

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH GERTRUDE JAY LEWIS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

and

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TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

William Nesson: This begins an interview with Gertrude Jay Lewis on November 20, 2009, in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, with ...

Shaun Illingworth: ... Shaun Illingworth ...

WN: ... William Nesson.

SI: Thank you for having us.

Gertrude Jay Lewis: Oh, it's my pleasure.

SI: To begin, could you tell us where and when you were born?

GL: ... I was born in South Orange, New Jersey, March 2, 1929. So, I just turned eighty this spring. ... I've lived in New Jersey all my life, but, as I said, in the wintertime now, we winter in Florida. So, we're "snowbirds."

SI: Can you tell us what your parents' names were?

GL: My mother's name was Lillian Greenbaum Jay and my father's name was Theodore Columbus Jay. He got the nickname Columbus because he was born on Columbus Day.

SI: Okay.

GL: So, that's not the nickname, [but his] middle name.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about your father's family history, such as where the family came from?

GL: My father was born in Newark, New Jersey, and so were his parents. If you went back another generation or two, they were from Germany. He had a business in Newark, was an insurance business. It was called Jay & Jay Insurance and they lived in South Orange, New Jersey, until, I forget what year, but I was out of the house and my sister and brother were out of the house. ... They decided to move down to the Jersey Shore, and they moved into a house in Elberon and that's where they lived until he died.

SI: What about your mother's family background?

GL: My mother was born in New York, but her father and mother were both Hungarians, and, [when] her father came over, he was already a physician. He had studied at the University of Vienna, and they lived in Newark, New Jersey, and then, eventually, we moved to South Orange, New Jersey. My mother was a schoolteacher. She taught before she was married for a little while, and then, she stayed home and raised the family. ... When World War II came around, there was a plea for teachers, because they were very short of teachers, and she went back to teaching then and taught until she was sixty-eight and lived until she was 102.

SI: That is incredible. Do you know how your parents met?

GL: They grew up together. They knew each other since they were six years old, and their families were friends and, eventually, they got together. [laughter]

WN: What were some of your hobbies as a child growing up in South Orange?

GL: My hobbies; I have to think back. [laughter] Well, I guess I did the normal things that kids did. You played ball out in the street and hopscotch, and I don't think I did anything unusual in my childhood. ... I have an older brother and older sister. So, we did a lot of things as families.

[TAPE PAUSED]

GL: [I] played tennis. [laughter] I did go to camp for two years when I was about seven and I learned how to play tennis and I've been playing ever since.

WN: What was the camp called?

GL: Pardon?

WN: Do you remember what the camp's name was?

GL: Camp Romaca, but I don't remember where it was. I think it was in the Berkshires, and I happened not to like camp. [Editor's Note: Camp Romaca is an all-girls camp in the Berkshire Mountains near Hinsdale, Massachusetts.] I got homesick. My sister loved it. She was furious, because my mother wouldn't send just one and not the other, so, either we both went or we both stayed home.

SI: How much older were your siblings?

GL: My sister's two years older and my brother was six years older.

SI: Okay.

GL: And my sister was little for her age and I used to get hand-me-downs from her. Eventually, I grew tall enough that I could get some new clothes, [laughter] and my brother, unfortunately, just passed away this spring.

SI: I am sorry to hear that. Was your father's business affected by the Great Depression at all?

GL: Well, he was in the insurance business and most people hung on to their insurance as long as they could. So, he was hit more as we were coming out of the Depression. He felt it more then, which I thought was unusual, but I was never conscious of the Depression, particularly, because I was born in it, you know, but, even those early years, I wasn't aware of any problem. We lived in the same house the whole time I grew up. So, obviously, we didn't run into problems and got rid of the house or anything.

SI: Do you remember anything, such as seeing people on the streets or people coming to the house looking for food?

GL: No, I don't remember any of that. We lived in a suburb and I guess we were protected from a lot of that.

SI: What was the neighborhood or street like?

GL: There were large houses with trees and we could play baseball in the street. Our house was a big house. ... It had four, five bedrooms at least. It was a two-story colonial and, an unusual thing, we used to go to the shore, summertimes, and then, my brother and sister had mastoids and they couldn't go swimming in the ocean. So, my folks built a little swimming pool in the backyard. ... No one had pools in their backyards at that time, but it was small. It was twelve feet long, seven feet wide and three feet deep, and we never went away summers after that. ... The summer that my husband and I started dating was a very hot summer and he used to come over and go swimming every night. [laughter] It helped the romance along a little bit.

SI: Did your husband grow up in the same neighborhood?

GL: No, he was from Jersey City. We met when he had been in service, and then, had gone to graduate school. He went to the Harvard Business School and, when he got out, he worked at Bamberger's. ... I had a cousin who was working at Bamberger's and he said to her, he didn't know any girls, ... did she know anyone? and so, she fixed us up and that's how it all started.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about your early education in South Orange?

GL: South Orange had a very good school system, and I went all through, you know, the whole system. I'm trying to think what was different. ... I just don't remember the specifics of it, but, interesting enough, when we came here, six years ago, I got in the elevator and ... some woman came up to me and she said, "We went to high school together." [laughter] ... That's true, because the people here are from around here, a lot of them. ... During the war years, that was a little different. I remember, my sister and I were in the Civil Air Patrol and we used to take a train to Summit. [Editor's Note: The Civil Air Patrol was established in December 1941 as a civilian auxiliary to the US Army Air Forces (later the US Air Force). The CAP includes a cadet program that offers training to youths beginning at age twelve.] ... We wore uniforms and we marched and learned to recognize planes, and my whole family was in the war effort. My brother was in the Army and my father was a street captain and my mother was a nurse's aide. So, the war effort affected us, and the gas rationing affected us. I couldn't drive the car until after the war, [laughter] because they couldn't spare the gas.

SI: Before America was drawn into World War II, what did you know about what was happening overseas? Did you follow the news out of either Europe or Asia?

GL: I really wasn't aware. You know, I was a teenager and we weren't aware of things like that particularly. As far as I know, we didn't have any relatives in Europe that were involved in the Holocaust. We have found out, since then, there were some, but we didn't know it at the time.

SI: Most of the family had immigrated here.

GL: Had already, yes. They came over in the late 1800s, most of them. You know, they were at different times, but they were all here before World War II, even before World War I, and, [in] World War I, my father was in the Navy.

SI: Did he ever talk about his time in the Navy, what he did?

GL: No, other than he won't eat baked beans. [laughter] That is one ... item, too, that they had too much of in the Navy. ... The other thing that we laughed at, he was a very good sailor and he always liked ships, and he once had his Navy uniform on and got seasick on the Staten Island Ferry and he was mortified. [laughter]

WN: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

GL: Yes. I was in seventh grade and we were going to a roller-skating party and it was a Sunday and the fathers were driving us. We had four cars of kids and they stopped at a light, because we heard it on the radio, and the fathers ran up and down the four cars and we were all buzzing about Pearl Harbor. ... Then, of course, we were very well aware of what was going on.

SI: How quickly did it begin to impact your town? You mentioned gas rationing and the Civil Defense drills. How quickly did those come in?

GL: People rallied very quickly. You know, it was [that] we knew who our enemies were--and it's not like these wars here, where you're not sure who your enemy is--and they rallied pretty quickly.

SI: Okay.

GL: And I did volunteer sewing for the Red Cross. ... They had little kimonos, I think, we made for the children or something, but we all did something and I used to do that.

SI: When did you become involved with the Civil Air Patrol?

GL: Soon after the war started, because my sister and I wanted to do something, and I would say, yes, ... right after it started, because ... I was in junior high and high school during those years.

SI: How often would you have to do things for the Civil Air Patrol? You mentioned you had to go out to Summit.

GL: Yes, we used to go out; I don't know if we went out every week or every other week, something like that, and we'd, I don't know, I guess, spend an hour or two when we met.

SI: Would you just meet as a group or would you have shifts for checking the sky?

GL: No, we just met as a group and studied the planes. We really didn't do much with it, but we felt we were being patriotic and being prepared.

SI: What were the uniforms like?

GL: They were khaki and very much like the WACs [Women's Army Corps], and I think we enjoyed getting into the uniform. It made us feel very important.

SI: How soon was your brother called into the service? Did he enlist or was he drafted?

GL: No, he was drafted. He was already in college. He was at MIT and I think he was drafted after his second year, and he tells a funny story. One of the required courses, when he was up there, was German and he didn't really want to take it, but, anyway, he went into service. ... When he came out, he found that they had relaxed that requirement during the war, but they reinstated it. ... He said, "Here I am, fighting the war and I have to take this German?" you know. So, he talked them out of it, but, later on, when he started working, he needed to know German, [laughter] because he was a patent lawyer. So, it got back to him.

SI: At that time, during the war, how did you feel towards the Germans or the Japanese? Did you have any particular feelings?

GL: Oh, yes, and that continued well after the war. I wouldn't buy any German products or any Japanese products. I mean, at that time, a car was made in just one country, so, you could say, "I'm not buying a German car," and, now, [laughter] it's hard to limit it, but we felt very strongly against the Japanese and the Germans, and we did. Now, I mentioned that we've done a lot of traveling and we have been in Germany. ... We had been in Munich and we found it a very emotional experience. We went into the beer hall where Hitler used to drink beer and mix with people and we look around at all these middle-aged Germans and think, "Where were you and what were you doing during the war?" So, that carried over a long time, and then, we went to Dachau and went to the concentration camp, and we also went to the other one; I forget the name. ... When we went to Dachau, we had taken the train from Munich and people there spoke English and German and we weren't sure where to get off. ... They appeared to be oblivious that there had been a concentration camp there. They were just, like, ignoring it, and then, when we went in to visit ... this facility, the people that were there were either middle-aged Americans or young Germans, young people. We didn't see any middle-aged German people [at] that time, you know.

SI: When was this trip?

GL: [To her husband] Do you remember when it was? I'd have to look it up. I have a record of all the dates; I could look it up.

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

GL: Yes, right, I would say '70s or '80s, probably, but we started traveling about forty years ago. When I started working at Rutgers, my husband and I were discussing finances and what to do and we decided that my money was going to be for traveling and his was going to be for educating the kids. [laughter] I got the better of the deal.

SI: To go back to your early education, what were the subjects that interested you the most?

GL: Well, I've always liked math. It's always been one of my [favorites]. At one time, I took mechanical drawing, which I liked very much, but I was the only girl in the class and I wasn't that comfortable about pursuing something like that. ... I thought, at that time, I had a choice of either being a teacher or going into business, that there weren't many choices for girls in math. Now, I have [a daughter], one of our daughters is an engineer. So, that changed after awhile.

SI: When you say, "Go into business," do you mean general business or as a secretary or something?

GL: Yes; well, not a secretary, but just doing general business. I didn't even know, to tell you the truth.

SI: Like bookkeeping or something?

GL: Yes. What happened was, I met my husband in my junior year in college and I wanted to get married. So, I had switched from the University of Cincinnati, that's where I started out, to Rutgers-Newark, so that we could get married. ... We got married just this time of year, so [that] I could get that week of Thanksgiving off for a honeymoon. ... Now, I've lost my track of what that question was.

SI: We were just talking about your early education and how you liked math.

GL: Yes, oh, okay. So, my degree was in business administration--personnel management, really. Then, what happened is, you've probably seen my records, Rutgers had a program called "Re-Training in Mathematics." Now, that came out in the '60s, and they wanted it for retraining women in mathematics and it led into teaching or to business. My kids were in school all day. So, I decided to take some courses, and the first course I took was a review of college math, sophomore and freshman college math, and it was the new terminology. The math was the same, but new terminology. The professor dropped his voice at the end of every sentence and the textbook wasn't in. [laughter] So, it was a bit challenging in the beginning, but, then, after I got over the hurdle and got through the first row of tests--and the kids, of course, I came home and our children kept saying, "What'd you get? What'd you get?" [laughter] You know, I used to worry about bringing grades to my parents and, now, I had to worry about bringing it to the children. So, then, I enrolled in a number of math courses, and one of the courses I took was computers and that was it, that was my field. ... They had an employment counselor involved with this program. It was sponsored by the Ford Foundation, and so, I said, "I'd like to do some

part-time work. I'm not anxious in full-time." So, I did some part-time jobs. The first job I took, it was in the summertime and my children were going to be in camp for two weeks and Ed's business was moving at that time. So, I thought, "Oh, I have two weeks, this sounds like a great way to learn." There was a professor in Princeton who was publishing a book on quantum mechanics and he had a complicated index, because the researchers were foreign-born. Their names were "Vons" and "Vans," and so forth, and the foreign libraries have, the *bibliotecas* have, different names. So, it was mostly a sorting program on the computer, and I thought, "Well, fine, I'll do it." Well, instead of two weeks, it took me five months, [laughter] and I learned very quickly. I learned more in that job than I would've in the classroom situation, and, if I had known what was involved, I probably would never have taken it, but, fortunately, I didn't know any better. ... I continued with that, and then, ... at some point, a position opened up in the Sociology Department at Rutgers, to ... help the researchers. I'd be the liaison between the researchers and the computer, and the job involved teaching and documentation and research. ... It was a half-time line and I worked there for eight years, and then, a position in the computer center at Rutgers' main campus opened up. So, I moved over there, and then, I had, you know, [positions] as programmer analyst and Manager of User Services and project leader, moving up in the different management positions. ... When I retired, I was Deputy Associate Director of the computer center, but, you know, it just seemed to be a natural progression with my math background.

SI: Looking over your resume, it is very impressive, but it is also very unique. From other interviews, I know that women were not necessarily encouraged, as you hinted at, to go into these fields coming through the school system when you did, in the 1940s.

GL: Right.

SI: Were people encouraging you to even think about college at that time, when you were in high school, your teachers and your family?

GL: ... Well, in my family, I was expected to go to college no matter what it was going to be, ... because, by then, my mother had gone back to teaching and she said it was very important, whether we were girls or boys, to have an education. ... I didn't feel any prejudice in the computer field; because there were so few people, they would take anyone, [laughter] you know. So, I never felt that, and I just accepted the fact that there weren't many [opportunities], you know, that there were only certain job positions open to me, and I never questioned it. It's a different world now. You'd question everything, but I was perfectly content with what my folks thought I should do.

SI: You entered high school during the war years.

GL: Yes, '41, yes, Pearl Harbor was; I think I was in seventh or eighth grade.

SI: You were probably still in your junior year when the war ended.

GL: Right.

SI: Did you see, in any way, if your schools, either in junior high or high school, were affected by the war? Was anything limited or affected?

GL: Don't remember, so, I guess not or I would remember. I think we just did our normal thing. Even though there was a war going on, ... I saw my girlfriends and I talked on the phone and did sleepovers and all those things, except we did this little extra war effort whenever we could.

SI: Do you remember any scrap drives or bond drives, anything like that?

GL: Well, the bond drives, yes, I bought my "E" bonds, [Series E US Savings Bonds, popularly known as "defense bonds" or "war bonds"]. I guess I just don't remember much.

WN: Growing up in South Orange, what impact did religion have on your family or you personally?

GL: Well, we're Jewish and we belong to the Reform Jewish Movement and, at that time, we didn't go to religious services a lot. My husband and I have since gone the other way. We're very interested and very involved. In fact, we have a daughter who's a rabbi, ... but we identified as being Jewish all along and there were a lot of times, incidents, war-wise, that made us feel uncomfortable, but we never backed down.

SI: That was an era, when you were growing up, when anti-Semitism was not as looked down upon as it is now. Did you encounter any anti-Semitism?

GL: Well, we were very careful to not rock the boat, so-to-speak. I remember, my mother never let us play out on Sundays, because our neighbors who were not Jewish were observing their Sabbath. So, we weren't allowed to ride our bicycle or run around. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

GL: Fine, let's continue.

SI: Thank you for the coffee and the pastry.

GL: My pleasure.

SI: I wanted to ask, since we talked about it off the tape, about your father's involvement with developing this temple in Newark.

GL: Yes.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about that on the record?

GL: Well, it was his grandparents who came from Germany and they came into Newark in about the 1850s, and that's when this Temple B'nai Jeshurun [was founded], which now is in Short Hills, but it had been in Newark. ... His father and his grandfather--might have been even the

great-grandfather--were all involved in the temple, and, also, other things. The Jewish Social Service in Newark, my grandfather, his father, had organized that. He was the original president and, you know, they were taking care of their own people. So, there were different societies that they were involved with.

SI: Growing up, were you involved in any kind of outreach or charity work? I know, later on, you did work with the *refuseniks*, but I mean when you were younger.

GL: Yes; no, not as a teenager. The problem was that the synagogue was in Newark and I lived in South Orange. So, it wasn't convenient to go down to different activities there, you know. With our children, in the town of Westfield, in fact, that was one of the reasons we moved to Westfield, was because there's a small synagogue right in town and a very good school system. ... We brought our family up in Westfield and it was much easier to participate in all these things. So, I didn't do much in the high school.

SI: I believe your husband mentioned that, in the synagogue, there would be as much German spoken as Hebrew. It retained the German Jewish character for quite awhile.

GL: Yes, it did, because ... the German Jews were the ones that formed it. ...

Edward Lewis: Tell them about your grandfather and the Beth Israel.

GL: Well, that grandfather on the other side, my mother's ... father, he came over as a young physician from the University of Vienna and he settled in Newark, New Jersey. ... He was one of the founders of the Beth Israel Hospital in Newark and, when they had the initial dinner for the hospital, he was the first speaker.

SI: Wow.

GL: And so, we were very proud of that, and Ed and I visited Vienna in our travels one time and we went to the archives building and we wanted to see if we could find out anything about my grandfather. ... They had microfilm on their students, so, they asked me when he matriculated. I said, "Well, from what I gather, somewhere around 1870, he went to college." I didn't know too much. So, they gave us this microfilm and it was sorted by class, the physicians, and so forth. So, we sat down and Ed ran it. In ten minutes, we found his record, when he enters and when he left and his father's name, and they sent me a letter, in German, confirming all this. So, that's in one of these books. ... Those are the kinds of things I put in the book.

SI: What was his name?

GL: Greenbaum, Solomon Greenbaum, and he used to have the name on the plaque inside the main hallway of the hospital, but the hospital's had a couple building additions, so, they moved these plaques to the second floor mezzanine. I haven't been there in years, so, I don't know if it's still there, but I always used to check on his name when I'd go there.

EL: Gert.

GL: What?

EL: The car, the car, your grandfather.

GL: Okay. [laughter] He used to do house calls by horse and carriage, that's what you did in those days, and he charged fifty cents for an office visit and a dollar for a house call. Anyway, he got tired of taking care of [the] horses and carriage and, when the first Model T Ford came out, he bought one. ... He got in the car and drove it and drove up the driveway, and then, when he wanted to stop, he said, "Whoa," and crashed right into the garage. [laughter] So, then, my mother, who was thirteen at the time, took over driving him on his rounds, and they didn't have driver's licenses then. So, he never drove again, but she did.

SI: To talk a little bit more about the World War II era, how much of an impact on your daily life did the war have? For example, would you follow the news constantly?

GL: Oh, yes, we followed the news and we'd read about what was going on and I remember very clearly the day of the atomic bomb. It so happened my folks and I were going out for dinner and we were in a little place ... locally in town and everyone was buzzing and we felt that it had to be [something important]. We didn't like the idea of all those lives being lost, but we thought this was going to be the beginning of the end of the war, which it was. So, we were very excited about that.

SI: It is something we have been looking at through some of these interviews. Now, that day has such meaning, but, when the news actually broke, even then, did you realize some of the impact of what it meant?

GL: Oh, yes, well, the atomic bomb, that was big news, ... and we followed these other battles along the way, but that was the most exciting.

SI: You knew it was something different.

GL: Right.

SI: It was not like all the other bombs.

GL: Right, and, of course, we didn't think of the ...

SI: Repercussions?

GL: Repercussions, thank you, [laughter] of how this affected people the rest of their lives and that kind of thing. We didn't think about that at that time; we just wanted to get out of the war.

EL: Tell them about your brother in World War II in China, that whole thing, your brother.

GL: Oh, yes, he was in the Army and he was stationed in the [China]-Burma-India area. In fact, he developed a fungus in India and he never got rid of it, you know. ... He used to write home and he said, "They value animals more than they do people," because they'd be on the streets. So, at some point, ... he was captured by the Chinese Communists, his unit, and the captain of this unit played ping-pong and my brother played ping-pong. So, he used to play and beat him in ping-pong. I said, "How did you have the nerve to do [that]?" [laughter] So, it was one of those funny things where they were captured and it was a friendly capture, I guess, and then, they were eventually released. ...

SI: What kind of reaction did your family have to that? Did you realize what it meant?

GL: Well, we didn't know about that until he came home.

SI: Okay.

GL: A lot of these things, we didn't know about until afterwards.

SI: Were you able to communicate with him at all?

GL: Oh, yes. We wrote. I wrote him ... those letters, V-J letters, all the time.

SI: V-mails? [Editor's Note: Victory mail or V-mail used a system of microfilming letter forms to conserve cargo space on ships carrying war materiel.]

GL: V-mails, right, and I wrote him all the time. I used to write him jokes that we'd tell at school. I often thought, afterwards, "What a ridiculous thing," but I didn't know what to write him, ... but we did keep in touch.

WN: In any of the letters that you received, did you notice that they were censored?

GL: No, I didn't notice that, so, they probably weren't, but we were fortunate to keep in touch and fortunate that he came out okay.

SI: Did you correspond with anyone else?

GL: No. ... Once in awhile, one of his companions would pass through and we'd have him for dinner. ... You know, they were from all over the country, but he always told anyone, if they came near us, they could come for a dinner. ... In fact, we had one friend that ... came at Christmastime, and so, we didn't know quite what to do, because [we are Jewish]. We got a little, tiny Christmas tree, just for him, [laughter] and exchanged gifts, because I knew, we knew, he was homesick for the holiday, and, yet, we couldn't fill in his feeling for the holiday, but, anyway, that's how we kept up also.

SI: Was he a friend from the area or a friend from the service?

GL: No, ... they were stationed together in Fort Hood, Texas. ... I forget where the friend was from, not from this area, but they just happened to [have] been together quite a bit in the service, so, he came over to visit.

SI: Wow.

GL: I remember that, for some reason, I remember his name was (Limon Morgan?). Now, why I remember that, I don't know. [laughter]

SI: One thing that historians have noticed is that there was a lot of movement during the war, even with people who were not in the service, like people moving to different areas to do war work. Do you remember that kind of population flow?

GL: No, I don't, and I think, again, we were sort of isolated in the suburban area, isolated from the business area.

SI: Do you remember seeing a lot of GIs in some capacity, if they were stationed nearby, perhaps?

GL: No, I don't even remember that, either.

SI: Was it mostly just people coming home on leave or visiting?

GL: Right, right. Again, I think, at my age, too, you know, junior high, high school, we were very self-centered, like kids are today, and not aware of a lot of these things.

SI: What about V-E Day and V-J Day? Do those stand out in your memory?

GL: Gee, I remember them. I don't know what we did those days, but I remember the excitement. One, the day of the invasion in Europe, we had a history test scheduled and it was June 6th. Is that the date? [Editor's Note: The Normandy Invasion began on June 6, 1944.] ... So, we told our teacher that, you know, "We're making history now. We can't do this," and he said, [laughter] "You'd better do this or you'll be history." So, I remember that excitement, too.

WN: Do you remember hearing about or learning about the Japanese internment camps on the West Coast?

GL: No, I wasn't aware of that and I didn't know about that until years later.

WN: What were your feelings about that?

GL: Well, I felt that it was unfair to the American Japanese. You know, I didn't feel they were the same as the Japanese who were fighting.

SI: Once the war ended, how quickly did things get back to normal? Was that a slow process?

GL: No, I think that they got back to normal pretty quickly. I know my brother returned from service and he went back to college to finish off, and we stopped all our little volunteer jobs. Whatever they were, they were no longer needed, and we were back into the groove.

SI: This was also the beginning of the Cold War. Do you remember any attitudes towards the Russians or Communism?

GL: I guess I wasn't very political at that time. I'm not political now, but I'm more aware now, but I don't think I was involved with those details.

SI: Was politics discussed at all in your home? Did your parents ever talk about Roosevelt or local politics?

GL: Oh, yes, they did talk about Roosevelt. ... They did talk, but not a lot, and they weren't aggressive about it, you know. It was sort of a passive discussion.

SI: Do you remember anything more about what your father would have to do as air defense warden?

GL: Well, it's just [that] when they had test air raids and they turned off, you know, all the lights and you had to draw your curtains, he went out and walked up and down the street to check the houses. So, in fact, I'd have to look and see if I still have the picture of him in his [hat]. He had a hard hat when he did that and he was very proud to do that, and he was a veteran of the First World War and he belonged to the Legion.

SI: Okay.

GL: And he used to go to those meetings. So, I guess he was patriotic in his way.

SI: Do you remember any outward displays of patriotism during the war, like parades? Did they have those, that you remember?

GL: Yes, we did have some of those in town, once in awhile. I never participated in them. I guess ... I wasn't too aware during World War II to give you that kind of information.

SI: We ask a lot of questions and some of the answers will be, "I do not remember," or, "I was not aware of that." You graduated from Columbia High School in 1947.

GL: Yes.

SI: At that point, you said that you were expected to go to college. What made you choose the University of Cincinnati?

GL: ... Well, interesting, my parents were friendly with a man by the name of Max Hertzberg, who used to be principal of the Weequahic High School in Newark. They were very good friends, and so, they talked to him and I talked to the counselors. ... I wanted to do something

with science and math, and I liked sewing, so, I thought maybe home economics. So, we were discussing schools and he was the one that brought up the University of Cincinnati--didn't know anything about it and [it] sounded fine to me. I wanted to go to a different part of the country, I wanted to live away from home, and it wasn't as expensive as some schools. So, that's how I got there, and then, when I was there, ... I kept changing my major. ... After two years, I went into a program, actually, it was like industrial management and personnel management, and they had a work study program. So, we worked for two months and studied for two months at the college, and then, took a week's vacation, and you worked year-round. This was the program, which I liked very much, because I found, after two months of school, you sort of got enough of that, and same with two months of work. ... I liked that program, but, then, Ed appeared, [laughter] and I thought differently and I wanted to get married. So, I transferred to Newark-Rutgers and, as I said, I got my degree in business administration. ...

SI: Before you went to Cincinnati, had you traveled much before? You said you went down to the shore, but outside of that.

GL: No, we didn't do much traveling. I remember, my brother got his driver's license in, I think it was 1941, and, just before the war broke out, ... we, as a family, went to Washington, DC. ... I remember, we let him drive the car a little bit and all of us were nervous about it, [laughter] but, after that, with the gas rationing, we couldn't waste the gas taking trips, and so, we didn't take family trips after that. So, you know, as our family was growing up, we had our own, we took trips. ... I'm trying to think, ... when they moved to the Shore, it was in the 1950s that they moved down there.

SI: Did you travel to Cincinnati alone or did your family go with you?

GL: No, I had never seen the college. I was accepted and the day I had to leave for college, my sister was getting married, so, I was lucky that I even got on the train that day, because they weren't paying any attention to me. I felt very lonely, [laughter] and I used to take the Cincinnati Limited train and that would leave at five in the afternoon--it was sit-up coach--and get there about eight in the morning. ... So, my folks just plunked me on the train and shipped me off and I was supposed to stay there until Christmastime. I wasn't supposed to come home Thanksgiving, but I remember, the first year, I did, because I was so homesick, but, then, I got over that and I liked it very much. ... It was interesting going to a different section of the country. You know, the kids were different, everything was different. They thought I had an accent and I thought they had one. [laughter]

EL: Tell them about your work experiences at college, Gert.

GL: Yes. Well, I got a job at Bamberger's and, by then, I was dating Ed. So, he introduced me to someone and I was a section manager, and I forget what else I did, but it was great. ... I thought we were dating discretely, but people seemed to say, you know, "When are you getting married?" I said, "To whom?" you know. [laughter] So, that was a nice job. A lot of kids supported themselves on this work study program. They were able to get jobs where they earned enough money to help support them. My folks paid for my education. I used to just do odd jobs just to get spending money.

SI: Did you work when you were out at Cincinnati?

GL: Yes. Well, the only thing I did, I used to type term papers, because that was something I could do on my own time, and we didn't have computers then, though. ... So, that's the only kind of work I did, and I know my brother used to wait on tables. I didn't realize that until his daughter wrote about him, [laughter] ... and I don't think my sister did anything work wise in college. She, too, married while she was in college, but Ed was already working. He was working at Bamberger's, and so, it was very nice. We lived home, actually, with my parents for a little while after we got married. I couldn't wait to get out. Ed loved it, [laughter] but it was just easier, you know, as time went on. Then, they decided to sell the house and go to the Shore and Ed said, "They sold the house from underneath me." [laughter] They kicked him out.

SI: Does anything else stand out about your time in Cincinnati? You mentioned the accents being different. Did anything stand out about being exposed to people from the Midwest?

EL: Jack Stern.

GL: Jack Stern; oh, in Cincinnati, there's the Hebrew Union College, which is the college for Reformed rabbis, and my roommate was dating one of those students. ... Then, I met Jack Stern and found he was a student there and he became a rabbi, ... but I knew him before [laughter] ... he became rabbi of our Westfield temple. There were holiday things. We had Passover *seder* someplace. I know, what happened is, the families would sign up at the dorms if they're willing to take someone on the holidays. So, I used to, on the holidays, the High Holy Days and Rosh Hashanah and Passover, I used to sign up and go with a Jewish family. It was very nice. You know, seeing, as I said, I was homesick, it was nice to be in a home situation.

EL: Tell them how Jack Stern returned to our life, Westfield.

GL: Yes, well, then, ... first of all, ... my roommate got married after the second year and Jack had a physical disability. I don't know what, he had trouble walking, and he couldn't make the wedding, so, we took the wedding party to the hospital. So, that's how I knew him, and then, I got to Westfield and he became the rabbi in Westfield. So, he was with us for seven years and that was really fun to have him return that way. ...

WN: You said you lived in the dorm.

GL: Yes.

WN: What was that like? What was that experience like for you?

GL: Well, I thought it was great. In fact, I remember, we played bridge every night for an hour before we went to bed. [laughter] We had a woman housemother and we had four in a room, which wasn't the easiest thing. We had two bunk beds, and so, my roommates, they came and went, you know. We had different roommates. Sometimes, ... I liked them, sometimes, I didn't,

but I've seen that with my own children, too. It's very difficult to live with a stranger. So, you have to learn how to adjust to those things.

SI: Were there a lot of women at the University of Cincinnati then?

GL: Yes, there were a normal proportion of women to men, I guess.

SI: Okay.

GL: Yes.

WN: Was it a coed university?

GL: Yes, it was coed. It was actually, I guess, a city college. A lot of kids commuted there, but we had our own dorms and, you know, ... you went to all the football games and things like that.

WN: While you were in college, Israel became a state, in 1948, correct?

GL: Right. [Editor's Note: Israel declared its independence in May 1948.]

WN: When did you hear about it? What was your reaction?

GL: I wasn't so sure I was going to be happy about something like that, because I didn't want people to say, as [for my] being a Jew, that, "You go back to your homeland." So, I wasn't so comfortable about it in the beginning, and I don't think my father was comfortable about it and I think that's why I felt that way. Of course, I've since changed my mind completely, but we were excited that it came about; we just were concerned about what the results were going to be.

SI: Before that, had Zionism been discussed in your home or community at all?

GL: Yes. We were anti-Zionist. So, my father, again, he felt that, you know, we were Americans and we were Jews, but we were Americans and this was our home, and he would never consider Israel as his home, homeland.

SI: I am not sure if you told us outright how you met your husband. You said he was working at Bamberger's at that time, when you came back.

GL: Yes. He had been in service, and then, he came out and went to the Harvard Business School on the GI Bill, and then, came out and he lived in Jersey City. ... He worked in Bamberger's and he said to my cousin, who worked in his office, "I don't know any girls." So, she fixed us up, and I [was] always amazed because I was the kid cousin that she never paid much attention to, but she was already going with this fellow that she married, and so, ... we just clicked. It was nice. My family liked him immediately. In fact, my mother tells the story, the first night we went out, they had company. So, when he came into the house, some of their friends were walking up the steps and he helped the ladies up the steps. That gave him brownie points right off the bat. [laughter] So, my mother said to my father, later on that night, she says,

"We're not," referring to Ed, "we're not going to let this one get away," [laughter] and, actually, he fell in love with my mother. She's really a remarkable lady, and I always said the only reason he married me is because she was already taken. [laughter]

WN: How long were you two dating before you got married?

GL: I guess we dated about a year-and-a-half, and then, we got married and I was twenty-one, just before I was twenty-two, and he was twenty-six at the time and had been working. So, eventually, he changed jobs, but he was at Bamberger's when we first got married.

SI: Where was Bamberger's then?

GL: In Newark, on Market Street.

SI: Okay.

GL: And then, ... as I said, we lived home for awhile, and then, we got an apartment in Belleville, and then, eventually, ... he changed jobs and was working out of Elizabeth, New Jersey. So, then, we moved to Westfield, which is "the fields west of Elizabeth," that's how it got its name, and brought up our family there, lived there for thirty-five years.

SI: In your time at Cincinnati and Rutgers, this was the GI Bill era, were there a lot of veterans there? Do you remember their impact on either school?

GL: No, we were just aware that there were a lot of veterans, you know. ... They filled up the seats, but, other than that, you know, we went along, took our courses, sometimes with them, sometimes not. ...

SI: What did you think of the faculty at University of Cincinnati?

GL: I was very satisfied with it, and that's why I was looking forward to this particular program. In fact, ... I remember one of the professors saying they were excited that I was coming into this program. He said, "Now, don't you go and leave us and get married," and I laughed, you know. Well, [laughter] the next semester, I had met Ed and I changed my mind, you know, but I thought that was an interesting program that I was going into, and I liked the faculty.

SI: What about at Rutgers, in that first time you were at Rutgers?

GL: Yes, well, that worked out very well. I went to Rutgers in Newark and I was comfortable transferring. Again, ... I think there was only two other women in the class. It was mostly men and they didn't have the other campuses, like they do now. In fact, I think the main business school is no longer in Newark. I think, is it? it's in Piscataway.

SI: I am not sure. Is it in Piscataway?

WN: I do not know.

SI: Yes.

GL: No? Well, anyway, ... they did interesting things with the business school. [Editor's Note: The Rutgers Business School has main campuses in Newark and Piscataway.] They mixed with the business people in Newark, and I remember one of the new things they did was have business luncheons that we all, students, went to and mixed us with the business people, too, so [that] we'd learn how to conduct ourselves at a business luncheon. ... I thought that was a very good idea, and then, the library, the Newark Library, is right nearby, and so, they took us over and we had courses on research in the library. All that has changed now, though, with the computer.

SI: Where were the classes held?

GL: In the buildings around the Military Park there, in Robert Treat [Hotel]. There are some buildings there. I don't remember the names of the buildings.

SI: Were they all actual University properties or were they just places that they temporarily found to have classes?

GL: Well, I think they're University properties, but they weren't very fancy. They were very stark kind of classrooms, but I think that all belonged to the University there.

SI: Do any of the professors stand out in your memory?

GL: No. I was just anxious to get my degree and get out. [laughter] I had that one more year to go, ... although I do remember, we had one professor who was a graduate of the Harvard Business School. ... Ed told me that you should never say you're from the "B School," that it should just show by your behavior, and this professor started every class with, "Well, at the 'B School,' [laughter] we do this," and, "At the 'B School,' we do that," [laughter] ... but I don't remember anyone outstanding. I am trying to think; I went from September to the following December, a year from that. So, it's a shame, but I don't remember a lot of these things. [laughter]

SI: No, that is all right. Was there anything particularly innovative in personnel management that you remember that they tried to teach you?

GL: Well, we used to have sessions where we would test each other on being interviewed, for instance, and you'd switch around--you'd be the interviewer and the interviewee--and we did things like that, which I enjoyed doing. I liked personnel management, because I'm more of a people person, although, you know, with the computers, people saying, "Well, you're into computers," you still have to work with people. You know, you can't just work with the machines.

WN: What was your daily schedule like? What time did your classes start? What time did classes end?

GL: Well, let me go back. At Cincinnati, we had classes on Saturdays, so, we would have either a Monday-Wednesday-Friday or a Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday routine, and they'd start at eight in the morning and we would be penalized if we cut a Saturday class. We got a double cut on a Saturday. So, I remember that in particular. At Rutgers, I don't remember the schedule. I didn't go on Saturday, though, and I never got my degree--I mean, ... I never got the certificate. I never graduated in the ceremony because, [at] the last minute, my husband had to work. In fact, I don't have a Rutgers certificate; I'd love to get one. Is there a way?

SI: I think you can get one.

GL: Can you get one?

SI: Yes.

GL: Whom do I contact?

SI: I will make a note to look into that.

GL: All right, because, ... now, it's important to have that certificate. I hang my husband's up and I print them all for other people; I'd like to have one, too. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Let me record this.

GL: Oh, okay.

SI: You were talking about your mother's education.

GL: Yes. My mother wanted to go to college and ... her father wasn't excited about that, even though he was an educated man. It was the old-fashioned education, where the woman's place was in the home. So, my mother finally convinced him that she could go to Newark Normal, which she could commute to by bus. It became Kean College, eventually. So, she went and got her two-year degree and taught, I think, for about five years before she was married. She taught seventh grade. Then, she stayed home to have a family, and then, when World War II came on, ... there was a plea for teachers, because the men were all in service. ... I don't know if I told you this story, but I'll repeat it; she decided she'd go back to teaching. So, I said to her, "Oh, Mother, you're too dumb to teach." Here, I'm all of thirteen, I knew everything, and my sister said, "Oh, it's not that you're too dumb, Mom, it's just that you're hopelessly old-fashioned." So, then, she wrote to my brother, who was already at college, and he wrote back and said, "Mom, you've got to remember that teaching in 1942 is a little different than 1492," and my father was of the old-fashioned ... theme that it's a reflection on his working power if his ... wife went to work. So, with that, she went back to teaching and she went back to studying and got her bachelor's degree. ... She taught until she was sixty-eight, and she lived until she was 102. So, she made it. We were very proud of her and she made us all eat our words. [laughter] ...

WN: Where did she teach?

GL: In the schools in Newark. In fact, she eventually specialized in remedial reading and she taught subnormal children. ... Oh, I can't think of the street, the names of the schools right now, but they were all in Newark and that's where she had lived and taught before she was married. Her sister, too, became a teacher and she taught in the same area.

SI: After you were married and you graduated from Rutgers-Newark, then, you and your husband started raising a family.

GL: Right, and I did volunteer work, you know. ... I worked in the Girl Scouts, Brownie Scouts, even before my kids were born, and I did volunteer work at the temple. I did a lot. In fact, as years went on, we did a lot of work at the temple. I was involved in PTA, I did their newsletters and, you know, the kinds of things you could do when you have a young family and you work around it. Now, our girls are a little over two years apart. We have three daughters, and so, ... when the oldest started school, the other two were still home. The oldest one brought all the diseases home. The mumps and the chickenpox and all those things came down, filtered down into the family. In fact, I remember when the youngest daughter, who was only about a year, or a year-and-a-half, ... I guess, was very upset because the chickenpox didn't come out right away. She wanted to have whatever her sisters had, [laughter] ... and then, with the synagogue, it was a small synagogue. We're only about sixty families and it was like a second family for us. ... We could take our kids there, take the babies there. We would do a lot of things as families, which was wonderful. Now, the synagogue is huge. It's got eleven hundred families and we went through a lot of building fund campaigns, but those were the things, you know, we did, the kind of volunteer work. ... My husband, meanwhile, was very involved with the temple, too, and he also performed in amateur productions, community players, and he was always involved in plays over the years. He's very good and he has very good stage presence. Once he gets on stage, everyone knows it, ... and I'm not interested in acting. I can applaud. [laughter] So, I'm the audience participant in this thing, but that's what we did. ...

SI: Do you want to say your children's names and when they were born?

GL: All right. Ellen is the oldest. She was born in 1952 and she's the one who's the rabbi and she's also a psychoanalyst along with it. Karen was born in 1954 and she's [the] one who's the engineer, and then, she became a project leader. She got a master's in business. Nancy was born in '57 and she's now a ...

EL: Senior vice-president

GL: Senior vice-president, yes.

EL: Marketing

GL: Of marketing in WestPoint Stevens. She's the one that went to Rutgers. ... You want to talk about each one? ...

SI: Sure.

GL: Yes. Well, Nancy, the youngest, started off in Tufts University and she was not very happy there, and so, she didn't want to go back the next year, and they were very nice. They said they'd keep her position open if she wanted to come back later on. So, I said to her, "You know, why don't you try Rutgers?" you know. The kids weren't interested because it was too close to home--sounds more glamorous to go someplace else. So, ... we said to her, "If you want to try Rutgers, we could afford to send you to overseas for, you know, a semester," because, by that time, I was working full-time at Rutgers and I would get the tuition free. So, that's what she did and it worked out beautifully. She went to London for her semester abroad and she found that Rutgers was very challenging. She thought it was going to be very easy after being at Tufts, but she found it was very challenging. ... When she's ready to graduate--she majored in speech and drama--so, the different companies came to interview. They had, you know, one of those days where they interview kids for jobs, and she had an interview with Bloomingdale's and, in the interview, he said, "Have you been to the Bloomingdale's in New York store?" She said, "No, but I plan to go next week." [laughter] She'd been to the suburban one. Then, in the interview, he said, "What do you think you can offer us? You haven't any experience in marketing and you're just a college graduate, but what else?" She said, "Well, I can speak and I can write," and he hired her and she's still speaking and writing. [laughter] ... It was a wonderful training program for her, and then, she moved around. She went to May [Department Stores] Company and a couple other companies and, now, she's in this position here. So, she's made quite a career out of Rutgers, ... and Nancy's husband is in printing. He sells printing--like, they print the PSAT tests and things like that. Big, big jobs, that's what he does. Karen, who's the engineer, went to Carnegie Mellon and she stayed out there in Pittsburgh and worked for many years and met her husband there. She married a little later than Nancy did, and he was a psychiatrist. In fact, he graduated from Rutgers, although she didn't know him there. So, I didn't ... talk about grandchildren yet, I'll just talk about children. [laughter] ... Unfortunately, there was a tragedy in her family and Karen's husband died about ten years ago, of a brain tumor. Then, Ellen is the rabbi and she's had a couple congregations. Right now, she does it part-time, because she's concentrating more on her psychoanalyst [practice], but she has a congregation in Washington, New Jersey, and then, ... her office hours are in New Jersey and New York. So, she's kept pretty busy and she's divorced.

EL: She went to Brown.

GL: What?

EL: She went to Brown University.

GL: Yes, okay. ... She entered Pembroke [College], was the last year of Pembroke [1971], and then, they merged, she always said "submerged," [laughter] with Brown. So, Karen; oh, okay, I lost my train of thought.

EL: Ellen's grant, Israel. ...

GL: Okay. Brown gave out some scholarship grants; one was [from] the person from IBM.

EL: The former president.

GL: The former president of IBM, and they gave out three of these grants every year. It was to give the students a chance to do something that they'd never be able to do any other way, and not enroll in any kind of formal course. So, she had applied to go to Israel and interview women in Israel on their independence or non-independence, and so, she was one of the three students that was chosen for this grant, and it was an outright grant. They just gave her a lump sum of money and she didn't have to write a report or anything. So, when she was over there, that's when she enrolled in the rabbinical school, because that's five years post-graduate. She never thought she'd finish, but I said to her, "You might as well try. You have no responsibilities right now," and so, she did, and so, she's been in it, what? almost thirty years now. Okay, do you want to know about grandchildren?

SI: Sure. How many grandchildren do you have?

GL: Okay. We have six. ... Each girl had two children. Now, I'll start [with] the oldest one, Ellen. ... Her oldest son is about thirty and he's a writer and he's had some articles published in *Harper's Magazine* and he's just negotiating to write a book. ... The next one, Micah, works for Apple Computer and he's living in Shanghai right now, because Apple was sending him back and forth to the States. Gideon, the oldest, is living in Germany right now.

EL: They both went to Stanford.

GL: Okay, and he's not upset about the Germans at all. You know, when I talk about how we felt when we were in Munich, he said, "It's so different now," and there are a lot of young people and it's inexpensive to live there. So, that's that family. Then, Karen, ... who's the engineer ...

EL: Wait, wait, he's a Fulbright fellow, Gideon.

GL: Gideon, the oldest, yes, he got a Fulbright Scholarship. That's how he got to Germany. He got a Fulbright Scholarship to Berlin for a year and he wanted them to continue it, [laughter] but they only gave him a year, but that's how he got over there. So, in Karen's family, the oldest, ... he graduated from Oberlin [College in Ohio]. He was training to work in music, but behind the scenes, in the festivals and everything, but he was having trouble getting a job and he plays a couple instruments. So, he's now on a ship, playing in the band. So, he goes sightseeing in the morning, rehearses in the afternoon and plays the band in the evening and earns money. [laughter] ... After a couple months of this, he came to New York to try and get a job, but he couldn't get anything, so, he went back on the ship, but it's a wonderful opportunity, without penalizing him.

EL: Holland-America.

GL: Holland-America. In fact, next May, he qualifies for a Mediterranean cruise, and the third family is a young family. ...

EL: Noah, Noah.

GL: Oh, Noah is graduating from Carnegie Mellon this year and he's into computers, in a specialized program, and he's president of his fraternity and he's an all around good kid. He also performed in plays like his grandfather and often had the same parts. He has a very nice singing voice. Can I go onto Nancy's family now?

EL: Yes, go ahead.

GL: Nancy has a daughter who's seventeen. She's a senior in high school. She goes to Princeton Day School and [is] applying to colleges and she's terrific. She's into everything. She [plays] soccer, track and does very well academically.

EL: Fully fluent in Spanish.

GL: ... They had nannies. My daughters all worked when they had children and they had all different kinds of arrangements for the kids. So, the youngest daughter had a nanny who spoke Spanish, because she was from Central America. So, Rebecca studied Spanish in high school and started to pick up the language. So, one day, she was at Princeton when a family wanted to see the grounds and she overheard the office clerk say, "Well, we don't have anyone to speak Spanish, to take you around." So, Rebecca said, "I'll take you around. I can speak it," and she did. She spoke well enough to take them around, you know, and the youngest one is Zachary and he's almost thirteen and he's a real boy. He likes lunch and sports and he's very bright and very lazy when it comes to school. ... They're all great kids. We're very, very blessed to have children and grandchildren. You know, we know a lot of people that aren't so blessed. So, they keep up a lot; well, they don't take so much of our time now. When they were small, we spent a lot more time with them, but, now, they're branching out on their own and they're in our thoughts, but we don't see them as much.

SI: In these years between when you started your family and when you went back to Rutgers, did you ever consider going into the work force and going back to school?

GL: In the back of my mind, I thought, eventually, I would do something, and so that when this article appeared in the paper about the Ford Foundation program, I think I got a mailing from Rutgers on it, too. I got it from both ends, and the timing was such that the children were in school, that, ... you know, I went for it and, of course, the fact that my mother had gone back to school was [a precedent]. She kept drumming it into us, ... my sister and me. She said, "First of all, you should really be teachers, because of the hours, but you really should be prepared, because you can never know what happens in life and that you should have a career." So, she really taught us that. My sister ended up teaching, she's in science, and so, she went that direction. So, I kept busy, you know, with, as I said, PTA--then, we built a house and sold a house--until I got saturated with all this volunteer stuff. ... That's when I started studying and thinking of going to work, because I figured I put all those hours in and, with kids in college, we could use the money, which we did.

SI: How long was the program?

GL: It wasn't [set up that way]. They just had a lot of courses and you could take it. It wasn't a prescribed set of courses. You could take whatever you wanted, and I guess I took some courses for two years, maybe, and then, I started working and I knew which direction I was going to go at that point. So, when my daughter, Karen, who is the engineer, told us that she switched her program, was going to go into engineering, she said, "Why didn't you go into engineering?" I said, "That's something that never occurred to me at the time." My brother was an engineer, but I said, "It just never occurred that I could be an engineer. I probably could have," but [I did not consider it].

SI: At that time, computer science and electrical engineering were very much hand-and-glove. Is that correct?

GL: Yes. Well, there weren't formal computer science courses for a long time, because when I was taking them, in fact, when I started working at Rutgers, most everyone had a non-computer background, ... formal, you know. They picked up a computer on the side or something, but the computer courses came later on.

EL: Talk about the big frames and your programming.

SI: Yes, what was the state of the art when you first started learning about computers?

GL: Yes. Well, I took this one job, the first job I took, working for this professor. It was the punch card era. I don't know if you know this, the punch cards used to come in boxes of two thousand and they were heavy and there wasn't any such thing as tapes and disks on the machine. They're just big, clumsy machines. ... I remember, and this job was at Princeton, I stacked these five boxes on a chair with casters and pushed it up and down the hall, because I couldn't lift them, and then, we had the trouble of the cards getting all mangled up. ... You know, so, it was an entirely different kind of computer work than now and, when you installed a program, you didn't just punch a couple buttons and install. You had to create sub-routines and add, and then, put them in order and get them together. So, it was very different, but it still was fascinating, you know. ... Then, when I worked at Rutgers Computer Center, we were servicing all kinds of machines and systems, but, again, that was pre-PC, so that we had, I remember, ... one system called PLATO [Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations]. ... I was working with a professor, this was at the computer center at Rutgers, who wanted to use this particular system for his math class. So, I was helping him set up the whatever program he's going to do and, all of a sudden, I realized he was dropping his voice at the end of every sentence. ... I said, "Did you happen to ... have taught this such-and-such class fifteen years ago?" He said, yes, he did. He had grown a beard since then, but he was the same person that dropped the same voice. I thought that was really funny. So, we reversed roles that time and I helped him. [laughter]

SI: I am looking at your résumé now. The first job you have down here is 1967 to 1968 at the Center for Computer Information Sciences at Rutgers-Newark.

GL: Yes.

SI: Was the work you did with the professor before this?

GL: No, it was after, yes. The professor there--I was teaching FORTRAN--and Bill something, I forget his name, he was really a wonderful person, but, anyway, no, that was a different setup, right.

SI: What kind of projects did you work on there?

GL: I don't remember any; you mean specific projects?

SI: Is there anything that stands out in your memory?

GL: Well, when I got to the main campus, in [the] Sociology Department, [to] go back to that, my field ended up being machine readable data files. These now are on discs and tapes, but, in the beginning, they weren't. ... We had belonged to some organizations like ICPSR and Inter-University Social and Political Science [Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research], and there would be surveys--Census data, in fact, was one of the big ones--and people would want to research a section of that. So, we would get these data files from these different sources. The Census data, Rutgers and Princeton had a joint project and we would get the tapes together and we would get them and teach them [the sociologists] how to use it and people would research them. I remember, when I was in Newark, one of the guys was researching, it was the time of the riots, in 1967, and there were data tapes on those things, you know. That's the kind of topic they would choose. [Editor's Note: The Newark riots of July 1967 resulted in over two dozen deaths, over seven hundred injuries, fifteen hundred arrests and property damage exceeding ten million dollars.] So, all the different departments would choose these projects for statistical analysis. So, the Sociology Department had written their own statistical package, because the commercial ones hadn't come out yet, but, then, by the time I got to the computer center, the commercial ones [had been released], SAS [Statistical Analysis System] and SPSS, I don't know if you're familiar with this, Statistical Package for Social Science. So, these were geared, you know, for social science data, and so, that was the part I worked mostly in. I would teach that and document. We did a lot of documentation. We had an education series every fall, which were lectures on all kinds of things. We would set up whatever people were requesting. So, those were the kinds of projects I got involved in. Then, we had a reference library where we would print out code books for these data files, and we worked in conjunction with the libraries. In fact, I wrote an article, I kept one of these, showing [how we were] jointly working with the library. ... I think it was a generic thing I wrote it on, but, anyway, we did that kind of thing. ... Then, I did, I was always involved in, the publishing. First of all, we had newsletters that we printed ... I think every two months, I don't remember, and then, I created, this was my project, "A Guide to the Facilities and Services at CCIS." So, these are the kinds of things that I did.

EL: Tell them about when we moved to Florida, the job you were going to get and the way they reacted to you.

GL: Yes, okay, and this was a big project. ... I used an old program and I adapted it to my needs. Again, it was all the social sciences and the files that we had and descriptions of them and how to get them. ...

SI: Let me read some of these for the recording.

GL: Okay.

SI: This first document is *The International Association for Social Science Information Service and Technology Quarterly*, Winter Edition 1984, Volume 8, Number 4. The article you wrote was called, "Data Service in a Computer Center." This is *The Center for Computer Information Services, Rutgers University, Guide to Machine Readable Data Files*, September 1989, Volume 1, "Data Descriptions and Indexes."

GL: That was cataloged in the Rutgers Library.

SI: You also have the CCIS newsletter and *The Guide to the Center for Computer Information Services Facilities and Services, 1990-1991*.

GL: I retired on January 1, 1991.

SI: It sounds like a large portion of your job was spent adapting the needs of researchers to the abilities of the computer system.

GL: Absolutely.

SI: How difficult was that?

GL: Sometimes, it was very difficult. I remember researching a man who was studying fish and we sat and talked and, all of a sudden, he said to me, "You don't know much about fish, do you?" and I felt like saying, "You don't know much about computers, do you?" [laughter] because you have to channel what they want in to fit into the computer. The sociologists, it was difficult because they thought in broad terms and you have to be very specific with a computer, and so, you have to try and find out what they really wanted, and then, funnel them in the right direction. ... The other thing [was] that, unfortunately, you never saw the end of the project. You helped them in the middle or wherever they had a problem, but you never saw the end result, but that's what made it interesting. Everyone was different. ... Even though the computer was the same, everyone else was different.

SI: How did the labs, the infrastructure and their abilities, at Rutgers grow over your time there?

GL: Yes, well, it did grow quite a bit. You know, we started to have these satellite computer centers, where it'd all been just the main computer center [at first], and then, a lot of our funds, our director used to get them from different departments, but, for instance, the Engineering Department decided to buy their own computers. ... So, we lost out on our funding because they took that for their own computers, and then, when the PCs [personal computers] came in, we were a little bit slow in the computer center picking up on that. Everyone was picking up PCs, and I remember talking to my boss about, "We've got to ... find out what the PCs are about," and he wasn't paying much attention. So, when he was on vacation, my immediate boss and I decided to have a session on teaching how to use--it wasn't Microsoft Word, it was one of the

other editing programs--so that our secretaries would know how to use it and we could give them our work and they would, you know, use the PCs. So, we got on the bandwagon, but we were a little bit late in doing that. You know, we didn't see it like other people saw it.

SI: When you say people were getting PCs, would individual professors just buy their own PCs?

GL: Yes, or the departments, you know, they were all setting up labs of their own. ... By that time, we had labs, you know, around the campuses, but you just never had enough labs. At one point, I was Manager of User Services and I was responsible for getting these students to help man the labs and it was hard, and they would work ... all night, all crazy hours, but, you know, we had to really keep on top of it. ... We worked a lot with the work study students and they gave us a certain number in the department, and then, we'd train them to do these different things. For instance, once, when we started working with the Census data, we started working with the big magnetic tapes. I hadn't done that before. So, we had to learn how to do that, and then, of course, the disks came in. So, you had to keep up. I always said I became obsolete the day I retired, you know. Now, when Ed mentioned about jobs, ... we were going to Florida and we both had the possibility of part-time jobs. I had interviewed at one of the community colleges down there and they had nothing at that time, and he said to me, "Boy, you'd be [great]. You're overqualified for anything you could do," and I said, "Well, I was just thinking of working a few hours," you know, but we were there like two minutes and I said to my husband, "What do you want to work for? All these years, we've been waiting to retire." We were afraid we couldn't fill our time. Well, we never had problems with that. [laughter] We did volunteer work in Florida. We worked in the local civic community. In fact, ... we were responsible for getting a wonderful park up and services for our local people. ... In fact, we even went to some PTA meetings--they didn't call them PTA down there--and I thought, "Gee, I thought I'd finished with that up in New Jersey." ... So, we never did work for money and, again, we sort of, after awhile, became a little saturated with volunteering and, as I said, I played golf and I play tennis, Ed plays golf, I play bridge, I play mahjong--I like to play all these things. So, I must say, the last couple years, I've been rather selfish and I've been playing, [laughter] and then, up here, too, of course, you know, when you get six months one place and six months in the other, it's sort of hard with continuity. I'm on what's called the welcoming committee here and, when people move in, we take turns welcoming them in, helping them get acclimated, because ... most people, when they come in here, have moved from a big house to a little apartment and it requires an adjustment. [laughter] In fact, I've never lived in an apartment building before. So, it's fine and we're very pleased with it, but it requires time and patience. So, not to change the subject, I did print out, you might be interested in this, about my childhood. This is what came out of my genealogy book and I printed that, because I thought maybe there are some more things in there that we didn't touch or that you might be interested in.

SI: In your career at Rutgers, you were there at a very interesting time, when computers moved from just being used by researchers for very specific purposes to PCs being used for such a wide variety of purposes by such a wide variety of people.

GL: Right.

SI: It sounds like some of what you were doing was taken over by the departments and other people buying their own computers. How did the computer center try to cope with these changes?

GL: Well, we tried to develop this education series, which we always had, and we changed, each time, what to teach. We tried to go with the flow. Wherever the need was, we would teach that course. Word Perfect was the one we started with; I'd forgotten that. I never liked that, I liked Word, but, anyway, ... we'd meet with these department heads, too. A lot of times, they got their own PCs, but they still wanted our expertise.

SI: Would you be responsible for servicing any of this other equipment that people bought in the departments or individually?

GL: Yes. Well, ... we had a service department in the computer center, where we go out and service the machines. That was part of, you know, [how] the department expanded in that area. In fact, one of my friends, she has a son who started working when he was a student there and he didn't graduate, but he ended up, he's terrific in electrical work and setting up the computers and there's like a shop there that he works out of. Of course, you know, with the dormitories now, they have all the electrical equipment to handle the PCs. So, people come with their own PCs right off the bat.

SI: Would you have to work with other departments, like the facilities and maintenance departments, to help build the infrastructure to support these computers?

GL: Well, we would give advice on these things. You know, we were on different committees, and were invited to participate.

SI: For example, how to wire computers in terms of electricity needs and those things?

GL: Yes. ... In fact, I'll never forget, we had a course arranged for us on putting together a computer, soldering and doing all that. We did it. You know, it was a learning experience for us and it was terrific. I had a funny thing happen here, when I welcomed someone who moved here, a gentleman who was having trouble getting his cable working. So, I thought [I would help]. Well, I'm crawling under his desk, trying to figure out all the wires and everything, and I couldn't figure it out. I didn't understand why. Then, he found out his service hadn't been turned on, [laughter] which is probably something I should have ... started with. ... People here all have PCs, you know, everyone has their own. ... Of course, when I started with the genealogy, when I first retired, I didn't have a PC and I didn't realize how much I missed it, how much a part it was of my daily routine. So, then, I finally got it and started with this genealogy, and I took courses in genealogy and I was using a computer program that was rather old. ... Then, I went to one of these conferences and they had a lot newer computer programs. So, I shifted to *Family Tree Maker*, is the one I use. In fact, in the back of those books, I have the family trees--that's the output from the *Family Tree Maker*, which I manipulated, but, yes, that's it.

WN: When you started working in the computer field, were there a lot of other women as well or were you one of the few?

GL: No, there were women in the department. ... As I said, there was no prejudice because there weren't enough people around that knew the stuff. So, there were always women. I worked with women and the men. One year, I worked at Union County Technical Institute and I had a Chinese professor, ... or boss, I guess you'd say, and he was going to put all the business applications on the computer. Meanwhile, they had me doing bookkeeping, which I had never done before. I didn't even keep my own books at home, [laughter] but I never got to touch the computer. He kept me away from the computer, so, I quit. [laughter] It didn't work out.

SI: You mentioned, earlier, someone doing research on the Newark riots in 1967.

GL: Yes.

SI: Were you taking classes in Newark at that time? Did it have any impact on your life?

GL: Yes, it did, because I was working at that time and I used to park my car in an outdoor parking garage and I ended up parking in an indoor parking garage during that time. I never felt it otherwise, but I didn't trust to stay out in the streets. So, I remember, my father had some stores on Springfield Avenue in Newark and, fortunately, they were not affected. Some of these stores, they had a lot of damage and everything, but his were okay. He rented them, you know. ... So, fortunately, I was okay with that, in Newark.

WN: What were your experiences on campus like during the Vietnam War? How did it affect you?

GL: Well, other than I thought it was a terrible war, I wasn't involved with anything. As I said, I'm not really an activist in a lot of these things, but I don't remember any discussion on campus about that. That was [the] '60s, right?

SI: Were there any protests that you remember seeing?

GL: I'm just saying I started working in '69, I think. ... Once in awhile, there was a protest. I remember, I was working with a professor and he cancelled the class because there was a protest, you know. ... Things like that sometimes affected us.

SI: When you started working in New Brunswick, where were you located?

GL: On the College Avenue Campus, and the computer center was in the basement of one of those buildings. So, we used to walk over. Again, I used to have to carry these cards, to walk over, and then, eventually, the computer center was developed in the Piscataway Campus, and then, I moved over there. In Princeton, ... their computer center was in the engineering department, originally, and then, they got their own, because we used to, ... as I said, go back and forth sometimes with ... the data, the sociology data. ...

SI: In 1970, the University was shut down because of the protest movement. Do you remember anything about that?

GL: No, I don't remember that. I guess I wasn't affect by it. [laughter]

WN: Do you remember the feeling around campus when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated?

GL: Oh, yes; well, I don't know about campus, but my own personal life. In fact, I remember, we were sitting glued to the television and someone rang the doorbell and they weren't aware of what was going on, but, ... just for days, we were in a daze about the whole thing. I don't remember on campus what happened. I just remember being at home. ... I guess I wasn't. ... What year was he assassinated?

WN: 1963.

GL: Yes, so, I wasn't ... on the campus then. I was studying. I just went back to school. It was in the 1960s, but I wasn't working then.

WN: I have a question about your retraining in math. You said it was sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

GL: Yes.

WN: Was that a lengthy application process or did you just say, "I want to go?"

GL: No, they did have a test we had to take, to test our ability in math and spatial relations, [and] so forth. We did have to do that, although I don't know anyone who was really turned down. ... The first year, I paid for the tuition, but, then, I found, after that, that they would take care of your tuition, and then, ... they ran out of funds and it was taken over by the National Science Foundation. So, it continued for quite awhile and, as I said, people had all kinds of backgrounds. ... When I was at the computer center and hiring programmers, in the beginning, very few of them had degrees in programming, you know, and then, you started to see degrees in computer programming. ... The colleges were picking it up.

SI: You have done a lot of technical writing. Was that a challenge to learn?

GL: Yes. The funny thing is, I went in the math field because I didn't like to write, and I found, as you moved up the scale, you had to write and write and write. [laughter] So, yes, we used to proof each other's documents a lot in the computer center, for accuracy and for clarity, and, sometimes, I'd send ... some of my staff to workshops on writing. So, it does require a different skill than just normal writing.

SI: Tell us about when you became Manager of User Services. What did you try to implement and what were the big challenges?

GL: ... Yes. Well, the education series was the big thing, and to keep it current and keep up with what people wanted. Then, we did a lot with the different departments, too, if we could.

You know, if they requested cooperation on some projects, we tried to do that. ... Our goal was to help as many departments as possible and, if they came in with a suggestion, we would consider it. You know, ... we didn't always do everything, but we had to [make an effort], and then, we trained students on, we had what was called aid stations, I don't know if they have them now, where ... you could come and ask any kind of computer question and a student would help. ... We would train these students and they were pretty good, and the funny thing was, I remember taking some examples of output, ... from I don't know where, and one of the students came up, he said, "That's my output," you know. [laughter] ... It amazed me that the computer center was open all night long, you know, and people would be there at two in the morning, because I was used to a much more structured household. So, I don't remember any individual projects, other than we were willing to tackle anything that came along, as long as we got permission from up above.

SI: Were your superiors usually supportive of things you tried to do?

GL: Yes, they were. My superior was great. ... All along, she supported me and we developed this computer reference center, this library. ... Again, it was documentation, and so forth, but we geared it specifically for computers, which they hadn't had before. You know, the libraries were general libraries. So, that was one of the projects we did, now that I think of it.

SI: Was that within the computer center or was it at one of the libraries?

GL: No, it was in the computer center, but our work with the librarians ... became more and more important, because we really were doing the same thing, but from a different approach. So, I worked with the librarians on that.

SI: Before you left, had they started to introduce the Internet and networking capabilities?

GL: No, they didn't have that at that point. I used to go down all the time--you know, not all the time, but once or twice a year--to visit our department. So, I remember trying it out while I was down there, but I had never done it before. That's why I said, in this field, you become obsolete very quickly. I'm very frustrated with my PC. [laughter] I had someone just last night trying to help me with my files. I was trying to change file type and I just clobbered them. ...

SI: Did you often have to deal with data migration in any capacity?

GL: What do you mean by data migration?

SI: Moving the same data through different formats.

GL: Yes, well, we did that, yes. We did a little bit of everything.

WN: What was the most challenging project that you had to undertake or manage while at Rutgers?

GL: Oh, I think the most challenging's when I went back to college that first time. That was [a time when] I'd been out of school twelve, thirteen years, and another friend of mine was going down the same time. She was going to the library school, and we were feeling pretty big, pretty, you know, terrific that we were going to go back to college, and we had to register on the Douglass Campus. So, we went in to have lunch at the Douglass Campus and it was crowded and two girls got up and gave us their seats. [laughter] We just felt so deflated. It was so obvious that we weren't part of the scene there, you know, but, in our class, it was a mixture of all people and all ages. ... It seems to me, that first test, midterm I took, I didn't finish it, which upset me. I don't ever remember not finishing a test. So, I think that that initial thing was the most challenging, but as far as ... the work I did, you know, some of the jobs were challenging, some not. Nothing stands out as being particularly different.

SI: You also told us some stories about your travels. Do you want to tell us a little bit about the places you have been and things you have done?

GL: ... I think my husband's favorite trip was the safari, and, as you see, if you go in the kitchen, you'll see the pictures of all the safaris. What was the other place that you mentioned that you liked? I thought China was fascinating and, [when] we went in China, it was 1992. I mean, it's ... a lot different now, but the fact that my husband spoke the Chinese language made it fun. He would try things out. In fact, one night, we were scheduled for dinner at nine o'clock at night and I said, "Oh, I've got to go to bed before then." I was so tired. So, I said, "Let's eat early." So, ... we went to the guide, and there were two dining rooms in that particular restaurant, hotel, and the guide said [to see the maitre d']. We went to the maitre d' and he said, "There's no room, nothing. You can't eat before nine." So, then, we went to the other dining room and the same thing. Then, my husband started speaking Chinese, and I didn't know what he was saying, but their faces went like this [in shock], and he said, "I am an old man," in Chinese, "I am hungry. I need to eat now." Well, do you know, they found space for us and didn't even charge us for dinner, [laughter] ... but, anyway, the Chinese [trip], the whole scene was so different. I thought that was fascinating. We took land tours, we took cruise tours. ... The latest things are riverboat cruises we've been taking in Europe. We really covered a lot of territory. The first trip we took was a freighter/passenger ship. It was an old ship. It was a communications ship in World War II and it went to Haiti for freight, and then, to Panama for it to transport employees back and forth, and nothing fancy, no band, ... just the people mixed with the crew, and it was wonderful. We got to Panama, though, and went to a nightclub and men were standing there with Tommy guns. That shook me up a little. [laughter] In fact, we've been to Israel a few times, and the first time we went to Israel was before the war in '67. We saw only half the country; you couldn't see the "Wailing Wall" [the Western Wall]. There are certain things you couldn't see, and then, we went back, I think in '75, and saw the rest of the country. We had an Israeli exchange student living with us for six months, which was a ticklish kind of situation. My oldest daughter was sixteen and she was sixteen, and she really wanted to have a boyfriend and have fun and my girls, at that point, weren't dating. They had fun as a group of people and they took school seriously. She didn't. I got called in by every teacher, and I'd never been called in by teachers for my own kids. ... It was right after the Six-Day War and, again, when you talk about how you look at your country, her whole being was this Six-Day War, and she had a younger brother and an older brother in service and a father. So, her life was very different than our lives. So, I could understand a lot of these things, but our kids weren't too

happy about it. Anyway, so, the last [trip], well, we took a mid-Eastern European tour and toured all those countries where our families were from. ... Wherever I could, I tried to trace something back, you know, and, in fact, we were in London, England, and Ed's father was born in London. The family was emigrating from Russia to the United States and they stayed in London for five years. We went to the hall of records and they had these huge volumes and they entered marriages, deaths and births, and we got a lot of information about his family out of that. So, that always added to the trips. Also, on our trips, we always liked to visit synagogues in different countries, because that, too, is very different than what we have here. So, we bought [art], and these paintings are all from our trips. That's Israel and this is Mexico. In fact, we bought the little pictures for our kids and we never gave it to them; we got home and I framed them for ourselves. We'd buy inexpensive pictures, and then, I'd spend a fortune framing them, ... and then, we have our families over there, if you'd like to see what the family is.

[TAPE PAUSED]

GL: Oh, okay, all right.

SI: Before the interview started, you were telling us about when you visited Russia and how you visited with the *refuseniks*. Can you tell us what led to that, and then, what you did there?

GL: Well, the Russian tour was published in the *New York Times*. You know, it was just a regular tour, but, in the synagogue, we had been working with an organization called NCRAC, National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, which was working with ... Russian *refuseniks*. Now, *refusenik*, the term came when a Russian wanted to leave his country and the country refused to let him go, and then, he usually lost his job and was known as a "parasite." So, it was a vicious circle and the Russian Jews were having a tough time. So, we signed up for this tour for a week. It was going to go to Leningrad and Moscow.

EL: St. Petersburg, now.

GL: So, we were given, by this NCRAC organization, cards, three-by-five cards, where the English name was on one side and the Russian address was on the other side. ... We would show it, we were told to show it, to the taxi cab driver and he would take us, but that Ed should go knock on the door, but I should stay in the car, to make sure someone was home, because we wouldn't be able to get a cab back, because these places were way out. So, we started off, and we also had brought things for them to sell in the black market. We brought dungarees and books and calculators, things that we would say belonged to us. It looked like it did and we could give it to them to sell. So, the first place we went, the buildings were tall and dark and they had numbers on it. The cab driver had to stop ... to see the number and we finally found the building and my husband left me to go up to knock on the door. Meanwhile, I sat there, realizing that, here, it's pitch black, I'm with a guy who doesn't speak English, no one knows I'm there. If anything happened, no one would know, and my husband ... had to walk up four flights because the elevator didn't work. ... He knocked on the door and said, "*Shalom*," and they weren't home. So, he came down. I was so happy to see him, [laughter] and he knew I was [worried]. His heart was palpitating. So, then, we went to another person's house and that was a better lit area and Ed went up and came back with a smile that they were at home and I could go in with him. So, they

didn't speak English well. They spoke Yiddish and, fortunately, my husband speaks a little Yiddish, so, we could converse. There were two families that were sharing the same apartment and we started to talk about things and they would shake their finger and point to; they had a magic slate. You know, our kids used to have that, where you could write, and then, you lift the paper up [to clear it]. So, ... we would use that when we were saying things we shouldn't say, and they were sure they were bugged. ... The doorbell rang and my husband and I were convinced it was the KGB and we've had it, but it was a friend of theirs who was visiting. ... Then, another couple came, and they were from Cleveland, Ohio. ... They were going to go to Kiev, we weren't, and so, the person we were visiting said, "Can we give your books to them for Kiev?" because Leningrad and Moscow would get the books, but Kiev was not getting them. So, they were sharing. So, we survived that. [laughter]

SI: What books were they?

GL: They were mostly on Judaism or prayer books.

EL: Religious prayer books.

GL: Yes. When we flew over to Russia, Smith had written a book on Russia that was not very flattering, [Hedrick Smith's *The Russians* (1975)], and we saw, in the airplane, there were stacks of books, because they said to us, "Don't take those books into Russia. They're not going to like it," and one of the people had ... an article in her purse that was not very nice on Russia. ... As she was getting off the plane; they called her in and questioned her. ... Another couple had a problem, there were two couples traveling together and, [at] the last minute, one couple didn't go, and then, they found out their pictures had been switched on their passports. So, it was harrowing just getting into the country, you know.

SI: As far as you know, were you the only ones going in who were working with this group?

GL: Yes, and we didn't tell anyone until after the trip was over. Everyone said, "Oh, we would have loved to have done it," but we kept very quiet about it and we tried to keep up with these people afterwards. It's very hard to do that. I found out that the one man, ... his family was in the States and he finally got out. Another man, he had a fiancée in Israel and he never got out. He ended up staying in the country. So, you know, they were having a rough time.

EL: Tell them about Moscow.

GL: Then, in Moscow, we went and this man was a scientist and he conducted science seminars every Sunday, ... to keep them up in the field, because these people were now *refuseniks*. ... They couldn't study, they couldn't work. ... I found out, when I got back to Rutgers, later on, that there were a couple professors at Rutgers, professors of math, that had taught ... in Russia in these seminars. They used to get these people from all over the world to come, ... and that family in Moscow, I think they got out. I'm not sure, I forget now. ... Then, we flew out of Moscow to go back to New York and the weather was very bad and, at that time, Pan Am flights were coming through. So, the pilot came down and he said, "If we can load the plane in X amount of minutes, we can beat the storm." I never saw a group of American people get up and

move, quietly and fast, because ... even though they weren't visiting people like we were, it was a very depressing country to visit at the time.

WN: Was this in the 1980s?

GL: '70s, '76, because they were advertising the sixtieth year of the [October] Revolution [of 1917], and the day we left, they had a parade with these huge missiles and all the equipment was going along with us to the airport. So, that's when it was. I think situations ... are much improved, but they're slipping again.

WN: My father went in the 1980s on a similar type of mission.

GL: Did he?

WN: Yes. He wore five to six layers of clothing on the plane, had two full suitcases of clothing and books and all kinds of medicine and other things that they could sell.

GL: Oh, no kidding, yes.

WN: He said he was in a hotel and they were talking about how they needed more pillows, but they did not call the desk. Someone came up and brought them pillows, so, they realized that the room was bugged.

GL: Oh, I know. We were afraid to speak, you know, in the room. We were whispering, because, you know, we didn't know what was going to happen. ...

SI: Did you have to take any other precautions, such as going a different route when you would go out and take a cab?

GL: No, they kept you very busy, morning, noon and night, so that, I mean, we had to break away from the group and take a taxicab to do this, but they tried to keep you ...

EL: Not during the day. We went at night

GL: Yes, but they tried to keep you so busy that you wouldn't try to do [anything], but we didn't have trouble walking around. Did you want to say something?

EL: No, just that this was an aside thing. We went on the regular tours during the day and we went on these visits at night and we didn't tell anybody about it.

GL: Yes. Is that what your father did, too?

WN: He just went out. He did not do a tour. It was just solely to do this.

GL: Yes. Well, as I said, we got back on the plane and we told people what we were doing. They ... all would have liked to have helped, but it was rather nerve-wracking. I mean, we were

told that if we were stopped by the KGB, this is [by] people in the States, we should just say we're friends of these people and we can visit whomever we want, but that's easier said than done when you face them, you know. In fact, when we got off the plane, the inspectors that were checking things, they looked like the gangsters that you see [in the media]. You know, they just looked wrong to us, you know, looked frightening to us, that we might just have misinterpreted it, you know. ... So, that was an interesting vacation.

WN: My dad's friend, when he got off the plane, he was taken into the side room for a really long time. Basically, they made a plan with each other that if one of them was taken away, the other person should just go after thirty minutes if they are not back, but, eventually, they were let off. It was very nerve-wracking.

GL: ... Oh, wow. Yes, well, you know, it's not a comfortable situation.

SI: Is there anything about your career at Rutgers that we have not discussed or that you would like to mention?

GL: Gee, I don't think so.

EL: How about your hiring that Czech?

GL: Oh, I was hiring ... someone for my staff and he's from Czechoslovakia, and [had] only been in the country two months and spoke English quite well. He was staying with family who spoke English. So, I said to him, "Where'd you learn to speak English?" He said, "Well, in Czechoslovakia, it was very difficult to get instruction books for the computer." At that time, you know, everything was in hard copy. Now, everything's on the computer--you don't need it. So, he said, "Once in awhile, an IBM manual would come floating in," and that's how he learned English. I hired him on the spot. I figured, "If anyone can make sense out of an IBM manual," [laughter] because their English is different than our English. So, he was a good one to hire, too.

[TAPE PAUSED]

WN: Going back to the 1950s and the start of the Cold War and McCarthyism, did you hear about the McCarthy trials and did you know anyone affected by it?

GL: Yes. Well, no, but ... we did follow the McCarthy trials and were very surprised. You know, ... he pulled these people out of a hat, as far as I was concerned--wasn't aware of any of that stuff.

EL: "Ellen, the Activist," Gert. ...

GL: Ellen, my daughter, has always been the activist. In fact, she used to go on these marches. I used to worry whether she'd be coming back in a whole piece or not, okay.

EL: Martin Luther King, [Jr.], marches.

GL: So, one day, when she's about fifteen, sixteen, she said she wanted to talk to us. We went and [had to] sit on the porch. It was very serious, and I said, "What is it?" and she said, "I think you people are underachievers," and I said, "Why underachievers?" [She said], well, we didn't go on marches and we didn't do this and we didn't do that. I said, "Well, you know, we're sort of busy earning a living, and we do volunteer work," ... but she was solving the problems of the world at that time. ... She doesn't remember it all, though, of course, but I thought that was a funny, funny story.

SI: Did you follow the Civil Rights Movement at all?

GL: Oh, yes, we were following it, but we were watching her carefully.

EL: Tell them the story about *The Leader*, the newspaper, and the three editors at Westfield, Westfield High School.

GL: Oh, Ellen was an editor of a newspaper and they were told that when they were given a deadline, come hell or high water, they had to go through and put their paper in, and so forth. So, she and the other girl and the other fellow, they just all happened to be Jewish. So, when the counselor set up a deadline, he set it on Yom Kippur. ... They explained to him that that's the holiest day and they're not supposed to write; he wouldn't listen. He said, "That's the deadline. You must [turn it in], no matter what." So, when it came Christmastime, they scheduled a date on Christmas Day and he said, "You can't do it on Christmas Day," and they said, "Why not?" you know. So, he [said], "*Touché*." They showed him what they meant.

SI: Good for them.

GL: Yes. We had trouble in the high school; in fact, there was a court case. They had religious tableaux for years and there were seventy families that were in this court case, and they were not all Jewish--they were Jewish, non-Jewish, they're quite a mixture of people--saying that they shouldn't have that during the school time. ... It should be volunteer or after school, but to make the kids sit through that, they felt it was a religious ceremony and not a regular ceremony. So, the court case, they settled out of court, that the decision was that this tableau should be done after school, and then, anyone can go or not go, and then, the interest died and it fizzled out, after all that. ... One of my daughters was in high school at that time and she was very uncomfortable because she was one of the seventy families that was involved. ...

SI: Did she just feel uncomfortable about it or did the people at school pressure her?

GL: No, she just felt uncomfortable about it and [within] the discussion among the kids, you know, and, after awhile, of course, it quieted down. She didn't do anything about it, no one did anything to her about it, but you get that feeling, you know.

EL: Shut the thing off a second.

[TAPE PAUSED]

EL: You may want to record [this]; this is a great story.

SI: Off the record, we were talking about how Westfield was a very WASP-y, tradition-bound community. In the postwar years, new populations came in and challenged the existing order.

GL: Well, when Ellen, my oldest, was two, we had just moved in to Westfield and it was about October and there's a lot of discussion of Christmas already. So, I decided to have a Hanukkah party for Ellen and her friends. Well, the mothers were all fascinated. They wanted to come, too, because none of them knew of Hanukkah. So, I had the Hanukkah party and we baked Hanukkah cookies and we sang Hanukkah songs, and the kids loved it. ... The next year, I had it and I remember one little boy saying, after we sang a Hanukkah song, he says, "I have a song. I want to sing, too," and I said, "What?" and he said, "Jesus but loves me, the Bible tells us so, [*Jesus Loves Me*]." So, they understood that this was a religious thing. So, after a few years, I thought, "Well, you know, [since] the kids are getting bigger and the mothers don't have to come, I'll stop." Well, they wouldn't let me stop the party. One little fellow came up, he said, "Isn't it time for the 'Harmonica' party this year?" So, the ten years we lived in the neighborhood, we had a Hanukkah party. ...

EL: There was very good dialogue between the rabbi and the ministers and the priests in the area, though, and, eventually, things worked out and it's a very mixed community now.

GL: Yes, but you have to, on your own level, ... do things to maintain peace.

SI: Were there other incidents like this, where they would not move events that were on Jewish holidays, insensitivity?

GL: Well, ... every year, I used to go with a calendar to the PTA, because the first year that we were there, they scheduled the school fair on Yom Kippur and the day to meet the teachers on Rosh Hashanah, and they said they didn't realize. So, the next year, I brought the calendar in and they'd already set up the dates, "You need to bring it in earlier." So, the next year, I brought it in. So, I was constantly pushing and we did have those problems, and then, what happened [was], which was interesting, they ended up closing the school on the High Holidays, because they couldn't get substitutes. So, that took care of that. We didn't have anything conflicting on the holidays, but it's always a constant thing. We're always conscious of it and we wished other people would be conscious of it, too.

SI: Do you think it was simply that they just were not aware?

EL: They weren't aware. ...

GL: No, I don't think it was any prejudice. I don't think it was anti-Semitism.

EL: No, no.

GL: I think it was just [that] it wasn't part of their physique and they just didn't pay any attention to it. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: This will conclude our interview with Mrs. Gertrude Jay Lewis on November 20, 2009, in Tinton Falls. We thank you and your husband for having us here today.

GL: I thank you, too.

SI: It has been a real pleasure. You are both very pleasant people and there have been a lot of great stories shared; thank you.

WN: Thank you.

GL: Okay.

[Post Script: My husband was present during this interview and contributed some remarks. He was very supportive of this project. Sadly, he died on February 15, 2010 and will not get to see this final report.]

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

Reviewed by Sydney Rhodes 11/16/10
Reviewed by Jonathan Conlin 11/16/10
Reviewed by Mark Kannell 11/16/10
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 1/20/11
Reviewed by Gertrude J. Lewis 1/25/11