You know my father didn't let me drive until I was eighteen.

FFF: Also, isn't that interesting. I thought we were the only ones.

EW: As far as social life, the dances. Do you remember different bands that played?

FFF: Well you would remember better than I do.

BF: Every one of the big bands of the day came into Rutgers.

EW: Because I've heard about Duke.

FFF: In the gym.

BF: Oh, yes, we were there. We were there for Duke Ellington.

FFF: I'm trying to remember ... Glenn Miller.

BF: Goodman.

FFF: I'm trying to remember. There ought to be records someplace in the music department.

BF: I don't know whether there are records in the Scarlet Letter.

KP: Well, it's hard ... when my students ... when they do their ... they take a semester with the *Targum*.

FFF: Weren't they fun.

KP: We have been very impressed with your social life.

FFF: Oh, yes, we had a wonderful social life.

KP: My students are often very envious of the dances.

FFF: At the end of the year was a band concert and dance. The Rutgers band would play.

BF: Oh, yes.

FFF: And Bob was the leader senior year, his senior year.

BF: I was one of the senior leaders. I even have a gold R somewhere, you have it.

FFF: I have it.

BF: Do they still give those out, gold Rs? You know if you are an athlete they still give you a letter, I think, don't they?

KP: I think they do but I'm not positive about that anymore.

FFF: I can find the R but I don't want to take ... I'll find it for you. It's a gold R and it could be put on a chain.

BF: I put in three years in the Rutgers band and the third year I was one of the senior leaders. You see what used to happen was they ... we would go for example, to football games and that was a period of time, those three years, which came very, very close to our football team's success last year.

FFF: They were always building character.

BF: So?

FFF: That's what they said.

BF: We would always come from having played at a football game, and the positive thinking was "our band was better than their band." We had heavy red wool sweaters, with a black "R."

FFF: A white hat.

BF: A white hat, yes. What do you call the kind that goes down in the front and not in the back?

FFF: Oh, yes.

BF: Oh, yes, and of course, in those days we also had a 150 pound football team, so we used to play with those and we use to play for the ROTC. We had a lot of activities, and in your senior year, we were required to take a course in composition, harmony, and arranging under Soup Walters who was then a graduate student. You were required to arrange a short piece. They gave you the melody, and then you had the annual band concert every year at which all of the senior leaders had the opportunity to conduct their own arrangements. Then not the same day, but was it the same day, they had a dance.

FFF: It was after the concert.

BF: After the concert, so that was fun.

EW: Did you go to the ball games?

FFF: Some.

EW: Was that common amongst the NJC woman?

FFF: Some of them ... more than some and more than others. Those who were dating usually. They would go. We did a lot of studying and we had a lot of work to do. It sounds like we were always dancing but we weren't. We were in the library.

EW: Were there sport teams for the woman?

FFF: It was just beginning. They had a lot of archery, as I remember and tennis. So everybody use to play tennis. We had to take gym or Phys-Ed for four years in those days and you selected, you could take modern dance and you could take other options.

MSL: It was certain ones that were winter.

FFF: Yes, it would change fall, winter, and spring sports. I had ear problems and never was able to do much swimming, as a child. I made up my mind that other people could swim and I could do it, too. So every chance I got and all winter, every winter, I would take swimming. I remember walking out into the snow after swimming and I loved that. I thought that was the greatest thing. I took modern dance and in the spring, once I passed the swimming test, I always took canoeing. A lot of us, did you come with us? We used to take out canoes at Weston Mill Pond where they were rented.

MSL: Oh, I remember that.

FFF: We would paddle up to Milltown and portage a little bit and leave our canoe. In Milltown, there was a drug store with a soda fountain.

MSL: I don't think it was part of the course. I think it was ...

FFF: I took a course, but I think it was later when we would stop and get a soda and then come back out and paddle back. But there was an arrangement that we used to walk from campus to the Weston Mill Pond and go down and get the canoes. You could take archery and you could take tennis. I think softball and hockey.

MSL: Archery.

FFF: You took archery.

EW: Do you remember teas at Woodlawn, afternoon teas?

FFF: I didn't go to any, I don't think. I think that was before us.

MSL: I seem to remember.

FFF: Did you? They said when Jimmy Neilson was alive, later than that. I remember you had to wear high heels. It's possible.

KP: So wearing gloves was really.

FFF: White gloves.

MSL: Little short.

FFF: Oh, little short to the wrist. You always had white gloves.

KP: Now you weren't in a fraternity, but did either of you ever go to any fraternity parties? Do you know anything about that?

FFF: Knew about that.

KP: You never went to a fraternity party?

FFF: Maybe once, I don't remember, I don't think so.

KP: Now did the Scarlet Barbs have some sort of equivalent to a fraternity party?

BF: Yes, oh, sure.

KP: Did you go to that? Just for the guys.

FFF: I just knew it existed.

BF: Something would come out, maybe it was because of the fact that many of them were during the week. There were some Scarlet Barb dances that we went to.

FFF: I don't think so.

BF: I have some memories of them. They were sort of serious. They had lectures and things of that sort. I remember one in particular.

FFF: You have three graduates here.

BF: It must have been in 1936, which was an election year, right?

KP: Yes.

BF: In an election, so they combined the representatives of all the liberal parties to come and speak to the students. So they had Democrat, they had Republican and I think they had a Socialist.

FFF: I remember Norman Thomas coming to campus. I think that, wasn't '36, it must have been '40.

BF: I remember particularly, things use to stick with you. I remember particularly the guy who came to speak for the Republicans who premised his speech by saying that he supposed that he was a Republican because his father was a Republican. When the question and answer period came, he was taken apart and skinned alive, taken apart in little tiny pieces, and the leader of the trouble was the chairman of the Rutgers Republican Party. Oh, he was so angry that was the best that the guy could come up with.

KP: When Norman Thomas came to speak, did he speak at Chapel?

FFF: I don't think so.

KP: Because Mary Hance's interview said something about that she ran after him trying to get some question for the *Caellian* or a quote. She mentioned something about chapel and I didn't know if it was during the chapel.

FFF: I was going to say that we had wonderful chapel programs.

KP: You didn't mind going?

FFF: No, there were two kinds of chapel programs. There were Tuesday and Friday. Some we could miss.

KP: You were allowed some cuts weren't you?

FFF: Exactly, that's the word I'm looking for.

KP: You had to have been to most of them.

FFF: Most of them, but the Tuesday ones were religious and the Friday ones were secular with announcements and business and what have you. The Tuesday ones brought in people that we never knew about who we learned about later were absolutely wonderful people. From every religion and every place. William Lyon Phelps I remember came once I even have his book downstairs. Milton Steinberg who was a Philadelphia rabbi of great repute. From every point of view, I mean Indian, Catholic.

BF: They used to use the chapel as a lecture hall.

FFF: That's something else. I'm not talking about that.

BF: That was the point.

FFF: That would be evenings. I remember Elisa Landi, who came. She was a film actress. She was wonderful, and I was so upset years later to learn she committed suicide, I couldn't believe it. She did some acting pieces for us in chapel. I think they still do have some lecturers that come into chapel. I used to look forward to those Tuesday chapels because I learned about other religions.

BF: Maria Von Trapp came.

FFF: Maria Von Trapp came to chapel, yes and spoke. Right, thank you. We had some great people. At our graduation Margaret Meade spoke, remember that?

BF: Yes, I remember that.

FFF: Maybe you missed that.

KP: She had just fled from Austria.

FFF: They had just come.

KP: What did she say?

BF: It was pre-*Sound of Music*.

FFF: She talked about ... I don't remember exactly. I hope somebody took notes or maybe it's in a *Caellian* somewhere what she said. But I remember how she looked and she wore her outfit with an apron.

KP: She wore an Austrian costume.

FFF: Austrian costume, yes.

KP: A dirndl.

FFF: A dirndl, yes.

BF: In fact in those days, it might have been in *Campus News*.

FFF: Yes, we were talking about that. We've been through that whole bit.

KP: February 13th, 1941, is the first day of *Campus News*.

FFF: I had saved all of my *Campus News* and I gave them to Pat for the Fiftieth Reunion book.

KP: Oh, okay.

FFF: I think she sent them back to the campus.

EW: When you say Tuesday night ...

FFF: Tuesday morning.

EW: Tuesday morning was the religious service. Was it tailored to all religions every time?

FFF: Different religion each Tuesday.

EW: Each Tuesday, okay.

KP: The Rutgers chapel had a very sort of Christian tone. It sounds like yours was more non-denominational.

FFF: Non-denominational. You didn't have that feeling.

KP: You didn't have a Dean Metzger who ...

FFF: No.

KP: I mean it's.

FFF: Who wasn't religious and he was a minister. We knew him and he took me home from the freshman dance, the mixer. Someone had taken my coat, and I had no coat.

KP: So he took you home.

FFF: He said, "If you don't have a coat, well, we'll have to find something," and then he took me home.

KP: Did you ever find your coat?

FFF: I think so, yes. It was returned to me.

EW: Now, in that *Caellian* they had talked about the etiquette of chapel. Was it a big thing? Do you remember?

FFF: I remember knitting, you weren't supposed to knit. I could listen and knit. Some of us sat in the back so we could knit.

MSL: We use to sit in assigned seats.

FFF: For a while, yes. Alphabetically, yes.

MSL: I remember sitting next to the same people all the time.

FFF: Helen Farnow sat next to me. She was Farnow and I was Finklestein and we sat next to each other. Maybe it was Friday when I knitted. It must have been Friday.

BF: Fasto, Feller, Farenjack ... I don't remember the.

FFF: Ferrante maybe or something.

BF: Ferrante.

EW: Do you remember the controversy about when to put your coat on? There were a few articles about when to put your coat on in chapel. Should you do it when you stand up, after you left the building?

FFF: I don't remember that. It doesn't ring a bell.

EW: That was '41.

FFF: That was '41, and she spoke to Mary Hance.

KP: She has been transcribing.

FFF: Transcribing Mary Hance's. She called me on the phone about a week ago.

KP: One of the things that I remember, my students had read the *Targum* and they commented what dominates is the three F's, the football, fraternities and the fun. With some other occasional seriousness, we haven't done as many of the *Caellian* but the *Campus News* particularly was pretty serious, compared to the *Targum*, not that there wouldn't be an occasional article but sometimes you wouldn't really know very much what's going outside of Rutgers.

FFF: No, it was very local.

KP: In *Campus News* there were a lot of serious issues.

FFF: Serious issues, maybe.

BF: That's what ultimately killed them.

KP: What I wanted to ask about the *Campus News* was the people who edited it and the switch from *Campus News* to *Caellian*.

FFF: I remember that it was a very serious thing and we were all shaken up.

MSL: When did that happen?

FFF: When we were in school or the junior year.

BF: February of '41.

EW: February 13, '41 is when the first *Caellian* came out. So the *Campus News*, did it end that December or that November?

FFF: No, just before. I don't think they missed a ... I don't think they missed new ...

BF: That's the new masthead and the new editorial board.

EW: There was a staff person put on to staff it, because before that the *Campus News* had just been students. When the problem came out, with the headline, Mary Hance's headline actually was the big problem.

FFF: I didn't realize that.

EW: She had a run-in with one of the Deans about it and that's when they decided.

FFF: But she is so sweet.

EW: She had her columnist.

FFF: Great.

EW: So they decided to put a faculty person on to make sure these things didn't happen and switch the name to the *Caellian*.

MSL: What was the issue?

EW: I don't know the exact issue.

FFF: I'm trying to remember. Maybe it's in there and maybe Pat had written about it. I'll bet it's in the reunion book.

EW: She didn't give the emphasis the particular issue needed. The faculty had given a speech. She had taken the notes and wrote out the headline but she didn't write the headline to mean as much as it was supposed to. She softened the issue and the Dean wasn't happy about it. They decided they needed to have a staff person on.

FFF: You are going to have a whole library, specifically, for Kurt Piehler's department.

KP: I'm curious because there seemed to be some women at NJC who were very active politically.

FFF: Yes, it was Americans for Democratic Action kind of thing. Somebody thought they were getting a little pink at one point, I remember.

KP: This was back in the late '30s?

FFF: It might, in my years.

MSL: Do you remember any of the people.

FFF: I can picture one of them, I can't think of her name. I remember Eleanor Roosevelt's coming. In fact, she visited at Hillel. They invited her and they never thought she would come and she came. "Yes," they said, "We'll invite her." It was made a big splash in town. Everybody got very excited.

KP: This was when you were in school that she came to Hillel or Hillel was later?

FFF: Hillel was later.

KP: So this was after she was the First Lady.

FFF: Yes, we had what they call the ... Well, there are various organizations. There was the Newman Club for the Catholic girls and there was what they called the Jewish Student League, which met in the basement of Temple Anshe Emeth on Livingston Avenue. Rabbi Keller (it was a reformed temple) was the leader. Sunday night we would have little meetings if you wanted to go and that was that. I'm sure the Protestant group had their group, too. I know that everybody that was Catholic got up early Sunday morning. They couldn't go Saturday nights in those days and they would get dressed up and go to church. There wasn't too much of religion. We didn't ask and if you wanted to go, you went, and if you didn't, you didn't. No tell, it was not an issue.

EW: Were you very aware there was an anti-war committee and there was support for the Allies committee? Were you very aware if they were informed dealing with opinions.

FFF: The war didn't start.

EW: It was before Pearl Harbor but they were basically debating, "should the U.S. support Britain or should we go into it."

FFF: Well, we used to talk about supporting Britain but I don't remember a formal talk, do you?

MSL: I don't remember.

FFF: Maybe we were off in our language houses.

MSL: Maybe it was a small group that made a lot of noise.

FFF: We were more involved with the Spanish Civil War.

KP: It sounds like that is very vivid.

FFF: Yes, because it affected us. We felt that we were charged ... it was an issue that affected our department. But they were sweet people. Every time I thought of not taking Spanish the next year, "I can't do that."

EW: Manuel Salas was your favorite.

FFF: He used to go around, I'll never forget it, in class, if we were discussing a bullfight, he was always the bull. He would make everything come alive. He would explain what this part was and what this role was and what that role was.

BF: Did you ever see his academic robes?

FFF: Oh, I showed a picture. I showed them a picture.

BF: University of what?

FFF: I don't know whether they went to Salamanca or one of those. We would all wait for him to get all dressed up.

KP: You had to wear the equivalent of the dink as a first year student.

FFF: Just the first ... until Campus Night, and then, everything went in the fire.

KP: What was this, since we don't and someone reading will not have a picture. You had a certain getup.

FFF: I have the pictures. They were green.

MSL: Aprons.

FFF: They were aprons and a dustcap. We made them.

KP: How long did you have to wear these?

FFF: Until Campus Night, which was about six weeks or so.

KP: Then they had a bonfire?

FFF: They had a bonfire except I don't think I put mine in the bonfire. I don't know whatever happened. It's somehow against my religion to throw things away, perhaps it was from the Depression.

KP: At Rutgers there would be some hazing that you were suppose to carry matches for upperclassmen.

FFF: We had to carry a redbook. We had to carry a shopping bag and have certain things in it. I don't know whether that's in there or not, but I remember the redbook with the directions on etiquette sort of things. I guess we had to light up for other people. I didn't ever smoke.

MSL: I remember carrying matches.

BF: Run, if an upperclassman whistled at you.

FFF: Oh, I know what you had to do. You had to take the mail out at night, the freshmen. Everybody in the house would write home with postcards or letters and the freshmen would have to go to the post box at the end of the campus. Some nights in the winter it was especially cold. I remember one night I had 102 fever, and somebody came for me to take the mail out. Finally, I said, "I'm sorry. I didn't come to college to get pneumonia. You'll have to take your own mail tonight." The upperclassmen weren't happy.

KP: There were a lot of women. Some of the rituals at Douglass survived for example, the sacred path and the Yule Log.

FFF: The Yule Log?

KP: We know a little bit because it still exists the Yule Log and the Sacred Path. What other ceremonies did you have. Because people have told us about the grads, you have a class color.

MSL: Oh, yes, it alternated every year. Our color was gray.

FFF: We had gray with maroon belt.

MSL: And some had maroon with gray.

FFF: Miriam, you're right. See, it's good you are here.

MSL: Like the even classes had one.

FFF: Gold and blue. Some had a gold dress with blue and then another year they would have a blue dress with a gold belt.

KP: Now when did you wear that?

FFF: All the time.

EW: Everyday?

FFF: No, whenever we felt like it, special occasions.

MSL: Just special occasions. You could wear it anytime.

FFF: But at chapel, when you were seniors, you wore your cap and gown. We bought them, twelve dollars and fifty cents. I still have mine.

MSL: You remember the prices.

KP: You actually got use out of your cap and gown?

EW: You wore it every week to Chapel.

FFF: Every week to Tuesday chapel, the seniors did it for the whole year.

KP: Oh, my goodness.

FFF: We had to go down to the basement and get our caps and gowns. (My son used to wear it for Halloween. He would take a wand and become a magician.) I still have it upstairs. If you want it, you can have it. Wool, very good quality, no holes, no moth holes.

KP: Pass it down to some current graduate and give that as the award.

FFF: For our fiftieth, I had to make a talk and I brought that and I brought the class dress. The one thing they asked me for and I didn't bring, but I have, was an evening coat, and I still have my evening coat. They were black velvet and they either had a little white ermine or make believe ermine collar. Mine had a hood with a little bit of ermine going down. I have that upstairs. What did you wear for a coat, you don't have it anymore?

MSL: I don't remember.

FFF: Remember those evening coats. Do you still have yours?

KP: So this was official sort of class code.

FFF: Unofficially. Everybody had them. I mean it was the style. You didn't wear your regular coat. You wore this long black velvet.

BF: Don't forget the saddle shoes.

FFF: You had to wear saddle shoes. So with your outfit you wore saddle shoes and ankle socks. No stockings, ankle socks.

KP: So even with your class dress.

FFF: When we got dressed up, we would wear stockings on the weekend. We could wear them anytime to class.

MSL: Chapel once a week.

FFF: We would wear our class dress.

BF: Stockings because that was pre-panty hose.

FFF: Oh, yes, stockings.

EW: There was actually, in the *Caellian*, there is a Cuno's Department Store on Livingston Ave.

BF: Cuno.

EW: They had a contest they would run that every week. A different NJC student had their name in their ad and they got a free pair of panty hose. Picture of garter belt that's very scandalous.

FFF: Oh, golly would be today or then it would have been.

MSL: I don't remember that.

FFF: I remember Thode's and we would go just for sodas. Then there was Clapps' for jewelry. Our rings came from Clapps'.

BF: Thode's was particularly fascinating because they were built in a building, which had started its life as a funeral parlor.

FFF: Oh, really, I didn't know that.

BF: Yes, indeed, if you went down in the basement, because I did, and you had the complete arrangement of slabs all around.

FFF: No kidding. I didn't know that. He knows things I don't know.

EW: Do you remember anything about a "bride's course?"

FFF: Yes.

MSL: Yes.

FFF: Pat took it. You'll have to ask Pat. Ask her about the bride's course, she took it. I remember that a doctor spoke to us about certain things we should be careful of. When we first came to school, we had a woman doctor who was the physician for the college, Frederica Brown, Dr. Brown. She gave just an hour or so with slides showing the works and what you looked like inside and that kind of thing.

KP: It sounds like you hadn't had that before.

FFF: Very little. I had a hygiene course in high school. She probably was a nurse but she was a maiden lady and she didn't seem to be too interesting.

BF: Theoretical.

MSL: There was a doctor who had red hair. Do you remember him?

FFF: No, maybe there was another doctor. I remember going into the infirmary one night with terrible, terrible cramps and she was sure that I had been out drinking. I said, "No, I haven't been anywhere near it." I don't drink anyway and she thought I was lying. Anyway, it turned out that I had some sort of constipation or something. So she gave me something that I will never forget as long as I live. It was a sample bottle of brown Cascara. It was the strongest, strongest stuff imaginable and she said, "I want you to take a tablespoon of this." I don't remember how often and how many times a day. She said, "Don't you come back until it's finished." Well, I took this Cascara Sagrada, that's what it was.

BF: Sagrada.

FFF: I took it, and it was so bad that when I came back I brought the bottle back and I said, "Here it is. I never want to see this again." But you know, I haven't taken a physical since. That cured me. I never needed it. Whatever she did, I'll never forget her.

BF: Scared.

FFF: It scared my insides. The only time I ever took anything was when I was given Milk of Magnesium before my children were born. They kind of clean you out a little bit. That's all I ever had. She shook me up. I don't know if they still make that stuff, but, boy it was violent.

KP: We have heard a lot of stories about drinking on Rutgers campus. Some fraternities drank even when they weren't suppose to.

FFF: It was Dr. Demarest, Dr. Demarest.

BF: Dr. Demarest was in fact responsible for that because he, as you know, was also a minister and Demi said, "Alcohol ... alcohol ... no."

FFF: No, way!

BF: No way, so it was not until ...

FFF: We never had anything to go.

KP: Openly?

EW: Did people sneak it in?

BF: Oh, of course. During my ... let's see, when was the end of Prohibition, '33 or maybe even. Because I remember that there used to be a speakeasy down on Dennis Street in New Brunswick. The name of it escapes me at the moment but it may pop back in. We used to go down there occasionally.

EW: What about on NJC?

BF: No.

FFF: No drinking.

EW: No drinking, no hidden bottles.

FFF: The worst thing that ever happened at Douglass was card playing, bridge into the night. A lot of the girls would go to Sara Liz, which was a tea room on George Street. Sara Elizabeth Tea Room ... yes, an old house.

MSL: An old house.

FFF: I never went in there. I never had the time and I never had the money. You were there?

MSL: There was nothing spectacular about it.

FFF: But that was the worst.

MSL: You could have a cup of tea, cookies, or whatever you wanted.

EW: There was a curfew.

FFF: 7:00.

EW: Now would that go for being in bed asleep?

FFF: No, no, in the house at 7:00. Then it was 10:00 on Friday. No, it was 11:00 on Friday. No, it was 12:00 Saturday night and 11:00 Sunday night. No, what was it, you know better.

BF: It was 11:00 Saturday night that's why we missed the end of so many movies.

FFF: Oh, right, 11:00 Saturday night.

EW: Did girls miss it?

FFF: They would lock the door so it was your business.

EW: Did you know about girls on your floor that weren't in their bed?

FFF: It didn't have to be in your bed. Had to be in the house.

EW: When it came to be 11:00 and they weren't there?

FFF: That was up to the house chairman. There was always a house chairman.

EW: But you didn't notice?

FFF: I still go to bed early. I never knew those things. I used to say after nine-thirty, forget it.

BF: We were able to solve that problem, however, because a girl going out on a date had to adhere to that curfew. If the girl went to the home of somebody locally, she could get a curfew extension.

EW: You lived right ...

BF: I lived on Delavan Street.

FFF: Fifteen, right off.

BF: Three houses off the corner of the Avenue there and my parents.

FFF: Nichol Avenue.

BF: My parents would not hesitate to call and get a hold of Miss Brown.

FFF: Or Miss Whatever.

BF: Whatever, I forget the rest of the names and say.

FFF: "We'll be a few minutes late."

BF: That Frieda is going to be at our home and we'll see that she gets home by whatever.

FFF: Oh, they really were careful. It was a local practice in those days. Whatever your parent would do, that's what they would do, *in loco parentis*.

BF: They had watchmen who used to patrol each campus.

FFF: He used to get to know them.

BF: I knew all of the watchmen. Some of them I got along well and there were one or two that ... that guy on Gibbons, he was, oh ...

MSL: They use to carry a big ...

FFF: A lantern of some sort.

MSL: Was it a lantern? It was very big and it was attached to their belt.

KP: Was there any crime to speak of on campus at NJC?

FFF: Crime, what do you mean crime?

KP: Did you ever see anything?

FFF: Never saw it. That honor system, that worked.

EW: Did you lock your door all the time like whenever you left your room?

FFF: No, never.

EW: To get into the building, did you have a house key?

FFF: We had a house key.

EW: Right there at the door.

FFF: But it was open all day.

EW: Was there always someone there at the door like in a little reception area?

FFF: No.

KP: I've been told Rutgers, Douglass, NJC had an honor code.

FFF: Honors, absolutely.

KP: So it was really honor.

FFF: We were on our honor and every test we took we had to sign, "I have neither given nor received aid on this test," and you have to sign your name. There was no proctoring, nothing. They would leave the work and go, the professors.

BF: If you saw somebody that you thought was cheating you were supposed to knock on the desk with your pencil.

FFF: I don't remember. It never happened. You know what would happen if somebody did something that was not right? That person would be more or less ostracized, would be looked down on. It was peer pressure. You wouldn't, you just wouldn't. You wouldn't even consider it. It wouldn't enter your mind. You might even just talk a little but you would never talk about the test. You know, you would say, "My back is beginning to hurt," or something. You could do that.

EW: Do you remember anything about the Deans?

FFF: Oh, sure.

KP: Maybe starting with Dean Corwin.

FFF: She always wore gray or blue. Grey stockings and gray shoes. Very gray looking lady.

BF: Grey skin and gray hair.

FFF: She had trouble speaking, public speaking. She would trip over her words and it was painful to listen to her speak. She may have said things, but we concentrated so much in helping her and hoping that she would get through it.

KP: What about Dean Boddie?

FFF: Oh, the Southern lady.

KP: I've heard a number of stories about Dean Boddie.

FFF: I don't know too much about her except we all knew she was from the South and she was a little different and you had to wear white gloves a lot. She was the one with the social amenities and made sure everybody followed them.

KP: What about cigarette smoking?

FFF: A lot of it.

KP: There was a lot.

FFF: A lot of it. We may have been the two people on campus that never smoked.

KP: So that was very common. That wasn't a cigarette war.

FFF: No, after dinner in the basement.

MSL: Those who smoked would have to smoke in the basement or outside the house.

FFF: On the back steps or something, but never in the house. People would go to dinner or go to a meeting. There were trees outside of Cooper with a lot of bricks around. The dirt was just high enough for you to sit and people would sit there and smoke. We never smoked.

BF: Except the rule was there was another where the corner of Commercial Avenue was the cutoff.

FFF: I didn't know that.

BF: Smoked as far as the corner of Commercial Avenue and George Street after that it was forbidden.

FFF: My mother forbid it, beside it would have been too expensive. She said, "You put that cigarette in your mouth and that's a nail in my coffin." We wouldn't dare. Women don't do that.

KP: Women don't smoke.

FFF: She just said, "What do you want to do, smell from tobacco? Who wants to kiss a tobacco mouth?" Not me, and I thank her. My children have never smoked.

KP: Your class remembers, Herr Hauptman and Professor Bergel?

FFF: No, he remembers Bergel. I don't.

KP: You don't. What do you remember? I mean obviously, he's been with greater (inaudible) have been detached to him. From the time he came back.

FFF: Well, he used to come regularly to have dinner at the German table and he would talk to people, and he gave courses. One day he wasn't there and he stopped coming and we found out that his car was in the garage but he was nowhere to be found, but I think that Pat discusses it in the reunion book.

BF: His car was in Pete Malouf's South End garage.

FFF: Oh, was it? I didn't know that. That's this Malouf's father.

BF: Yes, his father and if I remember correctly, it was a 1936 Ford V-8 and I remember because Pete used to be my mechanic. [pause in tape] I had a ...

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE-----

BF: Give him a reasonable period time and then he'll take it over that's all. So this I know.

FFF: They found him in Mexico.

BF: Not everybody, by any manner, was an anti-Nazi. I know I used to walk up College Avenue and there was somebody living there in Ford Hall with a big Nazi flag on prominent display in their dorm room. I don't know who it was and I never found out. I didn't want to know.

KP: I mean, it sounds like you just saw him since you had never taken German. You never had any personal contact.

FFF: No, we just saw him walk in and walk out and sit at the table.

KP: Did you know any people who had taken him as a professor?

FFF: Oh, yes. Ursula Holsing, you could talk to her. Do you know Ursula Holsing Vandernoot? She's the wife of George Vandernoot who is retired from the Ag School, professor *emeritus*, and they live in East Brunswick, 523 Ryder's Lane. ... I can get you the address. Her father was the chef at NJC. He was German, and she has given me some wonderful recipes. She's our class historian and she's a lovely gal, and George is a sweetheart. They just celebrated their fifty-sixth wedding anniversary and went on a cruise. They are lovely people. Call her and she can tell you about the German department. She was a German and a Math major.

BF: I do know, I think that when Bergel was terminated he contacted my father and appealed for his help. My father was Class of 1908 and had always been active in the alumni affairs. He appealed for his help in trying to get this termination reversed with no good results.

FFF: I think Oshinsky, and was it Dick McCormick, maybe, wrote a book about it.

BF: Oshinsky, Dick, and somebody else, a third one.

FFF: You probably have the book.

KP: In fact, I've assigned it to the course occasionally. We are most interested in getting people's impression from the time. And everything we know about it now that you would not know, Dean's documents. Because I heard that Hauptman while he had certain meetings, he was a reasonably, average professor in a lot of ways.

FFF: Average, that's a good word.

KP: That he didn't make a mark for the most part until really this controversy came up. I mean you wouldn't have known this and he would have gone back to Germany. I mean that was that, that pronounced.

EW: How did you find out about events leading to war ... Because the *Caellian* in '41 doesn't really have much about what was going on in Europe or anything like articles generally about that. How did you find out?

FFF: We didn't find out too much. That was the scary thing. All this was going on.

KP: Even in the paper, the newspaper?

FFF: Sure, we did, but somehow we knew there was a war on in Britain and there were rumors about submarines off our coast and things like that. We always thought that was just talk and found out later that it wasn't.

KP: I meant to ask you about this earlier, what about Zionism? Did your family have any ...

FFF: Mine didn't ... Bob's father, he was the one that was very active.

KP: So Zionism really wasn't very much of a presence?

FFF: No.

KP: Rutgers had a real Republican side. At least when students polls were being done in '36, '40, '32 and even before that. Republicans tended to win student polls, even in '32. What about at Douglass?

FFF: I couldn't vote until '40 election and I remember a bonfire. Do you remember? When there was a big discussion, "was it going to be Roosevelt or Wilkie." The way they talked about Wilkie was not very encouraging somehow. I felt that Roosevelt would be the one. Now Roosevelt had been in already, so they knew him and I guess they felt he had done something and

wanted to give him a chance. But I remember that bonfire and Roosevelt was the first one I ever voted for.

BF: Wilkie was here in New Brunswick. He had a speech here in New Brunswick on the steps of the Courthouse. I remember particularly that it was a speech that he probably wished he could have passed up because he had no voice at all.

FFF: I have his book upstairs and it's autographed by him. Because Bob had a cousin who became a lawyer and did his clerking in Wilkie's law office in New York City. He gave all his friends books autographed by Wilkie. I think it's up in our bedroom.

BF: Somewhere.

FFF: *One World*, yes.

BF: Oh, we have weird things.

FFF: Yes, odd things.

MSL: Do you remember reading that book?

FFF: That was the big thing.

BF: A book signed by Robert Morris.

FFF: Morris, yes, American Revolution. My father's fun was to haunt old bookstores, used bookstores.

BF: The War of 1812.

FFF: We'll have to come and spend a weekend.

KP: Do you have any more Douglass?

EW: Should we move to graduation.

FFF: It rained. We all remember that with the black dye from the caps and gowns coming down.

KP: I guess before leaving Douglass, you mentioned that you had a number of guest women come you mentioned. I guess one figure I'm very curious because there were a number of women who were Republican at Douglass or NJC. What did people think of Eleanor Roosevelt?

FFF: Loved her. She just was wonderful and whatever people said about her, it just hurt us, too.

BF: I think the feeling for her went beyond her politics.

KP: Her role as a first lady.

FFF: As the first lady and being the legs for Franklin Roosevelt. The stand she took at Constitution Hall. I saw her once. I met her once and I'll never forget her. I was at Penn Station in Newark and she was coming out. She was coming to I guess, to talk to make a speech somewhere. She had a big smile. She had a smile for everybody, and she had on a hat and that fur piece with the little, you know the head of the animal on it. They used to wear that.

KP: Which now is.

FFF: Very out but I just loved her.

KP: What about Margaret Mead because she became such a ... I mean she was a figure then.

FFF: They knew who were figures then and they brought them to campus and introduced them to us, and I felt we were exposed to a lot of people. Like even Isabel Garcia Lorca. Can you imagine spending a year with a woman like that and having her tell us all about her brother in the Civil War. It was wonderful, and we learned dances. The faculty brought some of their friends over. Do you remember?

KP: I'm curious because it's interesting. Among other things that is part of this project ... actually, one of my projects for this month is the high school teachers are taking excerpts of our interview and using them in teaching lessons. One of the things I have to go searching for is people's recollection of Paul Robeson. When I've asked people and they have very distinct recollections.

FFF: He'll tell you.

KP: Carl William for example, distinctly remembers his concerts and seeing him in theatre.

FFF: Sure, sure.

MSL: He was very much admired.

FFF: Oh, yes, they loved him here.

KP: Even though there would be something of a falling out between him and Rutgers in the 50s because of his stays in Moscow.

FFF: Well, that's what people think. Even now, as people with Clinton. People take sides, and they don't know what really happened. You know, everybody even with him, they don't know what really happened.

BF: We know that the first concert of the Rutgers Concert Series was at the Barn. Even though the acoustics there are lousy, that was the facility, and Robeson came to the first concert and did a magnificent job.

FFF: You know the swimming pool is right behind the stage there, don't you?

BF: Not behind the stage. But when you go into the barn you have the court, the basketball court and stuff.

FFF: There was a big wooden separation.

BF: Vertical something or other.

FFF: Backdrop.

BF: That covers the whole wall.

FFF: Behind that is the Rutgers swimming pool.

MSL: Oh, yes, I remember.

BF: That gets out of the way.

FFF: I remember Andre Kostelanetz came once, and when he found out there was a swimming pool behind it he said, "I'll never come back here until you find a different venue."

BF: But, anyway, yes, he did a fine job with the concert and I also remember a performance by Robeson of ... went out of my head isn't that awful? Othello with a Uta Hagen and then I saw they did a movie if I recall of *Emperor Jones*. He did extremely well there and then sort of lost touch.

FFF: We have a book upstairs.

BF: Until one time I was in the service and I was ... I don't remember whether that was, I think it must have been Percy Jones, Oak Creek, and he came to entertain the troops. Interestingly, Lou Grower of the Class of '36 was part of his entourage. By that time, his voice was beginning to just lose its capability so that he sang with a microphone and an amplifier.

FFF: There's no voice like his.

BF: It was beautiful.

FFF: Every time I hear somebody do *Ole Man River* I think it's not the same. When Frank Sinatra did it. Oh, God. He didn't know Paul Robeson.

BF: I think I still have an album of seventy-eight RPM records of Robeson.

FFF: Well we'll have to find it for you. That's right, *Ballad for Americans*. That was wonderful.

BF: He also has a Chinese communist war song.

FFF: The international.

BF: No, not the international, it was something else. I forget the name of it on that. But at any rate, I remember nothing but bad in my personal contact with him. He was a fine actor and a fine singer.

FFF: Nothing but bad?

BF: Nothing bad, I'm sorry if I said nothing but ... I think that we were all distressed when this confusion arose with his going to Russia and what have you. But I feel that he was just not prepared to accept the position of African Americans in the society of that day.

FFF: A lot of racism in this country. Blacks didn't have good jobs. They only had menial jobs. You couldn't find a black in a bank.

BF: The fact that he had acquired all of the varsity letters he had and a Phi Beta Kappa key and a law degree, I believe.

FFF: Yes. That was success on the stage and in the movies.

BF: Yes, but he wasn't satisfied.

FFF: He was still a black and it was sad.

BF: He was in a sense, a local boy.

FFF: His father was a minister.

BF: His father was a minister I think over in Princeton.

KP: Did you have any black students at Douglass, NJC when you were there?

FFF: Don't remember any. Do you remember any?

MSL: I think one or two, I don't remember.

FFF: Probably not.

KP: Because there were very few at Rutgers. We have been fortunate to interview someone from the Class of '41, Simeon Moss and there are a couple of others. We've only interviewed one black graduate so far.

FFF: Herbie Carman.

BF: No, he is already later.

FFF: Was he later?

BF: Much later. I'm thinking of Malcolm from my class, Clint Hogard from '39. They are both.

KP: You have to give me their addresses.

BF: He's got them upstairs.

KP: I can give you a call.

FFF: Want me to get them?

BF: Get one of my ... rosters. As far as Clint Hogard, he's not in my class. I think he is '39, but he is certainly an excellent communicator. He is a minister and Bill Capusi you will be able to find an address for him. He's in Flemington I think.

KP: We would like to know a little about graduation and what did you ... you mentioned how limited for women the options were.

FFF: Yes, very limited.

KP: Did they expand at all while you were at NJC?

FFF: They brought people in like Margaret Mead to show us that you could do something. Or be an actress, and I was no actress. What did you feel your options were?

BF: To be an actress?

MSL: I don't know whether I gave it much thought.

FFF: I wanted to be college woman. I always wanted to finish college. I loved school and nothing else. My mother asked me once, and I said, "I don't care what I study. I just want to finish college. I just want to be a college woman." That was my ambition, but then I would take it from there.

EW: You started at the New York Censorship Office on January 19th of '42.

FFF: I started by teaching actually in September, '41, when school opened. There was a Spanish teacher at Cleveland Junior High in Newark who went to Ecuador over the summer to see her parents and decided not to come back. So they asked me to stay on and I taught her class. When she came back after Christmas, I was asked to teach in my old high school and then I got the call. We had all taken a test, the civil service test. We saw one posted for translators, can you believe that?

MSL: All language majors were urged to take the civil service test.

KP: So you said your parents had this notion of government work?

FFF: It's a way of diplomacy. It was more in the idea of diplomacy.

KP: In some ways they weren't completely ...

FFF: They weren't so far out. It came to pass.

KP: Before talking about where you worked as a translator, in censorship how did you like teaching or your experience as being a teacher?

FFF: At Cleveland Junior High, I don't know if you know Bergen Street, outer Bergen Street in Newark? That was the worst school in Newark at the time. The principal, Dr. Monas, said, "Any teacher that stays in school after 3:30 is on her own responsibility." His or her own responsibility. One day I had a knife pulled in class and I said, "You put that away." I didn't know what to do, I was scared. "You put that away," and he said, "Oh, come on, you can die just as well as anybody else." I said, "But there is a cop on the corner. Do you want me to call the cop?" He said, "He can die, too." I don't know if this is for me.

EW: Graduation.

KP: We often think of schools going down hill. But there were some schools that weren't great in your era. As a teaching experience having a knife pulled on you.

FFF: I didn't feel that I was prepared for a school like that to begin with. This was Newark and there weren't all black kids, they were white kids. They just weren't well behaved.

KP: It sounds like ...

FFF: It was a junior high, seventh, eighth and ninth grade.

KP: Because I hear at Weequahic, the principal said, if you did get in trouble you were in real trouble.

FFF: You were in real trouble.

KP: So it seems like you were even stunned at how dangerous it could be.

FFF: It was dangerous and Dr. Monas was a sweetheart. He was so nice and so kind and understanding. But there was a limit.

KP: You mentioned having a knife pulled?

FFF: Yes.

KP: What else would students do?

FFF: They would misbehave, and I was young. I remember being called out of line in a fire drill. I was in the middle and I heard, "Get back in line! I didn't say anything, I just went into line. That afternoon there was a teacher's meeting and I turn up and I look over and I had my little evening up. I was seventeen, no, I was twenty. I guess I looked little but that was fun. Then I went to Weequahic, which was much easier, and it was a high school and I knew my way around.

KP: Sounds like after junior high it would be.

FFF: It was heaven. I knew the teachers, and I was shocked because they wanted me to call them by their first name and I couldn't do that. Can you imagine the feeling, people you had known?

KP: What are your memories of Pearl Harbor?

FFF: Standing in the kitchen on Pomona Avenue listening to the radio and hearing the reports.

BF: That's one of the things you don't forget?

FFF: You don't forget. Where were you.

BF: That's before Roosevelt's day, that "We are living in infamy," speech.

FFF: Where were you, you remember, too, I'll bet you?

ML: I was on Capitol Hill, in Washington D.C., driving up the hill in a car.

KP: Why were you in Washington?

ML: Because I was stationed in Fort (inaudible) Virginia.

KP: So you were in the military?

ML: Of all places, right in the center of it.

FFF: How do you hold onto a car when that happens?

KP: When did you take your civil service exam?

FFF: I thought we took it there.

MSL: While we were at college.

FFF: While we were at college? Well, then I made a mistake here.

MSL: I remember that all of the language students were urged to take it. It was before we graduated and we were urged to take the civil service exam.

FFF: Then I have to change that.

MSL: Because they only gave it at a certain time.

FFF: Change this ... I wrote it. Apply for Federal Civil Service positions as translators. We took the written test at college. I'm so glad you are here.

MSL: I remember going. I remember where it was because eventually that's where we worked. It was on 7th Avenue.

FFF: Corner of 24th Street and there we were given the oral exams.

MSL: Written.

FFF: Written there, too. Oh, then I better not take that out, okay written.

MSL: The reason I remember was because that's where we actually worked.

FFF: That's right and I remember being called in to talk in the languages. I remember the Spanish man, who interviewed me, asked me how to say "Peacock" and I couldn't remember.

MSL: How often does it come up in conversation.

EW: Did you ever mix up the languages in Spanish and French?

FFF: No.

EW: I had that problem. I'd go into one class and start speaking the other.

FFF: You can do that, but not in the middle. Oh, yes, what am I doing? Bob tells the story that one time when I came back from Middlebury where you have to sign up that you are going to

speak the language, otherwise they send you home. I started babbling in Spanish and, “What are you saying?” I didn’t realize it because I had been so used to it. We had good training here and they were a wonderful foreign language department and I don’t think they were given the credit.

MSL: Even with the language house.

FFF: In the language house system.

KP: It sounds like the language house system really made the difference.

FFF: Oh, yes because we used it and we were immersed in the language. The thing was I started to tell you about Professor de Visme. He died before we came there, but he brought the idea of the foreign language houses. As a matter-of-fact, one of his sons wrote the biography of his father. I don’t know if it’s around anywhere. I read it once, where he explained ... it seems that Hiram Parker Williamson went to Middlebury College originally. He was from Middlebury, Vermont. He went to Middlebury College and was a French major. Went over to France as an American soldier and found that he couldn’t speak the language (in World War I). He was very upset and he said, “What are colleges doing? They are short-changing people and giving them majors and giving them certifications, diplomas, and they can’t speak the language.” So he conceived the idea of the language house and, after the war, he was hired at Penn State. He brought his bride there and they set up the language houses. When the college opened here they invited him to come and start. He brought the idea and Madame was the first director, the *directrice* she called herself “of the house.” Then end of my freshman year ... she went every summer because they also started a summer camp. They called it Ecole Champlain. It was a Champlain school in Vergennes, Vermont, so that her children would have a place to go. She had two boys and they would have a place to go in the summertime. Interestingly enough, it was Jackie Onassis and her sister who went to the camp, which is where they learned how to speak French. They used to bring girls from France to spend the summer and to be the counselors. There were the "campeuses." It was a girl’s camp. It may still be in existence. She had an old brown car that she called, La Gauloise. We would take La Gauloise and she would take me and we would drive up to the camp from Middlebury College. Anyway, it was a wonderful experience and then the following summer I went to the Spanish school and I had wonderful teachers that had become famous. The wonderful poet, Jorge Guillen that we would read. They would read his poetry in college and he was one of my teachers. It was such a fabulous experience, I really was very lucky. But anyway, that’s when I came home speaking Spanish. But the language houses were a great idea and they were here before they were any other place, except for Penn State. Columbia developed them as well as other colleges. Rutgers had a language floor as I remember. I remember they had a French floor and a Spanish floor in their dorms.

KP: When did you start with it? You had taken the civil service test apparently and you were still students and then all of a sudden ...

FFF: All of sudden we got called. Then we got called to come.

KP: When did you actually report?

FFF: I would say.

MSL: I guess, after the war.

EW: I've got January 1941.

FFF: We were graduated in June, '41.

EW: Okay that clarifies it, because you hadn't graduated yet.

FFF: I wrote it all out for you here.

KP: Which is not too long after Pearl Harbor.

FFF: No.

KP: People hadn't even got their draft notices yet.

FFF: It was right at the beginning, and Censorship didn't have that many people. They were setting it up fast. I wrote here that at one point they asked some of us who were doing Spanish to do Portuguese because they didn't have enough Portuguese people. They said, "Well, you can read it, can't you?" So we did it for a while until they got beefed up.

MSL: I remember we would have a card on our desk to show our language or languages.

FFF: Well, I have stuff here.

KP: I can ask you about things you have written down.

MSL: I remember also having a card with Portuguese on it. I wasn't that great at it.

FFF: Odd things here.

KP: You both took the exam and you both started.

FFF: There were others, there were lots of others.

KP: How many?

FFF: I can give you names of some Douglass people.

KP: So there were a lot of you had all worked in Censorship.

MSL: All of the language students who had been urged to take the civil service exam were called.

KP: You started in January and the office was in a sense being.

FFF: Set up.

KP: How many people were there when you started?

FFF: There were quite a few.

KP: So already there were quite a few.

FFF: Right.

KP: And you worked where initially?

MSL: We worked in New York.

FFF: The building is still there. It's now a Veteran's Administration building.

KP: And it's in Lower Manhattan.

FFF: 24th, 7th Avenue at 24th Street.

KP: What was a typical day like, what would you do?

FFF: We had long tables with chairs.

MSL: Different languages.

FFF: Tables, depending on the ... yes, and I had and I threw it away a couple of weeks ago and I shouldn't have. I think I did but we had these little wooden blocks. I had two cards and one said "French" and it was blue with red letters in French. Next to it was a card that was red and said "Spanish" in gold letters, the colors of the country. I had the two of them here and they had to be at my desk all the time.

MSL: I had a third one in Portuguese.

FFF: You had Portuguese. They never gave me the Portuguese one. We were never, never, ever to reveal anything that happened. Certainly, not the methods. We were laughing the other day. We were given pins to wear.

MSL: The other day after you told me about it.

FFF: You did find it. Oh, good.

KP: All because of censorship, Victory. So you wore these little pins after four years of being in the Office of Censorship. Now that the war is long since over, what were the methods?

FFF: Do you think we could talk about it? Some methods, we could but some of them I still wouldn't, I don't think.

KP: I think it is pretty safe.

FFF: If I gave it?

KP: You always can take it out if you still think it is sensitive, but I think it is okay now.

FFF: It's funny that we had to sign papers. Yes, we were on the honor system, still with us.

KP: What would you do, what were you looking at, what were you reading?

FFF: I wrote it all down here, wait a minute. Do you want to read it quickly and then you will know what to ask me? I want it to come in here.

KP: Why don't you tell us?

FFF: This is what I wrote. Many language majors from the classes of '40 and '41 at NJC applied for Federal civil service positions as translators and as we saw "translator," we lit up. We took the written test at college and we were called to a Federal office building at 7th Avenue, corner of 24th Street in New York City where we were given written and oral exams in languages in which we had been trained. I passed the test and qualified in both my majors, French and Spanish, and was later recruited to do some Portuguese, which had been determined that a reader of Spanish could handle. There were not enough people at that point available to do Portuguese. We started work January 19, 1942 some five weeks after the start of hostilities. I remained until V-J Day, August 14, 1945. After that the Veterans Administration occupied the building. It was funny because we were opening mail like crazy, everybody's mail. On August 14th, you came up and thought of opening mail. We were so used to looking at mail.

MSL: In other words, it was illegal to open the US Mail after August 14th.

FFF: After August 14th after the war was over.

KP: So on August 14th?

FFF: You could go and interestingly, I don't know, maybe this is something I could say, we got a lot of mail from celebrities, which we would pass around because they were so interesting. I had a letter from Salvador Dali where he must have thought that his letter was going to be of

value because he wrote the letter and then drew pictures all around the four margins as a frame. They were beautiful.

KP: You basically were reading other people's mail.

FFF: Well, that was it. I had a letter from Douglass Fairbanks, Jr., and that one I passed around. Let me explain. We worked for the Office of Censorship, headquartered in Washington, D.C. There were branch offices in various harbor cities; New York, Miami, Houston, I'm pretty sure it was Houston, and San Francisco, as I remember. Mr. Byron Price was the chief censor in Washington. Coming back, right. Mr. Byron Spinney was in charge in New York City. We had two Byrons. Army officers headed most departments, which were staffed by the civilians. My department chief was Captain Fortune. I'll never forget him. The translators started off with the title, "Examiner." I entered my censorship career as a "Deputy Assistant Censor." All mail addressed to enemy countries was stopped. Stop me if I made any errors. And all mail leaving this country or mail in transit across ours from one foreign country to another was read and examined carefully for any information that could endanger our citizens or be of benefit to our opponents. Departments were set up to handle family mail, business mail, some army mail, not much army mail. You did only some, because that was handled within the companies. There were laboratories for looking for codes, ciphers and secret inks. I worked in Codes and Ciphers for a little bit, but most of the time I worked in "Secret Inks."

KP: Because often people work in Codes and Ciphers have a map, didn't they. Did you have a map?

FFF: No, I just was assigned there, but I didn't stay there for too long. But I have something, which I thought might be interesting. This was a card I got from the Chief of the Codes and Ciphers Department. Cable traffic was monitored at an office at 28th Street run by the Navy Department. I guess you couldn't phone either, then you couldn't make telephone calls. There were a very few people who were proficient in many languages. One man knew some 100 of them. His name was Conrad Bercovici. No, it was Joseph Bercovici, his brother was the author, Conrad Bercovici. Joseph knew some 100 languages, and if we had a problem and couldn't identify the language, we would go to him and he would identify it and then route it. They were able to identify specific languages and route them to the appropriate examiners. At first we worked six days a week. Then eventually after more people had been hired, we worked five and a half days a week. We were all afraid to miss a day because there was a chance that we might miss a letter and some catastrophe to our troops might be a consequence. We were trained to know what information should be kept inside the country. Words, phrases or products which could be of use to or give comfort to the enemy. That information was excised literally with a razor blade. We use to call the letters, "Lace Curtains." So that the information could never be raised as any deletion might be. You might not think so, but some of the enemy used black paint. We were particularly concerned about the safety of our ships in convoy on the ocean and about specific commercial products important to the war effort. Our methods never to be revealed, must have served well since the leads from every spy caught in World War II started in a censorship office. I am proud to say that my personal effort led to the apprehension of one

operative. We were very concerned about secrecy. We had to sign a paper indicating that we would never tell any of the rules, regulations or techniques found. Now with e-mail.

KP: One of the things, can we keep this?

FFF: I gave you one but fix that top. Mimi remembered that we had the test.

KP: I think that is our copy.

FFF: I gave Mimi one, you are right. Leave one with me but you can look at it now. Because you can make a copy. It's in the machine, I hope it's saved.

KP: If not, we will give you a copy back.

FFF: All right keep it then.

KP: You mentioned reading people's mail.

FFF: That released the boredom, sometimes.

KP: People who have done censorship in the military offices have said after that initial vicarious reading of other people's mail, by about the second day it's the most boring task.

FFF: Because you would never realize that everybody writes jokes. When they write letters, they send jokes. How many times can you read the same joke? Then in a foreign language we had learned the, literally, beautiful style of language. I mean, we were reading Garcia Lorca, Cervantes, these wonderful writers, and people half literate are writing letters. Did you find that, too? And you had to figure out what they were trying to say because, phonetically, it came out, but it wasn't literature. So we really learned our languages that way.

KP: Were you reading mail that was going to Vichy, France?

FFF: It wouldn't go.

KP: So the Vichy, even though we had diplomatic relations, this mail wasn't going to ... that you remember.

FFF: We had diplomatic relations with the Vichy?

KP: For several months.

FFF: That I didn't know. I remember mail going to Spain and countries in the Caribbean.

EW: What happened to mail that was addressed to a country that we couldn't send that to?

FFF: It didn't go.

EW: Was it returned to the sender?

FFF: I don't think. People used to come into the place with big sacks of mail from the post office and dump them out and we would have to go through them.

KP: Now would you read every letter?

FFF: At the beginning, we couldn't. As more people were hired, every letter was read.

KP: Initially you sort of read handfuls.

FFF: They would hand us mail.

KP: When you would open the letter and then ...

FFF: Everybody had a letter opener and we would open. Let me get an envelope.

BF: That you had ever seen.

KP: So she really had learned a lot of foul languages?

BF: Oh, boy.

KP: Interesting in a number of different languages.

BF: Two, three.

FFF: We would get a letter and you would learn to go up into the corner and slide the opener around the side, you would pull out the letter and read it, check it for the contents. We were given razorblades so we would cut out what was objectionable, like weather conditions.

KP: Weather was cut out?

FFF: Definitely cut out. Anything about where any troops were, anybody leaving from any port, expected in from any port, anything about a convoy. That was really hard and we had lights, long electric bulbs. They were shaped like this, electric lights, and we would put them inside the envelope. It was a big time for microfiche.

BF: Microdots.

FFF: They could be under stamps. These you can have.

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO-----

KP: This continues an interview with Frieda Feller with Miriam Lipton and also with an occasional comment from Maurice Lipton and from Robert Feller. An interview on March 27, 1998 at Highland Park, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and Elizabeth Wyatt. You were saying you would have these lights and you would look even at a stamp, microdot technology.

FFF: If the letter were typed, often the microfiche piece of film would be on a period so you had to look.

BF: Or the dot on an I.

FFF: Or the dot on an I.

KP: How many microdots would you find?

FFF: There were some occasionally.

KP: So it wasn't just theoretical?

FFF: No, oh, no.

EW: Will you explain exactly what that is.

FFF: It's a little square or a little dot of film. They reduced the message to as small as a dot and put the dot over a black dot or under a stamp or under an envelope flap or over a pattern inside an envelope.

BF: Have you ever seen a Minox camera?

FFF: This was from Secret Inks.

BF: A Minox camera is about this big and it was known as the "spy camera." Every one of them came with a carrying chain except that the carry chain had a couple of large beads in it. So that if you wanted to take a picture of something at such and such a distance, you put the bead on the surface and lifted the camera to that bead and then shot and that would be in focus.

FFF: These were slips that we had to put on mail if it was appropriate.

BF: You could reduce one of those dots, with everything on it, to fit on the dot of an I.

EW: How would the electric light that you had, how would that show the microfiche?

BF: The surface has a tiny raised.

KP: I'm curious. One of the things that before you showed me was this little slip I assume you put in the letters. The postal service delivered the domestic mail through air to the United States Censorship.

FFF: We weren't supposed to do domestic, if it slipped through.

KP: So occasionally there would be errors and you occasionally would open and you would put the slip in.

FFF: Yes, the cover.

KP: Was that an error?

FFF: It was an error.

KP: It really was an error?

FFF: Right! We weren't allowed to.

KP: To do domestic mail. This cover was opened when it reached the censor. It's interesting because this form was developed on December 12, 1941.

FFF: Really, oh, I never noticed it.

KP: See Form #2.

FFF: That was really quick.

KP: You had enclosed this other thing, this little flyer.

FFF: If it was appropriate.

KP: Miscommunications sustained by chemical testing. This was a routine scientific measure.

FFF: We would put the.

KP: All communications into various countries, foreign countries and that served to provide greater protection for the United States. So, often would you do chemical testing on a given letter, if you remember.

FFF: Relatively often. Well, there were, well, not the secret inks, which is, I was not into.

KP: You mentioned that in fact, it wasn't theoretical that you were valuable to work. In fact, you mentioned that they actually caught someone who was passing secrets.

FFF: More than once.

KP: More than once. You, in fact, had a key role. Could you talk a little a bit about who they apprehended and tried?

FFF: I have here and this is falling apart. I saved this and they got somebody. You can have that.

KP: It was June 29, 1943 in the *Daily Mirror* and it's a front-page story. "Earnest Lemans Pleads Guilty to U.S. Commission Martin Epstein in Brooklyn on Charges of Relating Convoy Information to Germany." It's dissolved.

FFF: I don't know, there is little pieces here but.

KP: You actually caught someone who was passing.

FFF: The material that I found led to his apprehension.

KP: He sent war secrets using a pen with invisible ink.

FFF: That's what he did.

KP: But between these broad lines were line items of data on shipping, troop movements written in invisible ink on the end of a toothpick. Lemans according to the FBI was a product of (inaudible) that produced eight Salvatores who were captured soon after being landed here on a (inaudible) boat. They carried the powdered substance, which is the base of the ink. Six of the eight Salvatores limits may face a firing squad of American soldiers. If he does, he will die for treason's (inaudible) of its oath of citizenship, which he took on Staten Island in 1924. Did you ever know what happened to the?

FFF: No, I don't know.

KP: You had a hand.

FFF: In leading to that. We didn't do it and nobody knew who we were. But we found this.

KP: So this was a letter that you found?

FFF: I think so, yes.

KP: That was suspicious and he did all the.

FFF: We were scared. We would go in with a fear because maybe there was a letter we would miss. You had that feeling too?

MSL: I wasn't in that department.

FFF: Here, these are notes that I took. But I don't know if that's.

KP: These were notes that you took.

FFF: When I was in code.

KP: So you would take code inside for general description (inaudible) three character open colored cipher, open code data and analogs, marked letters, first letter, first words, second letter, second word, etc. Suspect takes a day to store the unusually logic or (inaudible) over elaborate. Code you can write (inaudible) letters and numerals, which represent syllables, words, phrases or whole sentences. Cipher for pre-arrangement of letters or numerals (inaudible). Each one of them represents a letter or alphabet meaning you had transition cipher and substitute cipher. So you got a real introduction.

FFF: Yes, they trained us.

KP: How much training because it sounds like ...

FFF: This is business. They gave us training. I saved these. We have to know what's a certified check, a cashier's check, the monthly statement.

KP: This is sort of saying the ways things can go executor 8393.Iceland and/or between Spain and France, San Marino. (inaudible) enemy occupied prohibited transaction on how to do research. This is the rationing.

FFF: This is the signature. That was my boss in Secret Inks.

KP: You can't read it because it's the secret ink.

FFF: No, well maybe it's possible, but I doubt it. Is there anything?

KP: It looks like there is something actually, when putting it up to the light. When you mentioned they trained you, what kind of training did you get?

FFF: Well I gave you some of that and here.

KP: In the sense you would have lectures.

FFF: Yes. Oh, yes, is that it, maybe?

EW: Through the paper.

FFF: It could be. I don't know what I am giving you here but these are notes that I took on something else.

KP: You would also have lectures and you remember your training that you received?

MSL: I was not in the Secret Ink.

FFF: Look at this.

MSL: Got up until.

FFF: This is in the beginning, look at that.

KP: You were in 12C #1, "Do Not Open Mail" until notified. So you were known by your examiners?

FFF: Oh, numbers. Well, at the beginning and then when I went into Secret Ink so I got that five, four, six, nine.

KP: How long were you in Secret Inks for?

FFF: Most of the time.

KP: So most of the time you were there.

FFF: About three years.

KP: And you were not in Secret Inks?

MSL: No, an examiner.

KP: Odd jobs.

FFF: Here this is more business stuff. It's like a course.

KP: So how much training did you get because you were not in Secret Inks? How much training did you get in terms of work?

MSL: Well, there was training in what to look for if anything was unusual. We had lectures on what to look for.

FFF: And what to cut out.

KP: Did you have a hand in any suspicious activity that you know of?

MSL: No, if there was anything unusual we would pass it onto the supervisor who in turn would pass it onto his supervisor until it reached the top.

KP: You never had the same sense that you may have apprehended someone in your department whereas in Secret Inks, the probabilities are pretty good that you had, in fact?

FFF: Oh, if we found something ... it was funny. The other people would make a pennant with an "E" on it. Do you remember they use to put an "E" for excellence on factories that came up to what they were suppose to produce? Well, they would put an "E" on the table or somebody had to announce something that was significant. You were very proud if they put the "E" up for you.

KP: You mentioned, for example, one of the cards you showed us.

FFF: Just be careful of the newspaper because that's going to fall apart and I would suggest that you photocopy it.

BF: That's possible.

KP: The number, which was constant 705.

FFF: That was the phone number.

KP: And you were supposed to telephone?

FFF: That's if anybody needed you when you expected to be absent.

KP: You were simply to say, "Number 5460 at Miss MacIntosh's table, Row 3, Table Sixteen." So you weren't even suppose to use names.

FFF: No.

KP: But they gave you little pins that say your.

FFF: Isn't that funny, but that was later. It was much later.

KP: That was later, so initially you didn't use them? In addition what did you tell people you were doing?

FFF: Working for the government.

KP: That was it. Did you have background checks done on you?

FFF: We don't know. Then they gave us these certificates to hang up.

KP: When did you get the ...

FFF: At the end. And you notice that little seal Mimi showed me the other day that's the same as this.

KP: Same as the pin.

FFF: As the pin.

KP: So you don't know, in fact, if there was an FBI background check on you? Word never got back that agents were asking questions about you?

FFF: I think so. That may have been happened, I'm not sure.

KP: Sort of asked people.

FFF: It may have happened, I'm not sure. I couldn't say definitely.

MSL: Now that you mentioned that, I remember my mother telling me once that someone had come to the house.

FFF: It's possible, it could be.

MSL: I remember that, and she didn't know why and she told me later. At the time I couldn't think of any reason why anybody would check on me except about my employment.

KP: How much were you paid?

FFF: Not much.

MSL: I don't think it was exorbitant. I can't remember now what it was but I do know one thing that coming from a business office and then going to a government office was a big jump. Do you recall that?

FFF: Well, I was teaching.

MSL: I was working in an export office and it differs in salary. I can't remember exactly but it was tremendously more.

FFF: Going for the government.

MSL: Yes, yes.

KP: Really, because now it's often the other way and you often go from government to businesses.

MSL: Not in this instance. It was so vital.

KP: You mentioned a lot of Douglass College, NJC people but what about the other women and did you have any men?

FFF: Yes, you know who was there. You know Livio Dalto, he's a lawyer Class of '40 I think.

MSL: What was the name?

FFF: Livio Dalto.

MSL: I remember his name.

FFF: Sure, he married Leah Kinstlinger, and she was there too. We used to travel on the train together. It turned out, it was a romance and we didn't know it at the time. We thought he was just going with us, but then they hit it off and they were married and they have three children.

KP: Somebody from your college did this?

FFF: I don't know if was so many, maybe eight.

MSL: All language majors were offered the opportunity to take the exam, civil service exam.

EW: Were there women that were offered the position, or offered that didn't accept it, that had a fear?

FFF: I don't know. This was something that nobody else kept probably. See, we had to know what "letters of credit" were when I was in the business part. I'm just giving it to you.

MSL: We were so close to New York that I imagine they didn't think so. The fact that we were so close to New York it would be unlikely that anyone from ... except possibly someone on the West coast. But we were so close.

FFF: Can you read that, the director?

KP: No, that I can't. I'm curious here as to of chain of command. How big were sections?

FFF: We had whole floor of secret inks (inaudible) was on the eleventh floor, which was the top floor of this big building.

KP: Which floor were you on?

MSL: I don't remember.

FFF: I remember the top floor because we saw that plane hit the Empire State Building from out our window. There were windows all around. The only problem is we used to get mice and we were scared to death of little mice. It was a warehouse originally.

MSL: Maybe they were spies.

BF: They were employed by the spies to eat letters.

FFF: Anyway, did you know about all this? Did you know that there was such a thing?

KP: Oh, I know in general about censorship but not the degree of censorship. The actual procedures I'm not as familiar with and it's harder to document. How many people were in a section?

FFF: It depends where you were.

KP: Let's say when you started out, on the line, just reading before you got to secret ink.

FFF: Maybe about twelve at a table. Our table was like refectory tables with wooden chairs.

MSL: Would you say about twelve at a table?

FFF: Maybe, maybe more.

KP: You worked for eight hours.

FFF: We would get there at eight-thirty in the morning. I had to make the 6:23 train from New Brunswick. So I moved back to Newark when Bob was in the service. I think it was to five o'clock.

MSL: I used to be close enough to Penn Station to be able to ... I can't remember the exact time. I just got off at Perth Amboy. I took a train from Perth Amboy into Penn Station. This was actually within walking distance of Penn Station, it was Seventh Avenue.

FFF: Oh, you could. We walked down from 33rd to 24th. You probably did too. We got our walking in both ends of the day. In the wintertime, the wind blew between those buildings.

MSL: Was it Penn Station?

FFF: So, so cold.

KP: What kind of breaks did you get? I assume you got an hour for lunch.

FFF: Yes, I think so.

KP: Every two hours you got a five-minute break.

FFF: No.

MSL: It was up to the individual.

FFF: You could go to the bathroom when you needed to.

KP: It wasn't so regimented.

FFF: You wanted to work because you might miss a letter. Who would take time off?

KP: So it was really that sensitive.

FFF: Oh, yes. God, we all had somebody who was in service. God forbid, it was somebody's brother or somebody's husband or somebody's nephew. It was on your conscience that you went home and you missed the letter.

KP: Sounds like morale was pretty good.

FFF: Oh, yes. The whole war effort, I mean it wasn't like Vietnam and it wasn't like Korea even. Everybody ...

MSL: Nobody was supposed to know where we worked or what we were doing. So when anyone asked me, I just said, "I work for the Government."

FFF: That's right. If any of those things look as though they shouldn't go out, use your judgement.

KP: So we could have these.

FFF: The stationery and what I wrote. I don't think that's ...

KP: It's interesting because this was very sophisticated, in World War II, code but now you need a super computer to do code breaking.

FFF: They were doing it then.

KP: That is some of the early computer development.

FFF: Somebody called, Donovan, who had written about codes, it was very important.

ML: Bill Donovan, OSS.

FFF: Maybe. I hope I'm not giving you anything I shouldn't. So use your judgement all right.

KP: What percentage of the office, roughly, was women and how many were men?

FFF: Mostly women.

KP: You got to guess an average age.

FFF: Young.

KP: Most were your age.

FFF: A few middle-aged people.

MSL: A lot of them were recent graduates because it came at a very opportune time when we were graduating.

FFF: We needed jobs.

KP: You mentioned there was some army officers. Could you talk a little bit about them.

FFF: Well, they wore uniforms.

KP: They wore uniforms to work and how many were there?

FFF: Quite a few, and then we had some that were not in the army that were 4-F people that wanted to work for the government.

KP: The army officers, how old were they?

FFF: Captain Fortune, whom I know the best was probably thirty or so ... a big guy, very confident of himself.

KP: Did he stay there for the whole war? What about the other officers? Did any of them stay part of the war?

FFF: I don't know. We stayed in our department. You saw people in the elevator to the eighth floor, eleventh floor.

KP: Did your office or you department ever do things socially together. Did you have a picnic or a dance?

FFF: No, who had time? We worked there all the time. We would go home on Sunday and do your laundry and wash your hair. I would take my lunch off and I would brown bag it and write my letter to Bob so he got a letter every day. He was out in the Bulge. That was no fun and no people were being killed.

KP: Were there any women supervisors?

FFF: Yes. We resented it at one point. Everybody in our department was a college graduate except one and Captain Fortune put her in charge. It wasn't anyone of us and we resented that.

KP: Why do you think it happened?

FFF: He couldn't choose.

KP: So he decided to put the one ...

FFF: He didn't want to make people feel bad so he made them feel worse. We all liked each other. We would have accepted anybody but she probably figured it was administrative work and she was originally a secretary. The thing that bothered us was that she got a raise and earned more than we did. If it hadn't been for the money, we wouldn't have cared. That's the way the cookie crumbles.

EW: Were you living in your apartment in New Brunswick?

FFF: For the first five months I did, and then my parents convinced me that it would be cheaper to move back home. I think they weren't sure that he was going to come back or how he was going to come back or where he was going to come back, how long the war would last, and I was paying rent every month at our apartment. So your room is home and we'll store your furniture in the attic, which is what they did. When you need it, you'll take it away. So three years later he came back. They said, "You will need the money for a down payment on a house," which we did, this house.

KP: What was it like to move back with your parents after, especially, having been married?

FFF: My mother was working then and my father was working. My father and mother would pick me up at the railroad station in Newark and we would go out to supper into Goody's. He had some friends, and my mother was working and wasn't cooking. During the week, we working people just had supper together. It was routine.

KP: Even though there was a war, and you did have more money, you could go out to eat, it sounds like.

FFF: It wasn't expensive. My dinner at night was forty-five cents. I remember leaving a tip for all of us, a quarter. Money was different. I didn't order the most expensive dinner on the menu and my father insisted on paying for me so I left the tip. But there were other people. There were teachers and there were friends of my father and we would all meet in the Goody Shop. It was across the street from the City Hall where my father worked. We would go home and we were tired and get ready for the next day.

EW: What happened with your letters to him. Did you pass them to the front and have them checked before you sent them off?

FFF: No, no they went APO.

KP: APO mail is domestic.

FFF: APO goes to a domestic address, then mailed overseas. We do not know where someone is stationed in war time. The only thing that was checked was their mail out. If they knew something or were in a sensitive spot, but our mail wasn't checked. In fact, we used to have what they call "V" letters. Have you seen "V" letters, I have some upstairs? I have everything.

KP: You are an ark of the screen.

FFF: But not organized.

BF: Letters were checked by military censors. One of the officers of the company would censor our mail. Of course, we did have available to us what were known as "blue envelopes." In other words, if you wrote something that you didn't want an officer ... if you wanted to say nasty things about one of the officers in your company, you would ask for a blue envelope and that would be censored by somebody up the line, out of the area. Of course, it was an interesting challenge because I used to try to write letters figuring that if I wrote certain things on a college graduate level, that maybe the ignoramus, who was the officer, wouldn't know what I was talking about anyway.

FFF: We all used to number our letters so he could keep track and find out whether or not he got all of them or in what order they came. Like you would have forty-five, forty-six, forty-seven, and then you know in what order to read them.

BF: You never had any of my letters come in with stuff cut out of it, did you?

FFF: No.

EW: How often could you write because you wrote every day.

BF: I could write as often as I could write.

FFF: Depends on where they were. Everybody wrote everyday. It was just possible because you knew the person was alive on that day, weird, and morbid but that was it. I knew that if he wrote on May 1st that he was alive on May 1st. He is floating around Europe, crossing France and he is the Bulge I have to ... you know, life is different, very strange. Man's inhumanity to man. We get all upset over capital punishment, which I don't agree with, incidentally. I mean, I don't believe in capital punishment but here they go and kill people routinely and don't think anything of it. Let's go out and kill those, whatever. They are all some mother's child.

KP: It sounds like you didn't like the idea of the war. I mean you supported the war effort but you would have preferred if this hadn't happened.

FFF: Why can't it be done in diplomacy?

BF: We were married for six months.

FFF: Five months when you went in.

BF: Five months when I went in. We were married in June and I went in November.

EW: Well that's a story we haven't heard, the engagement.

BF: At Jamison Campus.

FFF: No, we were engaged at the Senior Ball.

BF: No, we weren't. We were engaged one night at Jamison Campus before Senior Ball.

FFF: That's when I got my ring and that's all I remember.

BF: The Senior Ball, she got her ring.

EW: That's when you announced it.

BF: Yes.

MSL: The rest is history.

FFF: We were married a year later.

EW: You were engaged for a year.

BF: Which was customary in those days.

EW: You got married in Newark?

FFF: Yes, the Essex House, which doesn't exist anymore.

KP: I almost feel like I should ask you to leave the room. What was it like to have your husband gone for so long? I mean, you are obviously concerned about him.

FFF: My twin sister was married and her husband who worked at a defense plant could avoid going and he felt that since he was married he wasn't this high up with children.

BF: He was older.

KP: He was a pre-Pearl Harbor father.

FFF: Yes, he was a pre-Pearl Harbor father. They had a little boy. My sister had three children and I used to go as often as possible to baby-sit in the evening. They lived at the apartment house with Mayor Ellenstein. It was just a couple blocks away so I would walk over and baby-sit, so my sister and brother-in-law could get out in the evening. That was pretty much what I did. I loved the kids and still do.

KP: I've read for example that Newark had pretty elaborate civil defense program. Because your father was involved with public safety ...

FFF: I don't know too much about that but before Bob went into service, he was in the aircraft warning service that use to watch ... they would have to know the design or the silhouette of every airplane that went over New Brunswick and identify them.

BF: We had a tower that was in the track, that land, where Malouf Ford is located and where Caldor is.

FFF: North Brunswick area.

BF: I would climb up in the tower and watch with binoculars. In fact, I would even take a look out in front closet and show you my helmet. I still have it.

FFF: Well, maybe you can contribute to the cause.

KP: One thing the Archives said is, "Please, no helmets." Everyone wants to give him his helmet. The documents we want, particularly letters and diaries and these types of documents. No helmets.

BF: Can make a deal with catering. They do excellent as soup cups.

KP: Though I think a helmet would be excellent for Sea Girt or Carlisle. I often thought we should have an auction of some of the key memorabilia that people would donate.

FFF: I've got stuff from here. Did I show, he's a got a belt, "*Gott Mit Uns*," the Nazi, German belt.

BF: The German military belt.

FFF: He's got some little Nazi flags and odd things.

KP: What about rationing? What do you remember about rationing?

FFF: I might have some ration books downstairs.

KP: Did your father have any gas allotment because of his city job?

FFF: No, but we went on our honeymoon, and there was already gas rationing, and we couldn't take the car. We took the train. We went to Lake George and we took the train because you can only get so much.

BF: Very little gas.

FFF: It was sugar and butter rationing, right, and meat.

BF: Oh, and how.

FFF: Things that you probably can't conceive of as a younger person. You can go out and buy anything you want. The people did it.

BF: Except on those very few occasions when I did get home before I went overseas, when and, of course, there were no supermarkets in those days so you had your own local butcher. When he heard that I was back, forget about it, it was steaks.

ML: I remember going over to the ration lawyer when I came home on furlough relief and going over and getting my stamps and bringing them home.

BF: I handled it slightly different.

KP: You were more informed.

FFF: He's got a lot of special friends.

BF: I handled it slightly differently because I was in a position to get a hold of pads of pass-blanks. Like retrieving passes and stuff of that sort.

FFF: Clerk.

BF: Fortunately, our company commander had a relatively simple and straightforward signature so if I needed gas, I got gas.

FFF: No, kidding. You never told me that.

BF: I use to forge George Gardner's signature on an ongoing basis.

FFF: He probably knew it.

BF: I don't know, and I don't care if he knew or he didn't. Let it go. When we were on the West Coast, one of the men had an old, battered, beat up car and we were up at Camp Polk. We would commute every weekend from Los Angeles.

FFF: No, not at Polk. Polk was Louisiana.

BF: I'm sorry not Polk, Camp Cook. So he furnished a car and I furnished the gas.

FFF: You had a good time.

BF: It was an interesting experience. The thing had no muffler so it sounded like a tank going down the road. It had no tailpipe, so it took us a week or so to figure out why we were coming back with these dreadful headaches. Finally, somebody said, "Hey, I think it's carbon monoxide."

FFF: You had to have some moments of levity. Sometimes you can't cry and you have to laugh. More questions?

KP: Germany would be defeated and how did that affect the office because the war would end in May in Germany?

FFF: We were happy, but we kept right on.

KP: Still Japan. For you the war was a very dramatic transition. On August 14th you mentioned that they immediately said, "Don't open anything. It's illegal now."

FFF: Just like they notify you when you can start to open and then they tell you, now you can't.

KP: When did your office end?

FFF: August 14th. They gave severance pay and they offered people to stay on to work at Veterans' Administration.

KP: So the people that were taken over.

FFF: He was coming back and I left.

BF: I was back and I ended up back here.

FFF: No, but I went with you.

BF: I ended up back in this country.

FFF: On V-E day.

BF: I called her at the office.

FFF: That was the call.

BF: Made sure she was sitting down.

FFF: I left and met him at Kilmer. He came into Kilmer and then I went back to work.

BF: She went back to work and I went out to all sorts of places and ended up out in Battle Creek, Michigan.

FFF: And I met you in Battle Creek.

BF: Then I said, "Enough already, I quit."

FFF: Then I left. I didn't get the severance pay because I left a little bit early. But Mimi stayed, and she was telling me a story the other day, which I thought was fascinating. Now we had to keep secrets and we couldn't tell anybody where we worked and what we were doing. For V-E Day, there was a parade outside.

MSL: Oh, yes, tell. I think it's priceless. Coming down 7th Avenue there was a procession, which included Eisenhower. He stood up and he waved at our office, and we are not suppose to tell anybody where we worked or what we were doing so somebody put a sign on our building and it said, "Welcome Eisenhower, Signed the Censors."

FFF: I'll never forget that.

MSL: We should have taken a picture of that.

KP: Did you elect to stay on the Veterans' Administration or did you just take the severance pay?

FFF: No, what happened, we were allowed to stay there and do other work. I guess to check ... I forgot what it was. But anyway we were permitted to stay there and do something that didn't involve opening mail.

KP: So after V-J Day?

FFF: After V-J day and we could take time out to go look for a job.

KP: So they didn't immediately cut you off on August 14th and say, "Thank you."

FFF: No.

KP: There was actually some transition.

FFF: I don't remember exactly how long it was but nobody seemed to complain because you could take time off whenever you wanted.

KP: Sounds like you didn't take a lot of time off when the war was going on?

FFF: Oh, no. We had our regular vacations but we were very hesitant. We would come home and dream about it. You know, maybe there's a letter I missed, maybe I put my stripes in the wrong place, maybe.

KP: Who were the ...

FFF: They were the different chemicals. You know you put one in and maybe I should have put it with this chemical here.

EW: Now you quit work.

FFF: I don't remember exactly when.

BF: After V-J Day.

FFF: Was it after V-J Day.

BF: Yes, because I was in.

FFF: Yes, it was and you were in Battle Creek, and you went to Oglethorpe and then you went.

BF: I was away from Battle Creek and I think I was in Chicago on V-J Day.

FFF: I forget that was August.

EW: You had met him.

FFF: I went out later in the winter. I remember it was wintertime in Battle Creek and he was released December 5th.

BF: I met her at the train station.

FFF: I went out to be with him.

BF: And, "Did you have a nice trip?" and she said, "Yes," and I said, "Good, because we are leaving tonight for Oglethorpe." One of the guys traveling with me was very, very nice and he had a lower berth and he gave it to the two of us.

FFF: We went to Chattanooga and then I stayed there for a week and I went back to work.

BF: She stayed for a week because that's all ...

FFF: The hotel would let me stay.

BF: We had to pull all sorts of strings.

FFF: All the hotels were full.

BF: To get her that week, but that's all they would allow her to stay.

FFF: There was another gal who worked in censorship whose home was Chattanooga where we stayed and she knew the people who owned the hotel so she got them to let me stay for the week.

BF: Which was just as well because we were under terrible tight security at Fort Oglethorpe. It was almost impossible for us to see one another. So she went home and I finished Oglethorpe and then I went back to the hospital, Percy Jones General, an amputee hospital, and I was there for a while. Fortunately, I used to read data coming in because this was my obligation to the men, patients of the hospital that I was working with. One day a notice came in saying that if you were in Europe on the mainland between this date and this date, you were entitled to a battle star and I said, "Oh, really, and then I double checked." It meant that instead of having two battle stars, I had three battle stars.

FFF: For each battle star (pause on tape).

BF: Out in December instead of in January, and so I called home and I talked to my grandmother who used to live with my parents.

-----END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE-----

BF: She, being the devil that she was, wouldn't tell anybody.

FFF: But she kept having dreams.

BF: But she kept on having dreams.

FFF: I had a dream.

BF: She had a dream that I was going to be home for her birthday.

FFF: She drove everybody crazy, Grandma, come on you are going to get yourself all upset.

BF: So December 7th.

FFF: We went to my folks home, and he got civilian suit.

BF: The ugliest, incredible.

FFF: You couldn't find clothes.

BF: Find anything.

FFF: There were no cars made, it was only tanks and military vehicles.

BF: It was the ugliest piece of fabric that you have ever seen but it wasn't a uniform. It had a lapel hole where you could stick a ruptured duck, a discharged Veteran button. That's all that I wanted and so in time for grandma's birthday, we came home and found that my sister and my mother were not around. The reason they were not around was the fact that they were going down to Fort Dix to pick up my brother-in-law who was being charged essentially that day. So we just were in the house celebrating and I sat down and started to fool around with the piano in the living room and my sister, my mother and my brother-in-law parked the car at the curb. My sister got out of the car and stopped dead and said, "There is nobody that plays the piano like that." We had quite a party that night.

FFF: It was great.

KP: You had known each other well before getting married but what was it like?

FFF: For Freshman year?

KP: What was it like, I mean, he had been away for a while? From your perspective what was it like to ...

FFF: What could you do? I was working and though I was busy during the day. I was reading mail.

EW: What was it like to have to be reacquainted?

FFF: It was different. It really was different.

BF: The thing that you have to remember.

FFF: We wrote everyday.

BF: No, but aside from the writing things that you have to remember is that we had quite a number of months together out in Battle Creek before I got my discharge.

FFF: Then it was a problem.

BF: We had our own apartment and we lived together.

FFF: I got pregnant.

BF: And she got pregnant I don't know whether that had anything to do with Battle Creek.

KP: You had been apart a while.

FFF: Years and years.

KP: What had changed in the years? Even you although you had stayed in the states, things changed for you.

FFF: We had different experiences.

KP: What does he tell you about the war?

FFF: I got all the letters.

KP: But what does he tell after you got home? Was there anything you learned that you didn't ...

FFF: I brought home a bullet casing that missed him by six inches. I have that upstairs.

KP: Were you surprised at how much danger? Because in the letters, I've been told, you couldn't tell specific details and you often didn't want to worry people. Did you realize?

FFF: No, not really. It was bad and we knew it was bad. We knew it was day to day. He had a lost a first cousin four days after D-Day. I found out on the train coming back from censorship. Somebody from town had heard it. Ada Bloom told me.

KP: Oh, yes, we interviewed her.

FFF: She worked for Pathe News and she commuted with me. She, Leah Kinstlinger and Lee Dalto. The four of us met down at the station every morning.

MSL: Who was the last one?

FFF: Lee Dalto, he was a Spanish major at Rutgers. He became a lawyer and a very sweet guy. They live in New York State someplace. He's another one you could ask. He went into service because I remember him in uniform.

KP: What class?

FFF: I think he was '40, like Leah.

KP: Had you thought of joining the service?

FFF: No, I felt I was doing my part by working in a censorship job.

KP: Because you didn't have much time.

FFF: But everybody had to do something in the war effort, everybody.

KP: You did feel that sense of?

FFF: We were at the place where it would make a difference. Not like his being as a pre-med digging ditches with engineers, and I needed this.

BF: Blowing things up. I've got an address for you if you want it.

KP: Yes.

FFF: He's a sweet guy, very.

KP: You left censorship and then what? What did you think? You were obviously delighted that your husband was coming back. What then, did you think you would be going back into teaching?

FFF: My son was on the way and Bob's mother and father had a real estate and insurance business in New Brunswick. So I would go down to work everyday and work in the office, where I pasted policies.

EW: Did you work after your son was born?

FFF: I didn't go back to work until the kids were out of high school. Then I went back and got my Master's Degree and I got a supervisor's certificate. I subbed and I used to sub on and off because they don't have many subs that are certified in foreign language. I had been subbing at the middle school and a Spanish teacher ... her husband was transferred to California, she said, "Look in on the class and you take over." I worked there until the end of the year and then I was rified because I was the last one hired. So they said, "Don't worry as soon as there is an opening that you could fill, you'll have it." The next year I became the French teacher at the high school. The same thing happened. There were fewer and fewer students and I was the last one hired. One of the teachers at the high school is an English teacher, is the wife of Dr. Wolfson who was head of the Graduate School, Dean of the Graduate School. She said, "You know, my husband is looking for supervisors to supervise student teachers at Rutgers, do you have the certifications?" I said, "Yes, I have supervisor certificate." So she said, "Oh, please go over and they need them very badly." So I went over and I practically didn't get my name out and they hired me and I started supervising. Then little by little, they asked me to teach courses. So I was there for fourteen and a half years.

KP: So when did you start at Rutgers?

FFF: '77, '78, something like that.

KP: You stayed until?

FFF: I stayed until I decided I had reached an age where maybe I shouldn't do it anymore.

KP: So what year was your last year at Rutgers?

FFF: I think about four years ago.

KP: So it is very recent.

FFF: Yes, meanwhile all through the years I was tutoring kids. That's why this is here.

KP: Do you still tutor?

FFF: I haven't in a while, no. I use to have twenty or thirty kids a week. There are a lot of kids in this community who were headed to college. If the children weren't doing well, particularly in foreign languages or in anything, the parents were quick to get them tutored. If they didn't like the teacher, and the kids weren't picking it up. I had one girl for example, who use to develop hives every time there was going to be a test so her mother would send her over here and we would prepare. Then I had the student teachers who used to come, too. For some of them their training wasn't that good. Some of them had been to junior college and didn't have the immersion experiences that we had. Then our languages really got better in censorship. We learned words we never learned in college.

KP: When you were out in the kitchen, your husband said you knew how to swear in foreign languages.

FFF: Well sure, you know.

KP: You had read this.

FFF: Read this stuff, stories. I had a brother-in-law that use to love to tell jokes. He would get started and I would say, "George, please" and he would be insulted. I would say, "George, do you want me to finish it for you?" I'd finish everything and "where do you learn these?" You had to read it.

KP: Sounds like the experience of reading these letters lasted a while.

FFF: It was years, yes. What a way to make a living. To read mail and open other people's mail.

KP: Someone else commented that he remembered as an officer, you sort of read all sorts of tragic stories.

FFF: Oh, yes, terrible. Break your heart. You just remember the ones you want to remember. Some of them are horrendous in the way people live. You have to be grateful even though we didn't have money. We had books, libraries, and we had museums.

BF: No money, but fun.

FFF: No money but we enjoyed each other. No one argued.

BF: Much.

FFF: At a different level.

KP: Did your children ever ask ... I assume they asked you what you did in the war at some point. Did they ever ask you what you had done during the war?

FFF: I just told them I worked in censorship. I don't think they know.

KP: They never really got curious?

BF: I don't think that they understood the concept of censorship.

FFF: The idea of somebody opening their mail, I think my daughter would resent it. She is a very private person. What about yours?

MSL: I don't know whether we ever go.

FFF: You haven't talked about it. Isn't it funny, you just don't. I think of things now that I would ask my grandparents. Even my grandmother that I knew for so long and we were so close, I never asked her if she came over on a sailing ship in 1865 or how she got here. I know she came with a younger brother, she was the older and she was eighteen and her brother was a little younger. But how did they come and why did they come at that age. I don't know.

KP: You started very early as a teacher, worked in censorship and then took some time off and then came back. In a way, because you both taught in the middle school.

FFF: And the high school.

KP: But then you taught at Rutgers teaching teachers.

FFF: Yes, I taught lots of courses at Rutgers it turned out. Sometimes the same course with four sections.

KP: What is your take on American ... I mean it is a very broad question about American education because you started out at a rough school. So it sounds like things got better for you and it wasn't a story of decline.

FFF: In supervising student teachers, I had maybe 450. I've known a lot of student teachers in a lot of schools from Paramus down to Trenton. He took to me some of them. Like Trenton, where they have unformed guards at Trenton High School. Wherever there is a corner there is another guard. He was waiting outside for me and I said, "Let me go to Trenton and go with me." He saw kids being frisked by the police.

BF: Not just frisked. And sitting on the car parked and the police car pulls up in front of the high school and the cop goes out and come back out with a kid in handcuffs, "Let's go."

FFF: It's very different and even here at this high school, this is a wonderful high school. A lot of kids ... were going on to college. The bedroom of New Brunswick and the bedroom of Rutgers children of professors. We have three doctors right across the street. It's a quiet community but some of the things that go on at the high school are sad. I don't know what it is. I've seen what passes for education. What passes for a course in one school and what passes for a course in another school can be very different.

KP: I know.

FFF: You recognized it.

KP: I noticed it when I get the end product. At Rutgers you can tell that some people come very well prepared.

FFF: Right and some of them can't spell.

KP: You figure if they got into the Rutgers system.

FFF: How did they get there?

KP: I mean, this is the best of in many ways. There are others that are very, very good.

FFF: Where my grandson is hopefully ... he's in Fairfax, Virginia. They have a high school and I should show you the courses.

KP: Oh, I'm sure Fairfax has a reputation for being a very good school.

FFF: They have a semester course on DNA. Unbelievable, the courses that are offered down there. He's in the seventh grade but he's in ninth grade math. He just took SAT's and they give it to them in the seventh grade to see where to place them in high school. He got a 1280 on the one that the Juniors take, the regular SAT course.

BF: Not the PSAT.

FFF: They don't give the PSAT until sophomore year here. It's what they have been learning. He's doing amazing things. We are lucky he's down there but some of the places here I wouldn't want my kids to be in school.

KP: When did you, in the states, learn about the full extent of Nazi brutality and the extermination?

FFF: Not for a long time, did you? I didn't think so.

KP: Was it not until 1945?

BF: A little before.

FFF: His outfit liberated Matthesen. He sort of had an idea of what was going on. We didn't know how bad. There is an interesting book, which I would like you to read, if you have not already. It has to do with ham radio. We are ham radio operators. It's called, *The Pledge* and it has to do with what people did ... the Jews when they found out and how they handled it. It's a very ... I'm surprised, and a doctor friend of ours who recommended it to us and I found it in the library here.

KP: I'll have to look for it.

FFF: Very interesting on how it was handled with money and who heard what and when.

KP: It sounds like you didn't hear very much about it.

FFF: We were very ... what's the word, "innocent."

KP: Even though your father was a fairly connected public official.

FFF: In Newark, it was Newark. I think that the religious people sort of got a line of some of this. If anybody heard anything, we didn't believe it. You heard things that nobody believed. Who could do this to people. This is propaganda.

ML: This came out in *Life Magazine*, some of these pictures.

FFF: We had no idea.

BF: Started (inaudible).

ML: Yes, well then that was.

FFF: When you look at the papers and when your students look, read the papers of those days, is there any reporting in that?

KP: In Rutgers it's interesting because, it is surprising how, nothing was said about the approaching of the war until Pearl Harbor so it would be very easy.

BF: Not surprising at all .

FFF: That was a shock, Pearl Harbor.

BF: We did not recognize that such a thing could happen although we did have people from my class who enlisted with the Canadian Air Force.

FFF: People went to the RAF.

BF: Sure, and why they did this, I don't know. There are certain mentalities that just want to get into a fight. I'm not qualified to say but I know. Like, Mike Dixon I think he was killed over that. He was in the Canadian Air Force.

FFF: To me, it was amazing that none of us knew. We really didn't know.

BF: How the government didn't make any noise about this. People who were trying to get out. People who were trying to get ships to get out of Germany and the ships were turned back. The government didn't want to get involved and didn't want people to know.

FFF: There were a lot of people who felt that we had had a war to end all wars.

BF: That was the one which caused it.

FFF: I know that we didn't want to get involved and they were afraid. The subterfuges that Roosevelt had to go through in order to get us prepared. I'm sure that you read a lot about that, more questions?

KP: I guess a few final ones what was your attitude towards Zionism and the potential state of Israel after the war? Was there more talk about ...

FFF: Well the talk was if nobody is welcome anywhere, let's find a place where at least they can live. They seem to be persecuted wherever they go and I find that you can only guess why, that maybe they're trained. They were all trained from being young that education is very important and are known as people over the book. It didn't matter what you read but you have to be literate and you have to read. When you read, you learn. So you try to do better that way. Like with my mother and father. My father, I mean they had nothing and even though he had to go to school at night, the education. He had another brother, there were three brothers. One was a lawyer and another one became a journalist, but they all went to college. That was the only way you could do anything. They came with nothing. In Europe, they weren't allowed to do certain things

except they would handle money and then when they handled money, then they were accused of being moneychangers, users and whatever. There was nothing left for them to do.

BF: My father was the first boy from the wrong side of the tracks to make it to Rutgers.

FFF: And he went on scholarship and he spent his life working for nothing for Rutgers because he was so grateful. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa, the Oratory Prize.

BF: And a bunch of other things.

FFF: He used to go up and down the street and collect money to buy books for Rutgers library.

KP: How did it feel to teach at Rutgers, to be a college teacher because you had gone to Douglass, which was NJC, now Douglass? You were teaching as part of Rutgers?

FFF: It was part of Rutgers, but the best part was everybody wanted an "A." What could I do to get an "A" and no behavior problems, it's unbelievable.

KP: You were shocked at that.

FFF: I was shocked and oh, I loved every minute of it. I loved those students and I still get letters all the time. I got jobs for some of the people. I got this gal I had who is from Bermuda and because she wasn't a citizen, she couldn't get her teaching license but she got a job in Bermuda. She is still teacher there and I would constantly get letters and we've been there twice. She had us over and been in her home. With each child, we had to get involved, Shinbone Alley in St. George's. The students were just so sweet and so wonderful. I think in all the years I failed only one and that was a young man who just didn't come to class. He wasn't interested. I had one gal who said, "I just can't do this exam." So I said, "Go home and then come back to my house. You are not going to fail this course." So she came and sat at this table and she did her final and she ended with a "B." I couldn't believe it. I just wouldn't let them fail, so they liked it.

BF: There were those that did not qualify as teachers.

FFF: Yes, well, so they got ... if they were really bad they got a "C." Who is going to hire somebody that got a "C" in Education, but we would find other ways. There is one gal, who was brilliant, who was teaching Spanish and was terrific in Spanish. She did her student teaching at Sayreville Junior High. It was so terrible that they wanted to fail her. She spent the whole time here, "Are you going to fail her? I mean didn't she learn something from you, the co-operating teacher?" Well, of course, she couldn't say she didn't learn anything from her so the girl gave her a "C." I finally said, "You know, you may not be a teacher, but you would make a wonderful lawyer." She said, "You know, it's funny. I always wanted to be a lawyer." So I said, "Why don't you take the law boards?" She said, "Well, I can't afford it." Her father had passed away and she needed to work. "Maybe you can get loans and let's see what happens." She took the law boards. This gal has been here every two weeks, this has been years. She was Class of '81,

you know what I mean? Anyway, to make a long story short, she got into Seton Hall Law School. She never took a note, brilliant, absolutely brilliant, photographic mind. Even in law school, never took a note. Passed the bar the first time. Because she had Spanish, she got a clerkship with a judge who needed somebody who could handle Spanish. She is second now in seniority in her office. She married one of the other lawyers in the office and she's a very successful lawyer.

BF: A tremendously successful.

FFF: Appellate cases only.

BF: An Appellate defense lawyer for an insurance company. When they've got a particularly tricky problem, they call her, mandatory.

FFF: She does the research and she's really very good.

BF: She's been published I don't know how many times.

FFF: So if they couldn't make it, we would find where their successes were and how to help them. This may not be your avenue, but maybe there's something else, and sometimes you hit it and they are successful. With this one she comes back constantly.

KP: She must be very appreciative.

FFF: Well, she didn't have any money and that couch was her bed for I don't know how long. She worried about getting just enough gas in the car to get to Sayreville. She would eat here and she still comes in. She goes to the Law Center, or somewhere near, then says, "What's in the ice box, what's in the refrigerator?" Some of them you keep hearing from and they become your friends, some of these students.

KP: In fact, I invite all the Alumni to the project. The students even invite them back. We are doing a newsletter for them.

FFF: Yes, that's a community.

KP: I'm not surprised.

FFF: I have to send gifts. That's another thing I go in and send gifts. There is one that got a job here at this high school as a Spanish teacher and she just had a baby. So I sent another baby gift, Maria Perez, a very sweet girl.

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask you?

FFF: A lot of other things, but we can't tell you.

BF: We can continue for another four minutes and we will be able to say that this has been going on for five hours.

FFF: Oh, really? Oh, golly.

BF: Are you setting a world record here?

KP: Oh, no.

FFF: I hope that you'll see Pat.

KP: I'm going to first double check to see if we've gotten her name because Barbara Tomblin did some of the Douglass women.

FFF: She wrote that story about being away and she writes so beautifully.

KP: I will definitely, if she has a contact with you, I will send her a letter.

FFF: I'm supposed to send something to Beth De Mauro, and I was going to send her this.

KP: Oh, okay.

FFF: Bob said it's in the computer, so if you want to take.

KP: I have a copy.

FFF: That's yours, okay. I'll get it out of the computer.

KP: Thank you very much.

FFF: For what?

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Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 6/20/00

Reviewed by Frieda Finklestein Feller 10/00