

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNETTE GREENBLATT

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mrs. Annette Greenblatt on October 6, 1999, in Vineland, New Jersey with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Stephanie Katz: Stephanie Katz.

SI: Mrs. Greenblatt, we would like to begin by asking you a few questions about your parents. Did both of your parents come from Philadelphia?

Annette Greenblatt: Yes, they did. They were both born in Philadelphia. My grandparents came from Austria, ... my father's parents, and my mother's parents came from Poland, from the *shtetel*, and they set up [in Philadelphia]. They came over as a young couple with two children, ended up with six children, and made a successful life for themselves here in this country.

SI: Was that your father's parents?

AG: That was my mother's parents. My father's parents did exactly the same. They had less children, they had five, but, my grandfather started ... a department store in West Philadelphia and it ended up supporting five families for many years, so, it was a large installation.

SI: What was the name of the department store?

AG: I.C. Schwarzman's; that was my father's name. ... No, the name of the institution there was Schwarzman's. My father, when he started business here, [it] was I.C. Schwarzman, but, it gives you an idea of the contribution that newcomers to this country can bring.

SI: Did you grow up knowing your grandparents?

AG: I grew up knowing one set, ... my mother's parents, and all of her sisters and brothers and [their] children. We would meet together every Sunday at my grandmother's house, so that we were all together. My father's father died when he was young, and I only knew my grandmother there, and we would spend Saturdays at her house with all the grandchildren, so that we had very close contact when we were young.

SI: Did they ever tell you about life in Europe?

AG: Oh, yes. I heard wonderful stories.

SI: Could you share a few with us?

AG: Sure. My grandmother was a very beautiful woman and, in Poland, which was conquered by Russia at that time, they were forcing all the Jewish men to go into the army for eighteen years. ... My grandfather was caught and was put in prison until they were ready to take him, and my grandmother used to bake cakes and cookies and take them to the prison guards and flirt with them. ... When they were ready to take my grandfather, the guards let him out, and so, the two of them took their two children and, in the middle of the night, left and worked their way

across to Marseilles, and my grandmother had brought with her all of the things, the linens, that she had sewn for her trousseau. ... When they got to Marseilles, they met friends, and the husband was distraught, because someone had robbed him of all his money, and he had four children and himself and his wife and ... no steamer tickets to get to the United States, and so, my grandmother took all [of] her linens and sold them and gave them money, so [that] they could come along with them. These are the kinds of stories I used to hear as a child.

SI: That is wonderful. Did they keep in touch with that part of the family?

AG: Yes. They moved close to each other and they were friends for years. That was a long time ago, but, they were friends for years. My mother hadn't been born then.

SI: What was the section of Philadelphia that they grew up in like?

AG: They started out in South Philadelphia, which is where all of the immigrants would come, and my grandparents decided they didn't want their children brought up among immigrants, they wanted them brought up among already established Americans, and so, they moved to North Fifth Street in Philadelphia. ... My grandfather was in many different businesses. He was a wonderful scholar and a terrible businessman and my grandmother ended up handling the businesses and trying to rescue them. So, it was an interesting life for the children.

SI: What kind of a scholar was he? Had he studied in Poland?

AG: Well, he was a Yiddish scholar and he was a *Torah* scholar, and, in those days, there was no greater honor than to spend your life as a scholar, and other people were responsible for taking care of you. He didn't spend his life, all of his life, as a scholar, but, he spent more of it than he should have studying instead of working.

SI: When was the family store, I.C. Schwarzman's, founded?

AG: Oh, my father's? Oh, I can tell you all about that, but, that was later.

SI: Okay.

AG: I have to tell you one more funny story about my grandfather first.

SI: Certainly.

AG: When we moved to Vineland, I was eight years old. We had lived in Philadelphia and my grandfather used to travel by train down to Cape May to collect rents for a cousin of his; that was one of his sources of income. ... He would always stop in Vineland. At that time, there were trains that serviced all the area, and he came [in] one day, and there was a bump in his coat pocket, and he lifted it out, and it was a puppy, and that became Pal, and that was our dog for nineteen years.

SI: Where in Philadelphia did you grow up?

AG: We were all in West Philadelphia. Our store was at 63rd and Vine Streets. At that time, it was an Italian and Jewish neighborhood. Today, it has changed to other ethnic groups.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit more about the store?

AG: Well, in 1932, which was at the heart of the Depression, my father's brothers disappeared from the store and left him with it, having him buy them out, and, consequently, he went bankrupt. ... When he went bankrupt, he paid back everything that had to be paid. He had three small children and the only money he had was 1,500 dollars that he could borrow on life insurance, because he'd been in the First World War. He'd been over in France, and so, with that 1,500 dollars and a little more [that] he scrounged up, we moved to Vineland. ... He opened up a small store and we had very little merchandise. So, I was eight, my brother was ten, [and] my younger brother was only four, so, he didn't get involved, but, we worked. We used to take the merchandise out of the boxes and put the empty boxes back on the wall, so [that] it would look like we had a lot of merchandise to sell, and my father used to get into our old car at four o'clock in the morning and drive to New York and pick up merchandise from brokers. He couldn't go to a wholesaler, 'cause you had to pay outright at a wholesale house, but, the brokers, who charged you more, allowed you time, a period for paying. ... At that time, there were no turnpikes, there were only very busy roads with a lot of traffic lights. It used to take him a good four hours each way and that was how he started in the business. He did exceedingly well and we moved to a larger store. ... He rebuilt it, and then, eventually, we moved again, and, this time, he really built a department store, with three other stores, which he rented, and he built an office building behind [it] and put in the two first elevators that were ever in Vineland. ... The kids used to come to ride the elevator and to watch it. I mean, they were absolutely [fascinated]. It was interesting how many customers were afraid to get in it, because they'd never seen an elevator and they didn't quite know ... how to handle it, but, we had a very beautiful store, I.C. Schwarzman's, and it was linens, and it was ladies' [garments], and it was men's accessories and shoes. ... [Do] you know where the Good Will Industry is now?

SK: Yes.

AG: That was our store, originally.

SK: Did you help out in the store very often?

AG: Yes. Growing up, I used to give up Christmas Dance at NJC, which is what it was called then, because that was our busy season and I would come home to work.

SK: What kinds of jobs did you do in the store?

AG: Oh, I was selling. I did advertising and I did buying. So, I was really involved in every aspect of it.

SI: I want to talk a little bit more about your childhood.

AG: Sure.

SI: Since your grandfather was a Yiddish scholar, was Yiddish spoken in your home?

AG: Unfortunately, no. My parents saved it for when they didn't want us to know what they were saying, [laughter] which was the usual thing at that time, because my parents were bilingual, but, I never [was]. I mean, I can understand [it] and I can pick out a few words, but, I'm ... certainly not conversant.

SI: What was it like to grow up in West Philadelphia? What were your friends like? What did you do for fun?

AG: I lived there until I was eight, and we used to have an old delivery truck for the store, and the delivery truck would take a gang of us children to school every day. We went to the Overbrook School and I can remember so distinctly us sitting in that truck, because it was a very steep hill, up 63rd Street, and I remember, he said to us, "The only way we'll get up the hill is if you all yell, 'Beat 'em and wink, beat 'em and wink,' the whole way up the hill," and that's what we did every day on the way to school.

SI: Did you know most of your friends through school or through the neighborhood?

AG: Neighborhood. My best girlfriend's last name was (McGonnicle?), Ricki McGonnicle, and I also had two cousins who lived right next door to us that we were close with, so that there were neighborhood friends and school friends both, and synagogue friends, because we went to synagogue.

SI: That is interesting. How religious was your family?

AG: Well, my parents were involved in building a very big Jewish center and synagogue on the corner of 63rd Street and Ludlow, and it had a swimming pool. I remember that so distinctly. They were very young, but, they were very much involved. They had met because they both taught Sunday school, and that's where they met before my father went overseas, and so, we have always been involved. ... The family is Conservative. ... I'm not at the synagogue frequently now, but, I am very Jewish, and, as we go on, you'll understand what I am saying, okay?

SI: Did your family keep a kosher kitchen?

AG: Yes, we always had a kosher kitchen. I always had a kosher kitchen, too, until I moved to New York at the age of fifty. So, it was a long time.

SK: Were most of your friends Jewish?

AG: Yes, yes. Oh, absolutely. As a matter-of-fact, when I was young here, I started an organization called Junior *Beth* (*Yehud?*), [of] which I was the president, and we made arrangements with Atlantic City and with Camden, with the community center in Camden, and we used to meet once a month, all of the young people together, because there weren't a whole lot in each area, but, when the three of us came together, we became very strong. ... I was responsible, to a great extent, for the organization of the young, Jewish high school students.

SK: Was that group similar to a BVYO?

AG: ... There were none of those things at the time.

SK: However, it was similar.

AG: Yes, yes.

SK: Okay.

SI: What do you remember about your early schooling, first, in Philadelphia, then, in Vineland?

AG: My schooling in Philadelphia, I really don't remember a great deal about it. I remember coming to Vineland and skipping twice, so, it must have been good schooling in Philadelphia, because I graduated at sixteen from high school.

SI: Was it a public school or a private school?

AG: Public school, at that time. Back in those days, there was no problem with the public schools, and that's where all of us attended and went right through.

SK: Were you involved in any clubs or have any hobbies in school?

AG: Oh, sure, of course.

SK: What did you do?

AG: When I was in first grade, I used to write plays and put them on in the class and we used to take the plays from one room to the other. I did *Alice in Wonderland*, I did *Peter Pan*. I had a wonderful time, so that I was always active and involved in school. In high school, I was in the Dramatic Club, I was in the Spanish Club. I don't remember what else, but, I was also very busy with Jewish activities at that time.

SI: Before the Great Depression, did your family ever travel around or go on vacation?

AG: No.

SI: What about later?

AG: No. The big thing to do, in those days, if you had a car, which was most unusual, was to get into the car on a hot night and ride with the windows open, to cool off, because there was no air conditioning. So, that was the extent of travel [for me]. My father's parents went back to Austria aboard a very fancy ship, just to go back and see their roots, and they bought some very beautiful crystal pieces, some of which I have, that they brought back with them on board [the] ship.

SI: When did they go back?

AG: Before I was born, and I'm seventy-four, so, it was a good while ago. That's why it was so unusual, because people really didn't travel in those days.

SI: What were your favorite subjects in school?

AG: Well, I was in [the] college ... preparatory [course], and I loved English, and I found that very challenging. I hated chemistry and physics. I squeaked myself through them, but, not happily. That was really pretty much it. ... History has always fascinated me. I was a history minor in college.

SI: Even though you were more involved in English and history at the time, did you feel that there were equal opportunities for women in the sciences?

AG: No. The point is, at that time, you really didn't think about it, because it was not an issue that had been raised, and, furthermore, I was always fairly assertive, so, I didn't have the feeling. ... I may have felt anti-Semitism, but, I never felt anti-woman, that I couldn't accomplish something because I was a woman, but, then, I didn't reach ... to go into law or to go into a ... medical school. They weren't really my interests and I was much more of a volunteer, providing service, than I was looking for a specific profession.

SK: What is the first anti-Semitic incident that you remember?

AG: Well, I remember very clearly that the Ku Klux Klan marched in Vineland. They had a stronghold in Bridgeton, and they marched here, and, also, they burned crosses. When I applied to NJC, I was rejected, and my English teacher, whose name was Jane (Beakley?), at the time, was so infuriated that she went up to the school to speak to the admissions officer and told him that she knew why I hadn't been accepted, and that it was a state school, and that he had no right to do that, and that's how I went to NJC. So, that was very blatant anti-Semitism, right within the school system.

SI: Do you remember any other incidents? I have been told that events such as the Klan march would not have been looked down upon by most people at the time

AG: ... Well, this town was run by an organization called the Mechanics, which was very much like the Ku Klux Klan, and it was strictly a White-Protestant community, and the Jews and the

Catholics, the Italians, were very close, and we finally succeeded in outvoting [them] and changing that. I think Johnny (Gatone?) his name was, was the first Italian mayor and Mr. (Gassel?) was a Jewish mayor, which would have been unheard of before that time. So, it was something that was in the air, but, it really didn't affect me, you know, tremendously, or leave any scars, or anything like that.

SI: Were your parents politically active?

AG: My father was quite amazing. When we came to Vineland, there had never been a Jew that was president of the Chamber of Commerce and he became president. There had never been a Jew elected to the Board of Education, because it was an election, and he was elected, and he eventually became the president. So, he was very much politically involved. My mother was very involved in Jewish causes in the various Jewish organizations. She was president of the Sisterhood and she came up with creative ideas for the synagogue, for fund raising, and was very much involved in that aspect. ... My father was president of the synagogue and ... chairman of the building committee when the current synagogue was built. So, they were both active in Jewish events and he was also active in the community.

SI: Do you know what kind of opposition he faced in his endeavors?

AG: He faced a lot of opposition. My father was not a good speaker. He was a wonderful writer. ... When I was in camp as a child, my whole bunk would wait for my father's letters to come, because they always had stories and they were always delightful, and, yet, he was an extremely shy man when you spoke to him. So, everything that he did was a tremendous effort on his part.

SI: When did you go to camp?

AG: My parents both worked in the store and, consequently, in the summertime, [since] they had three young children, when my mother was in the store, from nine to six, the same as my father, ... just having somebody in the house with us in the summertime wasn't good enough, because we couldn't go swimming, we couldn't ... have any activities, and so, they sent us to summer camp. ... I went to camp from the time I was twelve. The first four years, they couldn't afford it, but, [I went] from the time I was twelve, and then, I became a counselor, and, during the Second World War, when I was in college, I was a counselor at camp.

SI: Was this strictly a Jewish camp?

AG: Yes, yes.

SI: Which organization were they sponsored by?

AG: The first camp I went to was Camp (Redo?), which was run by the Y, but, after that, they were privately owned and managed.

SI: Were the children at the camp mostly from rural areas, like Vineland, or were they from urban areas, also?

AG: They were from all over, from as far as Pittsburgh. We were up in the Poconos, and so, they came from Philadelphia. ... I have friends today in Philly from camp.

SI: What did you notice about this intermingling of children from several different backgrounds and areas?

AG: There was no problem of integration whatsoever. I mean, there weren't little cliques. ... Well, my brother was there, and he and I have been very close, he's two years older than I, and everything we do, we do together. We did at that time. I wouldn't go out on a date unless he had a date and went with us, also, [laughter] because he wasn't as socially aware as I was and I didn't want to leave him behind. ...

SI: Were your parents Democrats?

AG: Yes, very much so.

SI: What did they think of Franklin Roosevelt?

AG: Well, we all didn't know enough not to, so, we all absolutely adored Franklin Roosevelt. The sun rose and set on him, and he was, we thought, our guardian and our savior, not knowing what he had done to the ship, the *St. Louis*, refusing it to come ... [to the United States] and they all went into the camps, or the fact that he allowed the State Department to refuse visas to people who had perfectly legitimate reasons to get them, because the State Department was so totally anti-Semitic. ... They had the meeting in Bermuda, and no one, no one spoke up for the Jews. They were all happy that they were gonna disappear. That's what they were looking for. So, once I knew that, I no longer adored him, but, until that time, [I did]. ... I remember when he died. ... I was working in the store, and I walked outside, and it had been a beautiful day, and, all of a sudden, the sky was completely gray, and there was a strong wind blowing, and the trees were swaying, and I kept saying, "Everybody is mourning, everyone is mourning," but, he did a great deal of good for this country. I wouldn't deny that in the least bit. ... He was really the first one who brought a sense of democracy, in caring for the underdog, but, that's my opinion.

SI: Do you remember Al Smith's campaign in 1928?

AG: Oh, I remember Willkie.

SI: Wendell Willkie?

AG: Yeah, and how I hoped so hard [for him], even though he was a Republican, supposedly. I voted for him and hoped that he would make it, and then, of course, he died shortly after the campaign, but, that was the one time in my life that I turned Republican, but, he was such a man of the world and truly humble and charismatic. Who else do I remember? I remember how

happy I was when Dewey lost, especially after all the papers said he won, and I have voted in every single election, I have voted in every single primary, and I have voted when it's the board of education. I just feel that it is my moral responsibility. I may not always be happy with this country, but, it's my country.

SK: Was politics discussed in your home?

AG: Yes, and among friends.

SI: How was Zionism viewed by your family and your community? What did they think of the crises faced by Jews in Europe, first, in Russia, and then, in Germany?

AG: ... My parents brought over family from Austria and from Hungary. We were ardent Zionists; that leads into my career and my life, professionally. I started the first women's division in Vineland back in 1948. I knew that the men were collecting funds, and I figured the women should, too, and I got a group of us to go from door-to-door with little boxes, asking, and we had, as you know, so many survivors that settled here, and [they] had very little, but, all of them managed to give you a few quarters or a few something, and we started a campaign that way and got people involved. Later, when the community decided that we should have a federation in Vineland, ... my friends came to me and they said, "You're the most likely one. You're the one who's been involved and has been promoting. ... Would you become a professional and would you take over and start a federation?" and it was a marvelous opportunity. I got a salary of 4,000 dollars a year, and I made an annual contribution of 2,000 dollars, and I worked eight days a week, [laughter] but, by the time I left Vineland, we had the first Holocaust program in the high school in the State of New Jersey. Is it still there? Do you know?

SK: I do not know.

SI: When did you set up that program?

AG: I don't really remember years. I've been in New York for twenty-one years. I was the Federation director from '69, [which] is when we started, to '78. So, it was for eighteen years and it was probably about five, six years into my time that we began with that. It had been started in Cleveland, and I invited the woman who started it in Cleveland to come to Vineland, and talk to us, and tell us how it was done, and then, we spoke to the Toby (Berkowitz?). Well, it's Toby (Goldstein?). I don't know if you know her or her children or anything. Anyway, she was very active with it, and we got the school system to agree to have the course, and (Dovehammer?), who ... was the first teacher, and we did so many things. On *Yom Ha-Shoah*, we had invited the high school children to come with sleeping bags to the synagogue, and we had a memorial in the synagogue that was contributed by Miles (Lerman?) for the Holocaust, and the kids came with their sleeping bags, and we had gotten the names of 10,000 children who had been lost, and, all night long, survivors came in and sat on the floor with them and told them stories, and the kids said *Kaddush*. ... They kept reading the names of the children and it was a very powerful experience for the kids.

SK: Was it just the Jewish children?

AG: Yes, just the Jewish children. Back in those days, you weren't reaching out beyond. You were hoping that the Jewish children understood what happened. I started the newspaper that is still in town, the Jewish paper. We started a senior citizens club, ... which is still going strong. We had the joint Hebrew school, which we still have, and ... it was wonderful, and our campaign went from 75,000 dollars to, during the Yom Kippur War, ... what did we raise? ... well over a hundred, no, 300,000 dollars, over 300,000 dollars. ... At that time, I had a teletype machine in my home coming from New York with the latest information and people came in all day and all night long, bringing any money that they picked up.

SK: Were they donations?

AG: Yeah, it was all donations, and that's when we went up to such a large amount.

SI: May I ask you a few more questions about your childhood?

AG: Sure.

SI: Your father served during World War I.

AG: Yes.

SI: Did he ever talk about his experiences?

AG: He was not fighting. Fortunately, he was in, what do you call it, when you're giving out ... uniforms? Not maintenance ...

SI: Tailoring?

AG: Yeah. Well, not tailoring. There's another word.

SI: Quartermaster?

AG: Yeah, quartermaster, that's it, that's what he was. Because of the store and his experience, they used him in that way. So, he was fortunate enough not to be at the front.

SI: Was he drafted?

AG: No, he volunteered.

SI: He stayed in the United States during the war.

AG: No, he was in France.

SI: Okay.

AG: He was in France doing this.

SI: Did he ever tell you any stories about France?

AG: No, no. I guess he couldn't tell them in front of my mother. [laughter]

SI: Your parents were married shortly after he returned.

AG: Yes.

SI: How did the Great Depression affect your store in Vineland?

AG: Well, tremendously, because my father came down with practically no money to start the store, and it was a terrible, terrible struggle to get the debts paid and to be able to feed his children and clothe them, and it was a very, very hard first three or four years. After that, it eased up, but, my brother and I were just talking about it. ... He said [that] he found an old box with sales receipts in it from when we first moved here and he said, some days, he made twelve dollars in the store, staying there from nine o'clock in the morning 'til eight o'clock at night, and how tough it was.

SI: Some people whose parents owned shops during the Depression have told us about the money-saving techniques their parents thought up and used, such as turning off the lights until a customer came in. How did your father make ends meet?

AG: Well, every way that you possibly could. He was always very conservative with spending, except for merchandise and things that he absolutely had to have, and he always did his own advertising when we were young, but, he brought a man down from Philadelphia to do the windows, so that the store would look different than the other stores. People would want to come in. He was a wonderful merchant and that man moved to Vineland, 'cause he fell in love with the town (George Speaker?).

SI: Did anyone else ever work in the store?

AG: Oh, sure. They probably had about fifteen employees in our last store, or more.

SI: How did the Great Depression affect Vineland?

AG: Oh, everyone was affected by it, absolutely. The town was so different than it is today. Saturday was the big day, when all the farmers and everyone else that lived on the outskirts came into the city with their children. This was "The City" and they would be walking up and down the sidewalks, and looking in the stores, and buying an ice cream cone in the 5&10, Woolworth's. You used to get three scoops for a nickel. ... We used to keep our store open on Saturday night,

until the last customer left. It could be ten o'clock, it could be eleven o'clock, it didn't matter, as long as there was a chance that someone would still walk in. ... Everyone did, [kept] your store open. Now, it's "Deadsville" on Landis Avenue, anytime, but, that was a very different world. A lot of the stores had porches in front of them at that time and a step or so going up, like you see [in] the western towns.

SK: Did you usually go to Landis Avenue with your family or friends?

AG: No, we didn't, 'cause we were working. I can ... remember, one time, we used to sell different shaped and sized little scarves that people used to put on their furniture, on the back of the sofa and on the arms, and it was woven and made in Hungary or someplace. ... They sent a costume along when they sent the merchandise, and so, I was dressed up in this costume and I stood outside giving out pamphlets.

SI: Did your family ever make use of any of the New Deal programs, such as the CCC?

AG: No, no. [The] CCC had a camp at Parvin State Park. It had been a prisoner of war camp during the war, and then, they converted it to a CCC [camp], so that there were CCC people around, but, we were never in that dire straits, that we had to reach out for that.

SI: Okay. When you were looking at colleges, why did you choose NJC?

AG: Because my brother was at Rutgers and I wanted to be near him, and one of his fraternity brothers had already invited me. They saw my picture and they invited me to a house party weekend. So, I knew a lot of the boys and my best friend, who became my sister-in-law, and I roomed together. ...

SK: Did you live in the dorms?

AG: Yes.

SK: Did you live in the dorms for all four years?

AG: Well, the first time we were there, is it Whittier? Is it still there?

SK: I do not think so.

AG: Probably not. They were small houses.

SI: Were they in the Horseshoe?

AG: Yeah. No, not in the Horseshoe. They were beyond it.

SI: Okay.

AG: And then, the last year, I lived at Jamison.

SI: Was there a reason why you and your brothers all attended school in New Brunswick?

AG: Yes, because it was near home and because it wasn't expensive. It cost 300 dollars, or 385 dollars, for my dorm and my admission and it included meals.

SI: Did you apply for any scholarships, such as the Governor's Scholarship?

AG: I was rejected at first, so, it would be kind of hard.

SI: Okay. When were you notified?

AG: Very shortly after I applied.

SI: When your English teacher protested, did you discover then that it was because of the Jewish quotas?

AG: All I know is, she came home and she told me, "Don't worry, dear," and that was enough for me.

SI: Was she a NJC graduate? Did she know people at the college?

AG: No, no, but, she was quite a woman.

SI: During the 1930s and early 1940s, did you ever hear anything about what was going on in Europe through your synagogue?

AG: You're talking about the Holocaust?

SI: Yes.

AG: No.

SI: Did you know anything about it?

AG: [We] really did not hear and were utterly shocked. I guess I was very protected, because I was at college and where would I hear at college? and there happened to be a terrible rabbi, who smoked on the pulpit on Friday nights, ... in the synagogue, and I went a couple of times, and I couldn't sit in his presence, so that I wasn't involved during the year with that. I would go home for all the Jewish holidays and be in my synagogue at home, and our rabbi had gone to the service, but, we didn't have a rabbi, so that there was no one who might have picked up the information and given it to us. Eventually, before the end of the war, we certainly knew what was happening and we were beginning to understand what the United States State Department had done, too.

SK: When did you find out about the Holocaust?

AG: I don't really remember that, to be honest. ... I was out of college.

SK: Do you remember how you found out?

AG: When I found out about it, I was back in Vineland, at the time when we realized what was going on, and we wrote protest letters and did whatever we could.

SI: Did ... Oh, I am sorry.

AG: Oh, I was just going to say, which really didn't seem to matter much.

SI: When you were living in Vineland, did you know of any German-Jewish immigrants settling in the area?

AG: Yes, yes. I graduated in '41 from high school and there were several people in my class who had come over within the past couple of years, one whose father was a rabbi, Rabbi (Eisenstein?), and his daughters were in high school. There were several people who had done that and had talked about having escaped. So, from them, but, they didn't know about the camps then. It was before that was really known.

SI: Did they talk about their experiences?

AG: Oh, certainly, how terrible it was and how lucky they were to get out.

SI: What did they do once they settled in? Did they buy farms?

AG: Well, no, because her father was a rabbi. So, he was a rabbi here, but, most of the survivors, and we had about 300 families, as you probably heard, come in this neighborhood, ... came because the Jewish Poultry Society purchased farms for them, and so, all of a sudden, ... the lawyers and the doctors and the engineers became farmers, but, at least it got them into the country. ... Many of them went back to their own professions, moved to the cities. ... The perfect example is Miles Lerman, who, today, is president of the Holocaust [Society?] and who has done such a tremendous amount in the Jewish world, and many of them have been very active.

SI: Our project actually interviewed the daughter of one of the men who was in the Jewish Poultry Society.

AG: Oh, really? That should have been fascinating.

SI: Yes. One of the men she met was a Dr. Schwietzer, who was a friend of Albert Einstein, so, she met Dr. Einstein. Moving on to your days at NJC, you entered college in September of '41, correct?

AG: '41.

SI: You were there for only a short time before America was plunged into the war.

AG: War was declared on December 7th.

SI: How did the campus change after December 7th?

AG: The campus didn't change tremendously, because it was a girls' school. If it had been a mixed school, then, there would have been a great deal of difference, but, because it was a girls' school, there wasn't the great sense [urgency]. I mean, we were all tremendously aware of the war and terribly concerned about it once it happened. I remember how we heard about it.

SI: How did you hear about it?

AG: ... My brother, and my future sister-in-law, and a boy I was pinned to, and I, and another couple, we visited the other couple for the weekend in the girls' dormitory and the boys' dormitory, back in those days, and we were sitting and watching a football game, or listening to a football game, that's right, not watching, and, all of a sudden, the announcer broke in and said, "Pearl Harbor has been bombed," and that was how we first heard about it.

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

AG: ... The controversial story is whether they were deliberately not prepared, to be sure that we went into the war, or whether it was actually mistakes along the way that caused it, but, the campus was very much concerned. As a matter-of-fact, I had a very funny experience. Johnson & Johnson has big factories in New Brunswick, and they came to the campus, and they gave us this big story about how desperately we're needed to make cancer bandages and ... to help them in the war effort, and they would send a bus in the morning at six o'clock, and pick us up, and bring us back at nine o'clock for classes, and I felt so noble. Years later, when I was reading about strikes and the labor movement, I realized that there was a strike going on at Johnson & Johnson, and they were trying to become organized, and they used us to keep the plant going, so [that] they could keep the union out.

SI: Our project has interviewed several women who volunteered at Johnson & Johnson. However, this is the first that we have heard about the NJC women being used as scabs. When did you discover the truth about this situation?

AG: Oh, it could have been twenty years ago, long, long after it happened.

SI: When you were a freshman at NJC, were you hazed at all?

AG: I had a bicycle at school to get around, and my roommate had a bike, and we used to have to ride wearing a feather up the back and a pouch on the side, and, if a senior stopped us, you had to get off your bike, and get down on your knees, and pick up (paw paws?), they called them, which was really nothing, but, this was just their way of hazing. So, I remember that, and I had to wear a sign, front and back, with the name on it, but, it was fun. You know, nobody minded it. You just kept thinking, "Well, next year, I'll be doing it to somebody else." [laughter] That was the only consolation. I loved the school, I really did. I had some excellent professors, particularly, I think, something that has really affected my life was a course on China and Japan [with] Doctor ...

SI: Hickman?

AG: Yeah.

SI: She was a very influential professor.

AG: She was a close friend of Franklin Roosevelt and she was the most fabulous professor. ... Really, since that course, I've had a tremendous interest in Chinese art, Japanese art, and we have collected some (UPOE?), which are their original prints, from the 1700s, and that is my absolute fondest memory. Then, I had an English professor in my freshman year, and I cannot remember his name, he was the most devastating, sarcastic, wonderful professor, who tore everything you did apart with such ease and with such humor that you really learned a great deal about not being flowery and learning that, ... when you write a sentence, it should have content, but, those are my major memories.

SI: Did you get to know Professor Hickman at all?

AG: Is she still alive?

SI: I think she died in a car accident shortly after the war. I know that she was very involved with the United Nations when it was being organized and founded.

AG: Yes, yes.

SI: I think she actually died while travelling to a United Nations function, ironically. Were you aware of any pro-United Nations groups at NJC?

AG: Yes, very much so, and involved with them, too.

SI: What was your level of involvement?

AG: Peripheral, but, [I] attended assemblies and meetings and stuff and, if they wanted cards taken or something like that, I would always do it.

SI: It seems as if you had a greater degree of awareness of what was going on in the world than most NJC students.

AG: Yes.

SI: Were you aware of what was going on in Europe during the war?

AG: I had that from lots of angles, because my friend was in France and followed with the troops all the way into Germany, and he had been the editor of *Targum*.

SI: What was his name?

AG: Irv Pape.

SI: Oh, I have heard of him.

AG: ... He would write the most wonderful letters describing the country, describing what was happening, and so, I had a great sense of what was going on, and I remember one funny thing he said. He said, "You cannot imagine how many French women are pushing little black babies in their carriages and telling everyone they have American Indians." [laughter] They thought they did.

SI: Did you correspond with anyone else?

AG: Oh, sure, to friends.

SI: Did you write to anyone in a different theater?

AG: Well, I switched boyfriends. My future husband was in India for three years, and so, I learned a great deal. First, he went through Burma, and then, he ended up in India and Calcutta, and he was in the Signal Corps, and he was the head of their spy [unit], you know, deciphering messages and stuff, and I heard a great deal from him ... about the Asian war. ... Even my ex-[boy]friend, we kept writing. So, I heard from both fronts.

SI: That is very interesting. Did you ever receive any mail that was censored?

AG: Oh, yeah.

SI: Did the letters have little holes in them?

AG: Not holes, whole sections cut out.

SI: Really? [laughter]

AG: Yes, there was also something called V-mail then, which was one sheet of paper that you folded up and covered over, and it would supposedly travel faster.

SK: Did you have a lot of interaction with Rutgers College students?

AG: ... Well, I went to Rutgers College for summer school one year. I was accelerating, and the first year I went to Rutgers, and the second year I went to Columbia, and then, I transferred to Columbia for about six weeks, in merchandising, and I found that everybody in my class was a man who was in business, and, after six weeks, I went back to NJC, made up six weeks [of] work, and came out with my best grades, [laughter] because of what I knew was behind me, but, in the fraternity house, there was not only a great deal of talking, but, less and less of these young men. ... One of the young men that I had dated when I was in high school was the first casualty. He was shot down over Romania. So, it was a very real thing to us.

SI: Was he a Rutgers College student?

AG: [Yes].

SI: What was his name?

AG: I don't remember. I just remember it happening and he was one of the first students to die.

SI: One of the goals of this project is to write a book memorializing all of the Rutgers and NJC students who died during World War II. I believe that I may have heard that story before, about a man shot down over Romania.

AG: Oh, well, then, you may have the name.

SI: Perhaps.

AG: 'Cause, I was going to say, I could ask my brother and try to find out for you, but, you have it already.

SI: I know that NJC offered several courses, such as drafting, that were related to the war effort. Were you aware of these courses?

AG: No.

SK: Did you ever feel unsafe around campus?

AG: No, no.

SI: How did the presence of Camp Kilmer affect campus life?

AG: It didn't really.

SI: No?

AG: No.

SI: Were there more GIs on campus?

AG: If there were, I wasn't conscious of it, 'cause I had my own interests. So, the girls may have been dating them and I just wouldn't have known about it.

SI: Did the college ever organize any dances or social events for the GIs?

AG: Not that I was conscious of.

SI: I read in your survey that you worked as a Red Cross aide. Was this while you were still at college?

AG: That was after. I never finished. I had gone to summer school for two summers, and I had maybe about four credits left to go, and I thought I was getting married in September, and he ended up going overseas. ... By then, it was too late to go back to school, and so, I started working in the store, and I never completed it, so that I was working from the time I was, like, eighteen.

SI: You were very young when you attended college, correct?

AG: Yes, sixteen.

SI: Did your age affect you in any way?

AG: No.

SI: Were you more ...

AG: Shy, no, no. Of course, I've been to camp, and I had had experiences with people outside of Vineland, so that I was comfortable being with other people, and, ... also, my years with Junior *Beth (Yehud?)* and all the other activities had made it [easier for me]. ... My father had made all three of us participate in public speaking contests in high school, so, we all had that training, too. Because he was so uncomfortable, he wanted to make sure that we weren't, so that I really was not affected, but, when I came back to Vineland, I immediately signed up at the hospital to assist [them], because they were short of nurses. ... I used to go there about four times a week, and they would save all the dirty jobs for us, like the bed pans and the back rubs, but, it was a great experience, and then, I used to drive down every Sunday. [They] would take a busload of us down to Atlantic City, because all the hotels had been turned into hospitals for the soldiers. There were no hotels in ... Atlantic City then, other than hospitals, and we would go and entertain

the soldiers and just sit and talk with them, whatever we could. So, I was involved in that way, also.

SI: What kinds of injuries did you see in the hospital?

AG: Everything, everything, terrible. It was very depressing. It was a very hard thing to do, because it's much easier to turn your back and not see, but, we went down.

SK: Were the volunteers mostly your age or were they older?

AG: No, it was a mixture.

SK: A mixture?

AG: I was probably the youngest, but, not by that much.

SI: Was there a Hillel on campus when you were a student or did that come later?

AG: No, they did not have a Hillel, Douglass. I don't know if they do today or not. ...

SI: You mentioned that you knew a rabbi on campus.

AG: Yeah, no. I was involved with the Jewish fraternity.

SI: Which fraternity was that?

AG: Sammy.

SI: Okay.

SK: Were you in a sorority?

AG: No, there were no sororities at Douglass. There were just fraternities at Rutgers.

SI: What do you remember about the ceremonies at NJC, such as Campus Night at Antilles? I have not interviewed that many NJC alumnae, but, I have heard several stories about the ceremonies. For example, one night, they filled Antilles Field with girls dressed up like gypsy dancers.

AG: That didn't happen at that time, that I remember. I remember chapel very well.

SI: Could you please tell us about chapel?

AG: [I remember] having to go to chapel and not enjoying it, particularly, but, that was a responsibility [for] everyone who went, which is also something that shouldn't have been,

because it was a religious ceremony and it was a state school, but, that's the way it was at that time. I also remember the beautiful home that they used for receptions and meetings, with pillars. ... I don't even know if it's still there, but, it was very lovely, and we were invited to tea and invited there for other occasions. I really haven't thought about it in a long time. I remember the post office, 'cause everybody would run there to see what was available. We had ceremonies. Of course, there was the Christmas dance, which I didn't attend, but, there were other dances that I certainly did that were great fun. ...

SI: Do you remember any concerts or pageants?

AG: I don't really remember.

SI: Were there any joint activities with Rutgers College?

AG: No.

SI: Do you remember any of the speakers that addressed the student body?

AG: Not particularly.

SI: No?

AG: It's a lot of years ago.

SI: I am not sure if Eleanor Roosevelt came to NJC during your time there. Do you remember her giving a speech?

AG: You know what? I think you're absolutely right. She came and spoke and that was a wonderful experience, and then, she came to Vineland. ...

SI: Oh, really?

AG: To speak for bonds. She used to speak for Israel Bonds a great deal, and she came to Vineland, and I ended up sitting with her, and it was a wonderful experience, and I could tell her [that] I'd already heard her. [laughter]

SI: Where were you sitting with her?

AG: It was at the synagogue.

SI: Oh.

AG: In the auditorium.

SI: While your opinion of Franklin Roosevelt has obviously changed, has your opinion of her changed at all?

AG: Only for the better, always.

SI: NJC women often talk about how professors arranged to have refugees brought over from Europe. I understand that the Spanish Department was mostly made up of Spanish Republicans who fled after Franco's victory. Do you remember seeing or hearing anything about these refugees?

AG: No, no, I really don't [remember that], and, well, I wasn't there. That was in '38. I didn't go until '41, so, I would have missed that.

SI: I think that they were still at NJC at that time.

AG: Yeah, they may have still been there, but, I wouldn't have known their resource, where they came from. ...

SI: All right.

AG: After a few years, they would be speaking English, and I would not [know], unless I were a Spanish major or something, and they were involved in that department. I would not have known.

SI: Were you able to take classes outside of your major?

AG: Yes.

SI: Which classes did you take?

AG: Well, I told you about the China [class]. I took economics courses. ... Well, I was a history minor. That was, probably, primarily, it. ... I took several courses in economics and the history courses that interested me.

SK: Were many women enrolled in the economics courses?

AG: No, no. They weren't crowded. They were not full classes.

SK: Was it mainly men or women in the economics classes.

AG: It couldn't be men, because it was a women's college.

SI: I have heard that, every once in awhile, a man would take a course at NJC.

AG: Not in those days. That's a newer development, maybe since they changed their name to Douglass.

SI: Do you remember Dean Boddie or Dean Corwin?

AG: I remember Dean Boddie. I remember both of them, but, not from close association. I was not particularly involved. I was not active in that way at campus.

SI: I have been told that there was a large contrast between both women, that Dean Corwin was a Northern liberal and Dean Boddie was a Southern conservative.

AG: I probably ... knew it very well at the time, but, it's not something that stayed with me.

SI: What kind of relationships did you form with your classmates?

AG: I have friends from campus that I'm still friendly with. My ex-roommate is no longer my sister-in-law, after twenty-five years, but, I have another friend, Bea Robin, who's very active in the alumni association, and she and Naomi Best roomed together, and we were ... inseparable, the four of us, and then, there were seniors, in my freshman year, that we just adored. ... There were two young women from Northern New Jersey, Stephanie, I don't remember her last name, and Roz, someone, whose husband eventually became the mayor of Bayonne, who we were very friendly with on campus. There were lots of people that we intermingled with and everything, but, it's a lot of years and I don't remember a whole lot of names.

SI: Were you still working in your family's store when the war ended?

AG: Once my perspective husband came back, ... we were married and he went into the store with my father. ... I no longer worked there, except at Christmastime. Wives were not allowed. I had three brothers that were involved, and they didn't want any disharmony or anything, and they felt that was the easiest way. So, I became very active in many activities. A friend and I started UNICEF in Vineland in the school system. We got all of the men's service organizations to agree to drive the children and they went out and collected for UNICEF. We had regular routes set up and everything. We had done a great deal of survey work in advance, and then, they all came back to one school and had doughnuts and cider for a treat afterwards, and that was the beginning of UNICEF. I don't know if they're still doing it, but, for many years, they followed that. So, I did that in Vineland, and I served on a committee that Governor Kean appointed for integration in the school system, finding a way to create and accomplish integration without too much ... disruption. ... We started with the middle school program, ... with fourth and fifth grades, all the children coming together, and, until that time, staying in their neighborhoods. I was very active in the Sisterhood at the synagogue. I was the first woman elected to the board of directors. I served as the state chairman for women, ... I'm sorry, the South Jersey chairman, ... for the Women's Conservative Organization, which was called [the] Women's League, and I chaired the women's campaign for UJA. So, I was busy. Although I was not working, I was doing a great deal of other things that affected peoples lives, and, when my younger son left for college, several friends asked me to become the executive director and to form a federation here.

We never had one and that's when that started. ... I told you about the programs and things that developed from that. So, I did that for thirteen years, and then, my marriage dissolved, and I went looking, for the first time in my life, for a job, and ... I went to five different federations to apply, four federations ... [and] National United Jewish Appeal, and I was accepted in all of them, which was wonderful for my morale. ... Of course, with a chance to go to National UJA, and be in New York, and be close to my family still, that was what I took. ... I served there from 1978 to 1992, as the national chairman, national director of women for the United Jewish Appeal, and I was, once again, the first woman that was appointed as an officer of the organization. I was an assistant vice-president. They had no choice. The world had changed, and [the] federations were incorporating women, and [the] UJA was not, so, I was the one who was picked, but, it was a very prestigious, exciting thing to have happen, even though I knew why it happened.

SI: Did you meet with any internal resistance from the men in the UJA?

AG: No, no, because they all knew it had to happen.

SI: Was the integration board that you served on only for Vineland or was it for all of Cumberland County?

AG: No, it was for the Vineland public schools.

SI: Okay.

AG: We were setting up a model that could be duplicated in other areas of the state, if it was acceptable.

SI: Was Vineland a very segregated area at the time?

AG: Yes. It was segregated mostly because of location, ... not necessarily deliberate, but, because ... the groups lived, as you know, in different areas, and that was the reason for it.

SI: When you were growing up in Vineland, did you know any black families?

AG: Oh, yeah. We used to have dancing at lunch hour in the gym, and the black girls and the white men, white boys, you know, if she's a terrific dancer, he'd go over and ask her to dance, so that I was not conscious of black and white in high school at all. It was a very good relationship at that time among all of us. I don't know how the black people felt, if they really felt accepted, but, as far as I was concerned, [they were]. As a matter-of-fact, it's an aside from all of this, but, when my younger son was in fourth grade in school, he came home in beginning of September to tell me [that] he had the most terrific teacher. ... Each student had to take a turn bringing in news from the newspaper and give ... an announcement over the loud speaker, and, you know, [this was] interesting them in world events, and politics, and all kinds of things. ... I had the shock of my life when I went to school on parents' night to find out that he had a black teacher and he had never even thought to say, "And my teacher is black," because it didn't matter. It just mattered

that he was good, and that was the attitude we've always had in our home, and that was the attitude that I felt in high school.

SI: Did this incident with the African-American teacher occur in the 1950s or 1960s?

AG: Was he what?

SI: Did this happen in the 1950s or 1960s?

AG: My son was ... born in, one's '52 and the other is '48, so, he was about ten years old when that happened, '58, yeah.

SI: So, this happened at little bit before the Civil Rights movement became widespread.

AG: That's right, before Martin Luther King.

SI: You mentioned that your family was in New York and that is why ...

AG: No, my family was in Vineland. ... One of the places that I had interviewed was Palm Beach and another one was Kansas City, so, compared to those, New York was very much closer.

SI: That is why you moved there. In the post-war period, what kind of work did you do with Holocaust survivors who were emigrating to the United States?

AG: A great deal, a very great deal in the federation. As a matter-of-fact, until we formed our federation, the survivors would not allow anyone other than a survivor to come to [the] *Yom Ha-Shoah* services. They held them themselves, and it was secretive, and it was their thing, and I succeeded in convincing them how important it was that the whole community be conscious and be part of it, and, eventually, that's what happened. So, I was very much involved with them.

SI: Was the Cumberland County Federation focused mostly on South Jersey or were you raising money for survivors all over the world?

AG: The federation, when I was there, about eighty-five percent of our money went to [the] United Jewish Appeal to go overseas and to provide for Europe, and for Israel, and wherever Jews were endangered. I think the percentage is much less today. I think that over fifty percent is probably kept here in the community and the balance goes overseas. That's a trend all over the country.

SK: What did you do with the money that you kept here?

AG: With the money that we kept here, we printed the newspaper, we ran programs for the elderly, we had children[']s youth programs, we supported the schools, so that the money was used, and we ran an office.

SI: Earlier, we discussed the Ku Klux Klan march in Vineland. Did anything like that happen after the war?

AG: Yes; I was involved. The Ku Klux Klan became very active in Bridgeton, and they were threatening to have a march from Vineland to Millville, and we were able to negotiate, between the police department and us, and some of the church groups that were involved, we all worked together, and we kept them from getting a permit. So, it didn't happen and that was probably ... in the '70s.

SI: I am surprised that it happened that recently. What about bias on a person-to-person level?

AG: On a person-to-person level, I don't think there has ever been a serious anti-Semitic problem here in Vineland. I mean, I can remember having a bus ride from New York and riding beside one of the (Durains?), who was a prominent family in Vineland at the time, and he didn't know who I was, and it was during the war, and he's proceeding to tell me that it's the Jews' fault that there's a war. So, to answer back doesn't make any difference, but, you answer back, but, that's the only experience that really stands out in my mind. Oh, one other ...

SI: Okay.

AG: We had gone to Massachusetts, to Cape Cod, and stayed in a very lovely motel early in the year, ... in May, and my brother and sister-in-law and another couple were going up in July, and I gave them the name of the motel, and they called them. ... When they heard the names, Schwarzman and Silverman, they said, "We don't take Jews," and they said, "But, Goldberg was there in May." They said, "That's different. We were empty." So, ... we had no idea. They were willing to let us stay there because they wanted the money.

SI: How did you feel when you heard that the State of Israel had been founded?

AG: Been founded?

SI: Yes.

AG: I cried, I cried, and I got even more involved, and, when I served as the executive director for women, I traveled all over Europe, into the Eastern European countries. I was in Poland and Auschwitz a half a dozen times, and I was in Romania, and I was in Yugoslavia, and I was in Hungary and Austria. I had terrible experiences in Austria.

SI: Oh, really?

AG: Anti-Semitic experiences.

SK: What happened?

AG: And Russia, and I was in Morocco, and [we were] welcomed by the king.

SI: Oh, really?

AG: He was wonderful, Hussein.

SI: I had a teacher in high school who was in the Peace Corps in Morocco and he spoke very highly of King Hussein.

AG: Yeah, a terrific guy. I was in Egypt, I was in Jordan.

SI: Was this in the 1960s or 1970s?

AG: No, this was in the '80s and '90s.

SI: Oh, very recently. In Egypt, Morocco and Jordan, were you treated differently because you were Jewish?

AG: Morocco was absolutely no problem whatsoever. Egypt, we were only in a hotel near the airport and the airport. I was there, later, for three weeks, ... four weeks, with my husband, and had no problem whatsoever in Egypt, and I was in Jordan two years ago, and went to Petra, and stayed in Amman, ... and we're entertained at the palace. I took groups, and that was women who were contributors, to make them bigger contributors, ... to see where their money goes and what happens, and we would always go to a country where the Joint Distribution Committee, which is the organization that takes care of Jews all over the world, [was at work], ... and, also, in Israel, and then, we would go on to Israel, on every trip. So, it was a fabulous, wonderful time in my life.

SI: Did you ever meet any of the Israeli heads of state?

AG: Oh, sure. I have pictures of me with Peres, and I have pictures of me with Teddy Kollek, who was the mayor of Jerusalem for so many years, and I was with Rabin. ... I sat with Golda, and she offered me a cigarette, and even though I didn't smoke, I took the cigarette and saved it, [laughter] and we sat around the table with her, there were just about twelve of us, and, as she was leaving, 'cause she had to leave before we did, ... she turned around [and] she said, "You come back. You'll come visit?" They were her last words.

SK: You mentioned that you experienced some anti-Semitism in Austria.

AG: Terrible.

SK: What happened?

AG: I had the group in the Hilton Hotel in Austria, and it was run completely by Arabs, and they were very unpleasant to us from the time we arrived, just little things, and I was concerned about

our luggage, and so, when we were leaving, I insisted that everyone follow their luggage down, and sit with it, and know where it was. ... When it came time to put it on the bus to take us to the airport, they said that we could not follow the luggage, because they had to take it through a backdoor and put it on the bus. ... When we go to the airport, there were three pieces missing, and we called the hotel, and they very naturally told us that they weren't interested, that that couldn't have happened, and it was so obvious that it was done deliberately. So, that's my last memory of Austria. Before that, I'd also been to many concentration camps. We went to Mauthausen, which is in the Black Forest. ... Well, anyway, it was a great time.

SI: How did the people in your group react to the various stops and sights on these trips?

AG: Well, the people that went were people who care, or they wouldn't be going to Israel, and they wouldn't be traveling with us, and they wouldn't be exposing themselves to knowing that they were going to be giving more money when they got there, so that their reactions were very similar to my reactions, very deep feelings and determined to do things so [that] it wouldn't happen again. They were mostly leaders in their own communities, and then, our national board was a group of the most fabulous women. I mean, they were women who could have spent the day shopping, they were all financially comfortable, and traveling, and doing any number of things, but, they really dedicated themselves to doing something constructive with their lives, and this is what they picked. ... I was surrounded by people that I admired and that I really enjoyed working with.

SI: Who did you get to work with on the national level with the UNJA?

AG: With what?

SI: I am sorry; I meant the United Jewish Appeal. In preparing for this interview, I read about several prominent rabbis, like Henry Morgenthau, Jr., who were involved with the UJA.

AG: ... There was a rabbinic cabinet, and, when I became a vice-president, an assistant vice-president, I supervised the Rabbinic Cabinet, the Men's Young Leadership Cabinet, the Women's Young Leadership Cabinet, the University Program, which was my absolute favorite, and the business and professional women's division, in addition to my own, so that I was involved with many rabbis, and I was involved with students, and it really covered the gamut.

SI: What kind of programs did you set up for the University Program?

AG: Well, they had a wonderful professional at that time, Suzie Jones, and I worked extensively with her, and I visited several of the campuses and spoke, so, it was a close relationship.

SI: What was that organization's goal?

AG: It was primarily for fundraising on campus, because that was our task.

SI: Did you ever speak at Rutgers or Douglass?

AG: No, no. I went to Washington, to George Washington, and ... they had a meeting, not on campus, but, I went to Rhode Island, they had a big meeting, and I went to Boston. They didn't necessarily meet on one campus, because there would be eight or ten colleges represented when they had a weekend, a study weekend. The leadership and those who took part all had background training. ... They just weren't asked to go out and collect money, but, they had an opportunity to really learn a great deal about [the] history and about why we were collecting and have a sense of what they were doing.

SI: We spoke earlier about establishing the first Holocaust program. Did you ever encounter any resistance from people who just did not want to know about it or people that did not believe it?

AG: No, no. I didn't experience that at all, because, when you work with a Jewish group, you don't experience that, and it was strictly a Jewish group that we were working with.

SK: Did you ever try talking to non-Jews about getting involved and donating?

AG: No. When we had the '73 war, non-Jews came out of the woodwork to contribute. They volunteered on their own. We didn't go seeking them. Some of the businessmen did because they had contributed to Italian causes and things like that, so, they could go to their friends, who were also businessmen, and ask them to reciprocate, but, I personally was not involved in that.

SI: Were any of your organizations involved in raising money for the Zionist pioneers in Palestine or the *Haganah* when they were trying to establish the State of Israel?

AG: Not pre-state. ... Well, [the] United Jewish Appeal started in 1939, actually. It had been the Palestine Appeal before then, and it became the United Jewish Appeal, joining together several different groups, and, at that time, they were involving in smuggling, shh. The National Chairman of the Women's Division, (Matilda Brayloff?), smuggled guns in to Israel and she was there during the fighting. That was before my time.

SI: Did you know her?

AG: ... Yes, I did. She had come to Vineland to speak, and I had invited her, and she had come to speak to a group of women, and she had stayed overnight at my home, so, I had an opportunity to sit and talk to her. She was an amazing woman.

SI: She spoke about her experiences.

AG: Yes, yes.

SI: When did you first visit Israel?

AG: 1970.

SI: What was it like?

AG: That's when I was director of the federation here, and I decided that if I was raising money and doing things, then, I'd better go and find out what it's all about, and so, I went on a women's mission and met very dear friends, one who eventually became the national chairman, and another one who was active on the board, who have been my friends ever since. ... We went to Austria first that time and to Mauthausen, and then, to Israel, and it was so funny, because there were a couple of fabulous women from Atlanta with us, and one of them said to me, "You wait and see. When you see that shoreline, you're going to burst out crying," and I said, "I don't cry." Well, I burst out crying when I saw that shoreline and I've been madly in love with it ever since.

SK: How many times have you been to Israel?

AG: About fifty.

SI: Wow.

SK: Wow.

AG: As a matter-of-fact, after I retired, Ed and I rented an apartment in Israel, in Jerusalem, and we spent a month there, and that was really a treat. I didn't have any women to worry about or anything else. It was just us and it was great.

SK: How large were the groups that you took over?

AG: It all depended. I had gone with as few as thirty and as many as two busses, which would be about sixty. ...

SK: You felt safe in a large group each time.

AG: Oh, I never worried. ... You know, you read so many things in the stories. I was there fifty times and never once had an experience that upset me, and I was there during the Gulf War. I went over then to show support, a whole group of us did, and had no fear then, either. ...

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

SI: This continues an interview with Mrs. Annette Greenblatt on October 6, 1999, in Vineland, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

SK: Stephanie Katz.

SI: We were discussing your work with United Jewish Appeal.

AG: Right.

SI: I was wondering, did you remain politically active as a Democrat?

AG: No, I didn't. I shouldn't say that, because I contributed politically to many organizations that I wanted to support, and I have always been a giver of *tzedakah*, far in excess of what ... anyone would expect from my salary. ... My husband, Ed, who had a stroke last year at this time, was extremely politically active. He wore a black armband during the Vietnam War, and he was examined by the Internal Revenue Service because he went on a plane with executives down to Washington to protest, and we both worked in a soup kitchen for the homeless in New York City at my synagogue. We did that for about fifteen years, and the interesting thing is, the friends we made there are the people who have come down to Vineland to visit us, because you have so much in common when you're there, working. ... We fed as many as 300 people in a morning and we would have to get up at six o'clock, because you did that before the day's work began. So, it was a very gratifying thing to do and I served on a social action committee at the synagogue. So, I have been [involved].

SI: Did you support candidates, such as John F. Kennedy, whose campaigns also served the goals of your organizations?

AG: Yes, yes. The only way I did it was with remuneration, because I was working. ... I got to the office at 8:30 in the morning and I worked until about six o'clock at night. By the time I came home and we had dinner, I wasn't in the mood to go out to meetings and campaign, and I spent probably close to a quarter of the year traveling or more, because, in addition to going to Europe, and Israel, and Africa, I also traveled in the United States to major meetings and programs. I had two associates who worked with me, and they would go to a lot of the things, but, I also traveled. So, I didn't have time and I felt I was doing good. [laughter]

SI: Did you follow any of the campaigns?

AG: I'm very interested politically. There is no question about it, and, as I told you, I had never missed an opportunity to vote under any circumstances, either with an absentee ballot or with a regular ballot, so that anyone who does that has to be interested and care, and I followed the candidates very closely. ... My husband, I started to say, is a great liberal, and he gets a lot of liberal magazines, *The Nation*, *The Washington Monthly*, so that we really have an opportunity to see a different point of view than you read in the *New York Times* or any newspaper.

SI: Have you stayed within the Democratic fold?

AG: Oh, yes, yes, absolutely. It would be a rare exception for me to vote anything other than Democrat.

SI: What was your opinion of the Democrats' social platform in the 1960s, the goals Kennedy tried to realize and the Great Society under Lyndon Johnson?

AG: I thought it was wonderful. I think that Johnson has never been given credit, because of the Vietnam War, with the major, major programs that he started, ... especially from a man coming

from the South, with the prejudices that he had. He really stepped beyond himself with what he did.

SI: I have been reading about the relationship between former American Presidents and the State of Israel, especially in terms of the aid they have offered or not offered during the Arab-Israeli wars. For example, many pundits believe that Eisenhower left Israel out to dry in 1956. Others claim that Johnson did not extend enough support during the Six-Day War. What is your opinion on this issue?

AG: Well, it's absolutely true. I mean, I agree with them completely and the whole reason is Arab oil. I mean, there's no question about it, and the strength of the oil companies, and the money that they pour in on both sides to make sure they're covered. That's the reality and it's not going to change. Clinton has probably been the most empathetic president that Israel has ever experienced.

SI: While you were traveling through Eastern Europe, did you ever encounter any problems with the Communist governments?

AG: Oh, we had to be extremely careful. There's no question about it. As a matter-of-fact, when we were in Czechoslovakia, it was still Communist the first time I went there. Later, it wasn't, but, we were ... followed, and we knew it, the whole time we were there, and we had to be very careful with the kind of relationships we established. We'd go to be with the Jewish communities in those countries and we were very careful not to put anyone in a position where they would suffer after we left. We always had someone from the Joint Distribution Committee with us, and they had a person who lived in each of the countries and worked with the Jewish population, and they were the ones who really set the standards for what we could do, what we couldn't do, and handled [us] that way. ... I had an experience leaving Czechoslovakia. There was a young woman with us who didn't believe that there were Communists, didn't believe anybody could disturb her because she was an American, and, when we got to check in the luggage, she was very nasty to the woman behind the counter, who was also nasty, and she refused to give her a boarding pass. Everybody's on board, I can't leave her, and she absolutely would not give it to her. I finally went over and handed her thirty dollars, and she took it, and then, she gave us the boarding pass, but, until we got it, I was absolutely frantic, because I could just see being stuck. The Joint Distribution people had left, because, once you enter a certain area when you're traveling overseas, they can no longer be with you. So, they had gone. I had nobody to turn to and nobody that spoke English. So, the only thing you can talk with is money.

SI: Did anyone from the State Department travel with you?

AG: No. We had a lot of contact with our embassies in different countries. We were entertained by the embassies very nicely. As a matter-of-fact, when we went to Holland, the American ambassador was a woman and Jewish, and we had an absolutely glorious time at the magnificent embassy there, and she entertained us for dinner one night. ... Several times, also, the American embassy assisted me, because, when I had the group in Spain, my pocket was picked, and they took my passport and my wallet, and I was really frantic. I called the police

station and they told me [that] they're so accustomed to it, if he just gives me a certificate, they'll let me get on the plane. So, I took the certificate, and I took the women to the airport, and I gave them the certificate, and they said, "No, you have to have a passport or you can't get on board." So, I called the American embassy and they said, "You're name Greenblatt?" I said "Yes." They said, "Someone just returned your passport." So, I hired a taxi and I said, "I'll give you a large sum of money if you can get me to the American embassy and back in time to catch the plane," and I pulled up in front of the American embassy, and there's a soldier waiting there, and he says, "Greenblatt?" I said, "Yes." "Come with me," and we marched. He shows me where to go, and then, the next one says, "Greenblatt!" and I ran down, and there was a little box there with a man sitting in it, a soldier, and he handed me my passport, and I got back, and they were just pulling the steps up when I got on the plane. So, there are wild experiences.

SK: Did you take any other precautions when flying overseas? I have heard that some people will not order kosher meals when traveling abroad to conceal the fact that they are Jewish.

AG: Well, every time we flew, we flew El Al, so, we didn't have to worry about that.

SK: Okay.

AG: The only times we didn't was, sometimes, flying to a European country, and, by then, people weren't concerned, I mean, if we were on TWA, or it was mostly American Airlines that we used, so that there was ... no problem like that, and, to be perfectly honest, there weren't that many people who wanted kosher.

SI: Could you tell us a little bit about your children?

AG: Okay, I certainly could. My older son is fifty-two, and his name is Mark, and he's unbelievably wonderful, he truly is, and he is a mortgage officer, very successful. ... He's the kind of person that he is so successful that his organization that he works for offered him a different area, where he would be working with homes that are very much larger than in Vineland, and it would be more remuneration, because of the percentage he gets, and he turned it down, because he said, here, he works with a lot of people who are buying for the first time, and, if they didn't have him to guide them through, how to handle it, and how to open up a bank account, and how to start savings, he said [that] they wouldn't know. ... He said [that] at least here he feels like he's doing something for people when he's providing them with mortgages for many people who would have a hard time getting it otherwise. ... He said that's more interesting to him than going into an area where all they do is hand it to their lawyer, and the lawyer talks to him, and he's finished. So, that's why I say, he's quite a man, and he and my daughter-in-law, you know, all the flowers that you saw when you came in, the impatiens, they planted all that before we came, so that when we came, the house would looking inviting to us. That's my son. My daughter-in-law is an absolute angel. She's the one who found the house. She went out and had five homes for us to look at when we came. She is over here constantly, helping, especially with the computer that we have a terrible time with, and she's very protective of me and wonderful. Then, I have another son, who is four years younger, who is in New York, and all the years that he was in New York, he and his wife were the same way. They were always there for

us and helpful. When Ed became so ill, there wasn't anything that they wouldn't do to ease it a little bit for us. They have a ten-year-old son who is ... so smart, it's scary. [laughter] He goes to [the] Abraham Joshua (Hershel?) School, and he's in small classes, and the teacher is constantly writing home about all of the things he does for other people. She said, "It's amazing that he's so bright. He picks up everything, and he goes around, and he helps the kids, and he never makes them feel like he knows more than they do." She said, "It's really beautiful to watch him," and he's a great little athlete. They live very differently in New York, because everything is play dates. They can't be out on the street, so, they have to make arrangements, and his phone is buzzing constantly, needing more play dates, ... his friends calling. So, that's my family. My son in New York is an attorney, but, he didn't want to practice. He practiced for awhile, and he got into the Jewish world as a fundraiser, and, right now, he's very successful. He's moved out of the Jewish world, and he's moved into the New York Chamber of Commerce, and he works with the major real estate, and he is their idea man. He is the creative one who sets the office up so [that] it's best organized for fundraising and comes up with the creative ideas, and then, other people follow them through. So, it's a wonderful position, ... which he's really enjoying, and my daughter-in-law has her doctorate from Yeshiva University as a psychologist, and she's very successful in her practice. So, that's the two of them. That's my family.

SI: That is very nice.

AG: Yes, I'm really so lucky with them.

SI: It sounds as if they inherited your social consciousness.

AG: Yes, and you never know that your kids are even conscious of it or they were annoyed, 'cause I went to so many meetings and everything, you know, when they were small, but, it obviously made an imprint, yeah. It's very gratifying.

SI: Was it difficult to raise your sons while working full-time?

AG: Sure it was, and I don't know that I was always the best mother.

SI: Well, it sounds like they turned out very well.

AG: Yeah, they did.

SI: Did they ever travel with you on any of the Federation trips?

AG: No, no, it's just strictly women. ... Oh, I also have, in Vineland, my son's daughter, my granddaughter, and I have two great-granddaughters living here, which is just wonderful. ... Jennifer and I have always been exceedingly close and it's like a miracle.

SI: Did you raise your children in the same tradition that your parents had raised you in?

AG: Yes, but, it didn't take effect.

SI: Oh, well.

AG: Well, my younger son, they just joined the synagogue, because my grandson will be *bar mitzvah*-[ed], and my older son, his wife is not Jewish and he does not belong, but, you couldn't have a more wonderful daughter-in-law. ... She's been so great for him. ... She taught him. ... He was a mortgage officer, and she got him involved, and that's really what changed his life around. So, we're very thrilled and grateful for her, and he still has a seder every year, and he always fasts on Yom Kippur and has a house full of people to break the fast, and, for Rosh Hashanah, ... I wanted to have him here, and he said, "No." ... Well, they came to our house the second night, but, the first night, he had it with some of his friends and us. So, it's in his heart.

SI: Did you encourage them to learn Hebrew?

AG: Oh, they went to Hebrew school, but, you don't learn anything in Hebrew school.

SI: Yes, that is what I hear. [laughter]

AG: You really don't. It's sad. I mean, the education system among Jews, who are so smart, is so mediocre, it's pathetic. My grandson speaks fluently.

SI: The ten-year-old?

AG: ... Yes, because he has both English and Hebrew teachers in every class, ... because it's Abraham Joshua (Hershel?), I don't know if you're familiar with him or not, but, he was a wonderful philosopher and a very, very remarkable man. ... They take math and they connect it with the Bible or with something, everything they do, so that they have a great sense of who they are and what they have accomplished, their ancestors. ... He has a terrific sense of history and he speaks Hebrew. So, it came out on one.

SI: During the Civil Rights Movement, did the United Jewish Appeal, or any of your other organizations, establish a relationship of mutual support with any African-American social organizations?

AG: Well, you see, the United Jewish Appeal is strictly overseas. When federations raise money, they raise money, and then, they have allocation meetings, and they determine how much will be allocated for overseas and how much they will keep in the community, and the funds that are kept in the community are the funds that would be involved if any funds were in the Civil Rights Movement, but, ... if United Jewish Appeal became involved in any way, they would lose their tax status, because their tax status is strictly overseas.

SI: Do you know of any community based efforts to aid the movement?

AG: Oh, certainly. They put groups together to march, to go to Washington, to participate, absolutely. ...

SI: Were you ever directly involved?

AG: I was in Washington, marching, sure, and I took my children. That was before I was in New York, [the] Civil Rights [Movement]. We saw Martin Luther King, Jr.

SI: Really? Did you hear his famous "I Have a Dream" speech?

AG: That's right.

SI: Do you remember when he was assassinated? How did his death affect you?

AG: Do I remember? What? Oh, of course, I remember. I remember being absolutely heartbroken that it had happened, sure.

SK: Were you involved with the women's movement at all?

AG: ... I was actively involved within my own organization, because I really felt that [the] UJA was an extremely male-orientated organization, and I was very busy supporting people who were not officers, but, who should have been raised up to a different level, in giving them the courage to speak up for themselves and telling them how to handle it. So, in that manner, I was certainly very much [involved]. When I left the organization, when I retired, I had a very unhappy experience with my retirement. I had a typical experience, at that time, with Jewish organizations, who are notorious for being male-oriented. They had made an offering, "If you retired at a certain period, this is what you would get," etc., and I was sixty-seven by then, and I figured that it was time for me [to go]. The world was changing, the systems were changing, and I wasn't happy with all of the things that I saw, and so, I elected to retire, and, four days afterwards, they made a new announcement, that if you retired by July of that same year, my retirement was by the end of March, ... then, you would get credit in your pension for any years that you worked for another organization. ... I had thirteen years. That would have made a tremendous difference, and I really tried a lawsuit, but, I never succeeded. So, it was very frustrating, because I loved the organization, I loved my work and the things I did, and I was grateful for the enormous opportunities that they filled my life with, and I didn't want to leave feeling like that, but, it was extremely hurtful. So it was. Today, there are women in major positions in the organization. There is a woman who is the national chairman for the first time. So, it took awhile, but, they have now come along with the rest of the world. ...

SI: From what I have read about the federations, it seems to me as if these organizations are quite bureaucratic.

AG: I must tell you that, at UJA, they had about ... one of the lowest averages for the percentage of money that was kept for administration. It was always a great satisfaction to me to know that the money that we were working so hard to raise was going where it should go, rather than into the pockets of the people who were working for the organization, as happened with [the] United

Way when they caught them in New York City, and [what] happened with so many, [the] Red Cross.

SI: UNICEF?

AG: Not UNICEF so much, I don't think, maybe, but, certainly [the] Salvation Army. They found out that they have an endowment of billions which they don't touch. So, I felt good about [the] UJA for that.

SI: What are you doing right now?

AG: ... Right now?

SI: What keeps you busy?

AG: With my husband recuperating from his stroke, my life is really dedicated to getting him well, and it's the doctors' appointments, and the running, and the encouraging, and we had a fabulous experience yesterday. He had had his stroke down in Margate, and we had ended up at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, that was last October, and I got a call from the hospital that they would like him to come in, if he was willing, for a new program that they were establishing. It's not a question of benefiting him, it's a question of benefiting them, in gaining more knowledge, and they said it would take about three or four hours the first time. We went up, and it was over four hours, and he was absolutely brilliant. ... He is a fabulous man, absolutely brilliant in the questions that he answered and the things that he responded to, and they couldn't get over him. They kept bringing people in. "Look what he's done. Look what's happening," and they're so anxious for him to continue that they said, if it's hard for us to get to Philadelphia, they'll come down to Vineland to work with him. ...

SK: You mentioned on your pre-interview survey that he wrote a book.

AG: He did write a book, yeah. He was a medical writer.

SI: How did you meet?

AG: ... I knew him as a child. He was born in Vineland, and they left Vineland shortly after I came here, and his family is a prominent family in the community, the Greenblatts, and they were my friends that I grew up with, and whenever they had a family event, he came. He wasn't living here, but, he would come to it, and I would see him, and I thought he was the most snobbish New Yorker I'd ever seen in my life, [laughter] and I was right, but, when I was moving to New York, he was down for a party, and someone told him [about me]. ... He said that he was going with someone, but, he said that when I came to New York, I should let him know where I lived, because he would tell me where to shop and what to do, but, he knew the entire city so well, which he did, and so, when I got to New York, I called, and I found out [that] I was only four blocks from him. So, we saw [each other], and it didn't take long, a month, and we were

together. So, we've really been together for twenty-one years, but, today is our fourteenth wedding anniversary.

SI: Congratulations.

AG: Thank you.

SI: Does he have any children?

AG: No, he never had children, but, my children have been absolutely wonderful with him and to him. He's very lucky to have gotten the whole family and I'm very lucky. We've traveled all over the world, vacationing. We've been to India, we went trekking in Nepal, we spent a month ... in Egypt, we've been to Peru, we've been to Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands. I could go on, and on, and on, France and Italy, London.

SI: So, you finally got to experience an Asian culture.

AG: Yes. We had a wonderful trip to China. ... Best of all, we took seven weeks, and we drove across the United States and back, and it was absolutely glorious. We didn't go on any highways. We planned our trip in advance, all on back roads, and it was when we got back to the George Washington Bridge, he looked at me and he said, "Do you realize [that] we've been cooped up together for seven weeks and there hasn't been one moment of discord?" [laughter]

SI: You also went to Temple University.

AG: ... No, I went to Columbia.

SI: Okay.

AG: I once dated someone from Temple. That's the closest.

SI: We are just about out of questions. Is there anything that you think that we have overlooked?

AG: ... No. I think I've pretty well described who I am, and what I've done, and how much I owe to my education, and the many, many things that I gained, besides just learning, when I was at school, and I think I've had a very full life so far.

SI: You really put your NJC education to good use in your life.

AG: Yes. Well, the other thing I do is play bridge.

SI: Do you play just for fun or do you compete?

AG: In my other life, with my previous husband, we used to play with friends from Woodbury and (Pitman?) and we had duplicate games that we played every month. Then, I went to New

York, and I didn't play for twenty years, and, since I've come back to Vineland, I've been playing duplicate again and having a great time with it, but, my husband won't play cards.
[laughter]

SI: Thank you for allowing us to interview you and for giving us so much of your time. This concludes an interview with Mrs. Annette Greenblatt on October 6, 1999, with Shaun Illingworth and Stephanie Katz.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

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