

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
Interview with Rachel Goldfarb
May 20, 1997
Margaret Garrett, Interviewer

Tape 1 of 2, Side A

When liberated Rachel and her mother were in the forest in the area of marshes of Pinsk. They were liberated by Russians. Rachel did not know they were liberated until someone said there were no more Germans there. When they realized they were liberated, Rachel and her mother went to the town where they had lived before the war, Dokczyce, Poland, to see if anyone else from the family would show up. Her mother was warned that if they spent the night there, they might not see the morning. The population was still with the German sentiment that all Jews should be exterminated. They proceeded to larger town, 30 k away, to Glynbourken. By the time they got there a few Jews had already gathered. They had the same warning. All lived in the same house. Another mother and daughter shared the same room with Rachel and her mother. They set up housekeeping there. There were people from the surrounding area; smaller townships joined in that larger township. With numbers everybody felt a greater degree of safety. Rachel's mother enrolled her in school. She started to attend the Russian school there right away. No one knew exactly what was happening. They knew the war was still raging. She was fourteen years old.

Rachel's parents had started her schooling early. By three she read her own story books. In Europe children weren't started in school until seven. She was started at five. She had a governess so she was advanced in math and reading and writing. During the ghetto her mother continued to have private tutoring for her so she continued to get some education. The only period she did not have any instruction was during hiding--about two years. When they came to the city, Glynbourken, and school was established she enrolled again. Throughout her travels through Europe she was exposed in some way to some form of informal education. The older survivors took charge of the younger survivors, trying to instruct them. She gained a little knowledge here and there. Every place where survivors gathered, there was always interest to teach the children. Because there was nothing to do, the adults were anxious to impart whatever knowledge they had to the younger kids.

By the time they got to Budapest, Hagana very active there. Hagana was a Jewish organization that had great impact on the liberation of Palestine and creation of the state of Israel. They organized the children right away, trying to prime them to be productive and active citizens. They set up special living quarters for the children. She and her mother did not live for a while in the same place.

From Glynbourken they started out, New Years 1945. Her mother made arrangements to join a working train. Train stations needed repair. They accepted volunteers. It was not easy to get into the work force. Her mother had to bribe some of the people there. Fortunately they were able to retrieve some of the valuables that had been buried and hidden. Just as some of the population were bad, some were good. A family who had hidden them for part of the time that they were running away from the ghetto had a farm. Rachel's mother had hidden some valuables with them; she had buried some silver, gold, and jewelry that she was able to unearth. They used that to survive for the next year or so.

When her mother was able to sign on to the train they were traveling toward the front lines. Her idea was to cross over to the Allied side. They lived on the train. Each boxcar was divided into four sleeping quarters. The center of it had a wood stove that heated it and they cooked their meals on it. They had taken food along with them, mostly potatoes and grain. There were very little rations. In one of the RR stations, a hospital train was on the next track. Her mother was going to throw out the peels from potatoes. A doctor from the train took the peels from her to make soup for the soldiers. The food situation was terrible as far as the Russian Army was concerned. The train was Russian. Her mother was going to work on the train. She hadn't started working yet. They were traveling toward a station that needed repair. She and her mother were with another family who were also Jewish: husband, wife, and son had also survived in hiding. The others were workers. Men, some women, not Jewish. They just enlisted into the work force. White Russians, Russians. Very few from Belarus. They were devoted Russians, communists.

One time a general who was hitching a ride was in the boxcar. Rachel and her mother had to vacate their bed and crowd in with the other family. Space had to be made for the general. There was great disorder. Trains moved whenever the lines were free. The hospital train on the next track

and their train were there for days, waiting for the track to be free. It was very chaotic. If there was sexual harassment, she was not aware of it. She kept to her own little niche and knew enough to stay out of the way.

The train traveled to southern Prussia. That was the area that was just being liberated. The train was heading there to clean up the railway stations. When they got to the station in Prussia, there was a path they followed to get water. They followed that path for several days. A soldier stepped off the path one step and was blown to bits. They were afraid to take a few steps off the train. When things calmed down some of the workers from the train and the soldiers were telling stories about going into Prussian houses and finding that the occupants had committed suicide. When they tried to remove the bodies, whoever was trying to remove the bodies was blown up with the bodies. They had mined themselves. Chandeliers were mined. People were afraid to touch anything because of booby traps. Roads and RR stations had a certain amount of danger because of mines everywhere.

Some of the people who had come from southern Poland learned that there was a gathering of Jews in a city called Lublin. Her mother was able to bribe to have their boxcar attached to a train that was headed there. She thinks they got there rather quickly. They must have gotten there the end of March because the snows were melting. It wasn't as cold anymore. They were able to sell their sheepskins and her mother's fur coat. They needed food and shelter. Shelter was provided free by some of the organizations that had set up there through the Hagana and through Hias, another Jewish organization that was helpful. The Red Cross must have been active because her mother has a Red Cross document that was issued to her. Some food was provided and some shelter. The shelter that was provided was mainly a cot. They crowded as many cots as possible into one room. Everybody got a cot and everybody got some sort of food.

Hagana had organized groups that were trying to smuggle people into Palestine. Youngsters were the first to be pushed forward. She was separated from her mother at that point. Her mother said Rachel should go and she would come when her turn came. Rachel was put in different living quarters from her mother, slightly better ones. There was organized supervision of children and a school. She was just a few blocks away from her mother and saw her every day. The idea was to keep the

younger people from becoming hooligans, to have some kind of organized supervision. Rachel was among the youngest in the group. Others were 16, 17, 18, 20. Rachel had her mother but the majority had no one. The idea was to keep them from running around and getting into mischief. Her mother wanted her to have the opportunity.

Because her mother had a little money she was able to get them into a group that would travel on their own without the supervision of the organizations that were trying to help. Mainly on foot, they proceeded forward. They decided to move forward because they were just sitting there. A group of people of some means got together and hired a guide to proceed toward the Allied lines. She remembers going toward Czechoslovakia first. Leaving on foot from Lublin, Poland. They proceeded as far as Budapest. They slept in barns or wherever the guide could find shelter. Food had to be purchased. Everything was shared. Sometimes the guide could arrange transportation on a wagon of a farmer who was going in their direction. Group was about ten people.

When they got to Budapest, there was better organization. As time was passing, a few organizations had improved. There was a bigger availability of funds from probably the United States, maybe some South American countries. Hagana was the biggest active force to move the Jews toward Palestine. The idea was to move them to Rumania, which was the closest access point to Palestine. Rachel and her mother got stuck in Budapest. From there it was more difficult to start moving. The British had caught on to what was going on and blockaded the ports and intercepted the vessels that were heading that way.

She remembers certain incidents, such as crossing into Austria and being faced with the British, who sent them right back to the Russian side. Realization dawned on everyone that they couldn't cross borders freely and that discretion had to be used when and where to cross borders. She remembers in Czechoslovakia hearing that Berlin was surrounded.

She remembers when they crossed into Italy. That was the highlight of everything. They had to go through the Alps and some of the passes on foot. When they came through the pass, they were so frozen, and then they saw the Israeli flag. Everybody started to pinch each other; they thought they were hallucinating. Seeing the blue and white flag was like a mirage. It was the Hebrew Brigade, part of the British Army at that point. They

were occupying an area that was near Bologna, because that was the next stop. They had the most warm reception. Their clothes were tattered. They were given Israeli uniform issue--a pair of shorts, she doesn't remember the shirt, a jacket that she cherished for a long time. No shoes. The Italian population was so different from the Belarus and the Polish population. It was the first time they felt they didn't have to run for their lives. They heard stories of others who lost siblings after the Holocaust at the hands of the Poles. It was difficult to imagine that people would go with pieces of wood that could clobber someone to just kill. In Italy there was a different atmosphere. The Italians were warm and accommodating. They lived in Italian homes, Gentiles. The first quarters in Bologna were Army barracks.

At that point the Israeli Hagana was very active in Italy trying to transport people to the seashore and get them across to Palestine. Everybody waited for the opportunity to be put on a ship. There were no other desires, no other hopes. The first movement they had to the south, they were put on a truck, between thirty and forty people, to go to a ship. Their truck broke down. They never made it. They were housed in some villas. There were a lot of people in one place--sharing rooms but having a corner of their own. Food was provided. They didn't have any more money. They were housed in Bologna for a little bit. At that point, Hias and also a Jewish organization provided food and started bringing clothing. There were donations from Jews from the US. From there they thought there would be an opportunity to get on another ship.

They were transported to the heel of Italy. There were three Santas there. After they got there they found out the British were blockading and they couldn't get on any ships. That became their living quarters from 1945 to early 1947--villas in Italy that were converted. Each had a quarter of their own. It was sponsored by Hias. There was a general kitchen that served food. July 1945 to early 1947. All Jewish refugees. There was an Army outpost near Santa Cesarea. Rachel remembers her first encounter with Negroes/blacks. They had tremendous stature. Each was six feet tall. They were very kindly. She never had such treats. Especially with children, they would give candy and ice cream. The place got organized very quickly. She started school again. Books were available. In Yiddish. Some in Polish. She hates the language now. Russian. Probably every language people had spoken they had some books there. Collected and made available and they all shared. Some textbooks. Organized school.

Whatever there was a teacher available for, that is what they learned. Probably learned more world history there than anybody learns in a school here.

There was no such thing as having fun until later. Whoever had contact with relatives in the US and got a few cents shared it with everybody else. She is still in touch with a man friend who is quite a bit older than she. He had brothers in the US. His brother used to send him money on a regular basis. He shared it with everybody. Her introduction to opera and music came that way. Later, she went to performances.

Santa Cesarea was a sleepy town on the sea. A resort. One of the hotels Mussolini would frequent because of the hot sulfur baths. There were dances on the terraces. They would sneak a look and they learned to dance on the area below. There were more boys than girls. Rachel was probably the youngest and the boys took care of her. Everybody had respect for everybody else and everybody tried to help everybody else.

Rachel used to like to watch the dancing and see how the other half lived. A few villas were occupied by refugees but the general population was from the villages. Her favorite place to read was in a fig tree. There were figs and olives growing; there was shade and privacy. The population was kind and helpful. She met a family of winter vacationers there from Rome, where they had a hotel Rachel became friendly with the children and the family and learned a little Italian. Later she visited them in Rome. They were not Jewish. The only Jews she knew were Jews who were displaced persons. There were Jews from Poland, Hungary, Greece. She learned to play the mandolin, certain games and cards, and to ride a bike. Her mother worked in the kitchen. A lot of it was volunteer work. There was no real pay. Later there was a little pay when everything got more organized.

The frontier opened. People were able to communicate with relatives in different countries. The relatives made arrangements for their kin to join them. Rachel and her mother were not able to make contact with anybody. The main push was to try to get to Palestine. They had relatives but did not remember an address. Her mother remembered that Rachel's father's sister and her husband lived in Washington, DC. She remembered the DC. As time progressed and some of the survivors emigrated to the US the emigrees wrote and gave advice on how to contact relatives. The ones that left early were the ones that remembered addresses of relatives. There was also a problem with quotas.

Rachel and her mother were under Polish quota; the Polish quota was pretty much full. The accumulation of openings was not all that big. It became a little easier later. They tried to go to Palestine. You got yourself on lists. They had to have the ship, the means to bribe to allow the ship to exit ports of Italy. The hope was of reaching the shores of Israel--she knew people who had got caught jumping ship and trying to wade ashore to Palestine and got the bullet. Rachel and her mother missed the famous Exodus because her mother got sick. That was the saddest day of her life. They later found out they would have ended up in Cyprus. But they would have been closer to Palestine. Then her mother had written to the Jewish language newspapers in the US, looking for Rachel's uncle. Somebody in Washington happened to read the paper and asked her uncle if it was a name he recognized. It was her aunt's maiden

name, her father's sister. Then there was the question of the uncle tracking down Rachel and her mother. They were in Italy. They had not put their address in Forward. They gave it to somebody to put in. Rachel's mother received a letter from a man saying that he was the William Gotkin that they were searching. Rachel's aunt had lived with Rachel's mother and father before coming to the US. They corresponded until the war broke out. Letters did not turn around then as quickly as they do now. Her uncle wrote that they would immediately start paper work to bring them to the US. It was a question of quota. Her mother had been born in an area that was Russia. Then it became White Russia because Poland got its independence. Some of the territory transferred to Poland was Russia before. Rachel remembers the trip to Naples, where the American Consul was.

UNRRA, that administered DP camps, placed people who were interested in going to the US into a camp in Bari, Italy. This included people from the Exodus and others. Rachel and her mother were placed there. It was a military camp originally and had Quonset huts. This was the first time she and her mother had a cubicle of their own. People were transferred there. People who were trying to go to Israel were transferred further north to Milan. It would be harder for them to cross the waters, it was farther. Milan was also inland. Bari was a port. Rachel and her mother were transferred to Bari. Her uncle was sending them some money. Rachel was enrolled in an Italian school that taught English. She learned a little bit about grammar, how to read, how to perceive the vowels. From Bari, the last point, they managed to get on the Russian quota. They spent 2 1/2 years in Italy and left in November, 1947.

The crossing was on a troop ship. Her mother had a very difficult crossing and couldn't get out of her bunk to go to the dining room. There were a lot of Italians who were traveling.

Rachel had mixed feelings about coming to the US instead of Palestine. One of the good feelings was coming to relatives. Most of their friends went the other way. Some came to the US but it was a big country. There was very little hope of seeing anybody again. She had sights set on Palestine for so long and had a feeling of devotion instilled in her as a child because her father was a Zionist way back. Probably that was why she learned the language. She knew Hebrew. She spoke it from the beginning. Her father had founded a modern Hebrew school. Her father

had supplied funds but a rabbi had organized a school. It was a modern Hebrew school with Hebrew as spoken now in Israel. It provided both the secular and the Hebrew education. She was enrolled in the school at the age of five. They needed enrollees and she was advanced enough to be able to fit in. The rabbi and his family ended up in the US and a son of his lives in this area. They went to a function in the US and he was there.

The first person Rachel met when they crossed the Alps was the brother of her governess. He gave her one of the books that she has read thoroughly, the complete Bible. It was military issue and about three inches thick, and about 3 by 3 by 5. The pages were so thin she had to put a piece of paper underneath. It was one of the books she studied to keep occupied.

Thinking about going to Palestine seemed like coming home. The next best thing to home. Coming to the US was like second best other than that she was coming to a family. When she arrived there was a very warm reception. The ship had almost gotten lost at sea in a big storm. They had watched a fishing boat going down. She remembers sitting outside the port of NY at dusk, watching the strings of light. Who would have thought they were cars. With all the neon lights it was an unbelievable sight. She still thinks the skyline of NY is a sight to behold. It was different from what she had imagined. They had running water in Italy but it was one faucet. Poland is a very backward country. They didn't even have any bathrooms. They did not have indoor plumbing. Her family had a bathtub but the bathtub had to be filled. The water, the well, was in the yard. It had to be pumped into the kitchen. They had electricity. They were way ahead of the others. Many houses didn't have electricity. They had a radio but it was probably one of the few in the city. She cannot begin to explain how backward Poland is. The US was not as big a shock as if she had come directly from Poland. Czechoslovakia was quite modernized, as was Italy, but it was a long way from what she found here.

Rachel's uncle and his cousin met them in New York. They spent the night with the cousin. The next morning they took a train to Washington. New York was very busy, scary. The first thing that she saw was the Brooklyn Bridge. How long it was. The Williamsburg Bridge was just as long. It was incomprehensible. The subway. It was exciting. She doesn't think she was scared of anything. Her experience had taken away any fear. She was a daredevil anyway, not being afraid of things. There had been

electricity in the villa that she lived in. Everybody had a hot plate. The electricity was always out. She would go up the pole and connect it back up again. She didn't understand what she was doing. At one point during the hiding and the running she got lost from her mother. She was in the forest and had no idea which direction to go. No idea where the Germans were. The forest was full of wolves and bear. She came out to a clearing and heard the Germans call halt, saw the bullets hit the ground. Suddenly she heard her mother call her name and ran to her mother. Life didn't mean anything. There was a strong sense of survival but life didn't mean anything. You didn't expect to survive. You wanted to but you had to expect something was going to happen and if you die you die. Life wasn't that interesting. Life didn't hold that much for you. The ingrained desire, the human push to live. You don't know it as the will to live but it is there.

They got on the train to Washington. Her uncle had a grocery store at 3rd and P. He and her aunt were working unbelievable hours. He would be up at 5 in the morning, didn't close the store before 10 at night. By the time he got to bed it was probably midnight and then up at 5.

Her aunt and uncle were born in Poland. Her uncle was about 16 when he left Poland; her aunt was 14 at the time. He promised her that he would send for her and he did as soon as he could earn enough to make some sort of arrangements for her to live here. She was 16 or 17 when she came here. Rachel's father paid the passage. She couldn't come directly to the US because she wasn't a citizen; she couldn't enter. She came to Cuba. He went to Cuba and married her. Her aunt said she thought she was going to die on the ship crossing from Cuba to the US.

They had three daughters. Their oldest daughter was six months younger than Rachel. Rachel was welcomed into the family very warmly. The next morning it was before Thanksgiving and the store was very busy. Her cousin, who was 16, dressed in jeans, and a shirt, went down to help in the store. Rachel was given a pair of jeans and a shirt and a pair of loafers and she went down to the store. She could read but did not know what a lot of the things meant. And everybody with a different dialect. She had learned some English in Italy. The customers started to point to things. They pointed to peas if they wanted peas and she learned what the word meant.

As soon as Thanksgiving was over, her uncle took her to a private Jewish religious school at Wisconsin and O. It was an elementary school. He told her to speak to those children in English and they will learn Hebrew from her. She was accepted. By the end of January she had conquered the language well enough to communicate. Classes were mostly in English, also Hebrew. She was not required to do much but had the drive within herself. Whatever classes there were, the main idea was to learn English. She learned enough to exist; she had the desire to learn.

The elementary school said she knew enough to handle the work of Junior High School. To be with little kids in the elementary school didn't matter to her. She was there to learn. Her uncle took her to a friend of his who was a rabbi and he asked her what she wanted. She could go to an Americanization school, where they taught English to foreigners, or they could get her into the school where she would have to learn on her own. She realized that a language is not that difficult to conquer if you put your mind to it. From the German she recognized some of the words. The week in the grocery store she had learned some words. Her cousins and uncle made her speak in English. When she started junior high school she had a lot of help from two teachers. One was her home room teacher, who later she knew much better because she was a member of Hadassah and they were both in the same organization. She was in a class with her middle cousin. The home room teacher saw that they did not have classes together. She was not afraid to go from the store to the school.

Rachel's homeroom teacher was a Jewish woman whose mother spoke Yiddish. Rachel was put in her home room because the teacher said she could help her. The teacher's mother could translate some things for her if they became too difficult. The English period instructor was a woman who had lost her husband and two sons in WWII and was very sympathetic to Rachel's problems. That woman took her in hand; she met Rachel every day an hour before classes and would instruct her in sentence structure and grammar. Rachel was the only student from overseas in the school. Those two teachers set her on a course of study with a desire to excel.

Most of the kids were kind, even though Rachel was about three years older than they were. She fell in with everybody. They tried to include her in everything, except her cousin, who felt she was a dragging noose around her neck. Rachel was, at the end of 1947, just turning 17. They were about 14. There was a big difference in maturity but Rachel was immature for her age. Rachel thinks her cousin resented that Rachel was thrust upon her. She tried not to hang on. She realized that was not good for either one. A lot of the cousin's friends included her in things.

Rachel made fun of herself. Gym was painful but she made it out to be a big joke. She didn't know what baseball was, what a bat was, the rules of the game. She was told to get out there and try to hit the ball. No one showed her. Everybody laughed so she laughed along with them. She found that was one way of getting along well. She had to overcome the sensitivities.

Rachel worked with the teachers that were giving her help. Shakespeare was awful. "Julius Caesar" was presented. Rachel was nicknamed "Shakespeare" in Yiddish by the woman who did the translation for her. There was no way Rachel could understand it and the teacher was willing to help. Rachel went to summer school.

Rachel's mother could not get a job in Washington but got a job in New York in the garment industry so they moved to New York in June 1948. It was very hard to get living quarters. On her father's side there were some cousins in New York who helped out. The apartment was over a pub. It was the only place that she was scared to come home at night because there were some drunks. Her work was in the library. She was in public

school. In Washington she had gone to public junior high school. During the summer in New York she took required subjects, mostly English and Civics. She had made some friends and was coached through Civics.

By the fall semester she was ready for high school. The first school was in the district where she lived. The principal said most of the students dropped out at age 18 and saw no reason to enroll her as she would turn 18 in several months. He said the school was very rough. Her lunch would be stolen. The students had to be aware of knives. This was 1948. The school was in East New York, Brooklyn. Her father's cousin's daughter, who was her age, had just graduated from high school. She said the principal at the school she had graduated from was a very nice man and Jewish and he would understand. The relative made Rachel two years younger. She was enrolled in high school from her home but she had to stay at her cousin's part of the time and so was partially separated from her mother.

High school was a different set of rules. Her English was not yet up to par. She had no problem reading, writing, or understanding, but her pronunciation was terrible. She was in luck. She was assigned to a woman who was of German birth, Rae Ried. Ms. Ried said she was born in Germany and brought to the US as a child and her sympathies were with Rachel. She helped Rachel to think of people as individuals and assessing them for themselves. The teacher found two Jewish teachers whose specialty was speech and elocution and she got them to help Rachel after school on a voluntary basis. They were kindly gentlemen who made her practice in front of the mirror. She found that the students were helpful. She didn't know anything about football, baseball, basket ball. A criterion to pass gym was that you had to understand each game. The kids helped her. She helped them in swimming and math. One of the foreign languages in the language requirement was Hebrew. She couldn't bring herself to do the German. She probably could have passed it in German too. Rachel took the Regents in Hebrew, which gave her the language requirement for graduation. In European History she just needed a little review. American history she had to take. She filled in with subjects she needed such as typing. She needed 32 credits.

Rachel also worked a 30 hour week. When she first came to New York she got a job painting piggy banks. She knew how to use a brush from her childhood. School was from eight to one or twelve to six. She was first

put in the later session and worked from seven in the morning until eleven, four hours a day, five days a week. Twenty hours. She went to school afterwards. As soon as she finished her first year of high school she had gained enough knowledge to get a job. She worked at Miles Shoes] as cashier in one of their stores and did the books. It was just for the summer to start. The manager liked her. She worked from six to ten every night. Then on the weekend. She doesn't remember this as being hard. She met some people who had been in Bari, Italy. She kept more company with that group than the high school group. She felt more comfortable with other Jewish refugees. The high school group were younger. Their attitudes and approach to life were completely different. She felt more comfortable with people who had gone through the same experiences she had. Nobody wanted to hear about her experiences or how it had affected her. She pledged to whatever they wanted her to pledge: Honor Society, different clubs, different letters to be earned. To be part of the crowd and become Americanized she had to do those things. She wanted to fit in. She was told by her cousins early that if she wanted to sound American she should learn slang. She was pushed from different directions and absorbed a little bit of everything. She went to football games and stood up and cheered when everyone else did. After a while she started to kibitz around. She had two groups of friends: school friends that she never dated and an outside group. Through some of them and some of the older boys from school she was labeled a snob because she would only go out with college boys. It was necessary. Some of the pranks, of high school friends, were not what she considered the right kind of behavior. She went through high school in two and a half years.

Rachel's mother did not have the desire or drive to learn English. Mrs. Goldfarb is still bilingual: Yiddish and English. And Hebrew too. She was able to learn English quickly because she could switch from one language to another without thinking about it so she automatically thought in English instead of trying to translate what she was saying. Once she understood sentence structure she never reverted to translation. In those days she could revert to Russian too. Whichever language was spoken she answered automatically in that language.

Her relationship with her mother was very cherished. She had no one else. The same was true for her uncle and aunt. Her mother was an independent business woman before the war, which was unusual for a woman in that day and age. Here she was never able to regain the community respect

that she had there and that affected her general outlook to life. Mrs. Goldfarb is more of a mother to her mother now than she is a daughter. Her mother speaks English but not to have the command of language that is necessary to function well. She will not speak in English to Mrs. Goldfarb. She is now also hard of hearing. She just turned 90. Her mother can pick up Yiddish words more easily; the sounds are more familiar to her.

Graduating from high school was just another step for Rachel. She graduated fifth in her class of 598. There was no way to really rejoice. Her aunt came to her graduation. For her mother the big point was that she graduated and she could get a better job. She thinks her mother was very depressed and tired and unhappy in her work. Graduation meant that Rachel could take over more responsibility. It was nothing to make a fuss over.

Rachel was exhausted. The doctor suggested she take some time off. That semester it was difficult to arrange a college education plus she didn't have the funds plus she had a scholarship to Brandeis if she went into teaching Hebrew. She could not see that as a goal for herself. She wanted accounting. She worked as a bookkeeper and was offered a job by the company. Still she couldn't see that as a goal. Her cousin was getting married in a couple of weeks in Washington. Her aunt helped her decide to take some time off, then work and save some money and start college. Rachel came back to Washington for the wedding and then couldn't bring herself to leave Washington. She didn't want to work in New York. She was a small town girl at heart.

When she came to Washington for the wedding she helped in the grocery store. A customer at the store helped her get an interview at the State Department for a job translating from Russian to English. She was not a citizen so she could not have the job. She had to be in the country five years to be a citizen. That customer then asked other friends. The customer's neighbor was Chief Probation Officer for the District court. They were not under Civil Service. Rachel went for interview and was hired. She got a job doing general office work and some bookkeeping. She didn't know any short hand but she knew typing. Her aim was to have the proper credits to go to college. Her boss liked her work and liked that she caught on quickly. Rachel took a course in shorthand at Strayer College. Her mother was in New York. Rachel didn't want to go back to New York. She did not like the size of the city. Washington was like a small town.

She could take the street car or walk. She liked the greenery. Not everything was towering over each other. She liked the feel of the city.

Then Rachel became a little more interested in the intricacies of the law. She enrolled in night classes at G.W. University to become more familiar with the codes etc. She took any courses offered that they suggested she take. She was working under a special appointment. She had to have the sponsorship of three judges. She was known as the kid. She was the youngest member of the staff. She became a citizen in front of one of the judges of the Court. He said what are you doing there. She stood up and said she wasn't a citizen. She enjoyed working there.

Rachel's mother came to Washington, they found an apartment and set up housekeeping. Rachel was able to support both of them. She started out at Grade 3, about \$2600 a year, which was considered good money. It was enough for them to sustain an apartment and provide the necessities. She had been living with her aunt and uncle. When she first started to work, before her mother came, she lived with them and her uncle banked all of her money. She didn't expect it. She turned her paycheck over to him and asked him for enough for basic expenses and schooling. When she set up the apartment he handed all of the money she had given him back to her. When he had given lunch money to the children he gave her the same thing. She never spent it. She walked to school. She spent very frugally.

Tape 2 of 2, Side B

Shortly after that she got married. Her husband was also a survivor. Rachel met him when she first came to Washington. He came to the US in 1946 and then was drafted. Later he was called back for the Korean War. Rachel met him at a party of friends, a get together of Holocaust survivors. He was from central Poland. Once they met his family urged him not to procrastinate. They were married in June 1952. A daughter was born in 1954. Rachel went back to work in the probation office after maternity leave. She worked for one year after that. Her mother was living with her so she could take care of the baby. After one year it was too much for her mother so Rachel stayed home.

Rachel continued with classes here and there and did volunteer work. She never thought of it as difficult to have her mother living with them. Now it would be a hardship because they have different modes of life. Her mother lived with them for the first 15 years of married life and went on vacations with them. Her mother then had worked out a lot of problems of loss of family, loss of stature and status and financial position. She found a niche at work at Hechts behind the bakery counter. It was a good way for her because she met people and did not feel inferior. Working in the garment industry in New York she felt inferior. In Poland she had sold fabric and here in New York she was doing sewing. Rachel got her teaching certificate and went to teach in the afternoon school so she would not be away from her children. They were attending too. Rachel started out two days a week and progressed to four days a week of working, teaching mostly history, also Hebrew. She settled in to typical American life.

In Europe Rachel's family had been very observant but here they became Conservative. They adhered to many aspects of the Jewish religion. The holidays are very meaningful. She keeps a kosher home. She feels that distinguishes her house. She does not eat kosher all the time. Her husband's relatives do not keep kosher and, not wanting to be an outsider all the time, she got adjusted to eating some things. She will not touch pork. That has a stigma to eat. She will not eat anything that is milk and meat. She says it's crazy. She will eat non-kosher meat but she won't eat anything that is cooked with milk or a combination of dairy and meat.

They observe the holidays religiously and have a lot of company over the holidays. She likes to have family around. She doesn't have much family.

One of her cousins died and her other two are not very close with her. Her husband's family is very close. They are unusual. In addition to Mrs. Goldfarb keeping the religious holidays, they attend the Jewish non-religious holidays with her husband's family. It's a big family. Her husband's mother was one of eight. Six survived. They all have families here. Her husband's mother was the only one that was still in Europe. The only reason Mrs. Goldfarb's husband came in 1946 was that the papers were already made out for them to come to the US. The war stopped them. He was on the first ship that arrived from Germany to the US. His family is very attentive. Because of that she doesn't feel her children are deprived of family. Even though his mother was the youngest and his cousin's children are his generation they are all cousins. Her children are cousins. They are not thought of as distant relatives.

Mrs. Goldfarb's daughter lives in Potomac. Her son right now lives at home. Both are architects. Her husband is retired. He was in sales with Sears.

She always had two sets of friends. She has a special relationship with survivors. She made friends and neighbors became friends. From school she met people who have remained friends. She has made friends now through work. There is always a special closeness with survivors because they have the same background. There are certain values that remain with them. They may not be related but it feels like family. They always attended each other's celebrations. A celebration wouldn't be the same if they didn't have each other to attend. It is like a second family. A certain kinship that goes beyond family. It would be like having sisters and being able to share things that nobody else could understand. Nobody else could understand what it means to them.

Mrs. Goldfarb occasionally talks about her experiences during the Holocaust. They don't sit down and talk about them per se but it has to come out. Something will remind them. For example, they were celebrating Mother's Day and had guests. Her husband has difficulty talking about the Holocaust and his experiences. She seems to be able to talk about it easier. He gets very emotional. Out of nowhere something touched off and he started to talk about things. This Passover, the same thing--something came up. Just a slight thing, something that jars the memory to back home, the family, friends, celebrations. It comes back and the next thing that comes around is what happened during the

Holocaust during those holidays. Her husband remembered that Yom Kippur he hid his portion of bread. He couldn't bring himself, hungry as he was, to eat on that day. Even though he needed the energy, he couldn't bring himself to eat that. Just knowing what day it was. Someone remembered getting together a few men discreetly and intoning some prayers; whoever remembered what portion of what. Those things come out. Her husband was in camps. He managed to run away from the ghetto and found that he had no way to hide and he had to bribe his way back into the ghetto and then he was worse off because he didn't have any papers. Then he had to be in hiding in the ghetto. Those things come out.

She doesn't know his complete story. She gets bits and pieces. He cannot sit down from A to Z. He has never been interviewed. He just breaks down. His first experience going over his story was with the Department of Justice. They were looking for some information and he had volunteered to do some interviews with them. It was really being grilled. Since then he can't bring himself to talk about it. The recordation of the history is fairly new. His was done years ago. This has only been done in the last 6 or 7 years. She was one of the early recorders of it. The only recordation was a tape she made for Brandeis. She is more comfortable talking about it than writing a book about it. She thinks she does not have the organization of thought. If she had a ghost writer it would not have the same meaning.

Mrs. Goldfarb has more or less always been able to talk about it. Part of it came from her experience and relationship with her guidance counselor. She made her bare her soul. Mrs. Goldfarb thinks it helped. Experiences as a child are different than when you are more grown up. The things that affected her were probably different than for someone who was an adult. One of the memories she has is playing hopscotch and knitting. You had to be productive in the ghetto or else you were eliminated. So she learned to knit. Her mother couldn't knit so she had to produce her own quota and her mother's quota. Thinking about it is thinking about playing hopscotch and knitting because that is her memory of it. She learned to spin wool because that was another way of proving your worthiness, to be allowed to live. There is a natural way of burying in your memory some of your worst memories.

Her children have been very aware of it from their youngest years. The children were very protective of them. Any time there was something on

television the children made sure they kept their parents busy with something else so they wouldn't turn on the TV and watch it. Especially films of the Germans. Just seeing the Germans march can touch off a certain memory and a certain bitterness. Their youth was stolen from them. Their families were stolen from them.

As a mother, Mrs. Goldfarb rejoiced in her children's childhood. She is sorry she is not a grandmother. Her daughter is 42 and her son is 38 and she doesn't see herself as a grandmother anymore but she has enjoyed her friends' children. It is one of the things you adjust to and live with.

She was very active in Hadassah, is very active in the Temple. In the early years before UJA became an organization per se she was more active in Hadassah, not in the last 10 to 12 years. Her aunt was aging, lived here at the Hebrew Home and she visited her. She didn't want to commit to organizational work.

Mrs. Goldfarb has visited Israel. It was like being on cloud nine. Knowing the history and having read the Bible cover to cover it was like coming to a place where stuff was alive: seeing the accomplishments of the Jewish people, knowing there was a place that if anytime anyone tried to do something like that to the Jewish people there was somebody that could speak up, knowing there was an entity that cares and an entity that has the ability and the power to make it known to somebody else. Having experienced life under Russian rule, under the communists and under the Germans, coming to the US, experiencing what she experienced here, during the McCarthy era, thinking: if anyone wants to be a communist let them go to Russia and see what it is like. This country has afforded the Goldfarb's freedom, opportunity, allowed them to have a very good life. Being able to work and make their own way was a wonderful gift. Keeping the tradition is important but tradition belongs in the home. It does not have to be imposed on the population. She feels American. In Israel she felt a feeling of belonging, a part of a people. If asked what was she first she could not answer whether Jew or American first; equally American and Jew. She has feelings for Israel. They donate to Israel, buy Israeli bonds. Support Israel. She always wanted to be there. But she still feels American. She thinks it is wonderful that America allows them to be loyal to Israel but not feel that they are disloyal to America.

She thinks it is important to value what you have and keep freedom. Don't

let it slip away. Your life will be only as good as you make it yourself. Take advantage of all the opportunities that you have and that this country gives you.