HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

JUDITH LEIFER

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Elizabeth Geggel
Date: January 17, 1983

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JL - Judith Leifer[1] [interviewee]
EG - Elizabeth Geggel [interviewer]
Date: January 17, 1983[2]

Tape one, side one:

EG: Today is January 17, 1983; this is an interview with Mrs. Judith Leifer, by Elizabeth Geggel. Mrs. Leifer, could you tell me, please, where you were born and when and a little bit about your family?

JL: I was born in Bratislava. Czechoslovakia, it was called then in 1932, and I was born to a young couple. I had a brother who is two years older. My father was a traveling salesman in textiles. And he was originally from Transylvania, which was part of Hungary at the time, part of Romania, when he was born, but it was later transferred to Hungary. So, actually his upbringing was Hungarian. And my mother was from Arabia, for centuries and the whole family was escaping Arabia.

EG: But your parents lived in Bratislava?

JL: In Bratislava, that's where they met. My mother after she finished her schooling, came to Bratislava to find work and that is where she met my father, so that is how I was born in Slovakia.

EG: What was your life like before the war? Before your life was changed by the Nazis?

JL: Well, my early childhood memories were of security and well-being, nothing extravagant but no shortages and no worries.

EG: You were, since you were born in 1932, by the time the Nazis came, you were still a young girl, a child?

JL: Yes.

EG: But you did go to school at that time? During [unclear]?

JL: Oh, yes. Yes, yes.

EG: What kind of a school did you go to?

JL: The Jewish community was, in Bratislava, was by and large Orthodox, and it varied from very *frum*, very ultra Orthodox, extremely pious, to more moderate Modern and then you have, the other group, which was called Neologues [Neologists]

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[1]Née Loeb.

[2]Collateral Material available through the Gratz College Tuttleman Library include: Judith's grandmother's memoir: journal written in German by Emma Benedict Beck (1876-1973) after her release from Theresienstadt during her later years in the U.S. Donated by granddaughter Judith Leifer; a photocopy of a handwritten memoir of Emma Beck from 1938-1945. First pages translated by Lotte Marcus into English. Donated by granddaughter Judith Leifer; "Vordalung" original for Emma Beck from Theresienstadt (an original bank receipt from Theresienstadt, 17 June 1943), Donated by Judith Leifer, Annenberg Research Institute.

and they were equivalent to the present day Reform. Reform Jews. I had an Orthodox upbringing, went to a Hebrew-Zionist kindergarten, with Hebrew songs and celebrated the Jewish holidays and we go dances. Then, I went, both my brother and I went, to Jewish schools, Orthodox schools, which was separated boys schools and girls schools.

EG: So, there were only Jewish children there?

JL: Only Jewish children. I had very little, in fact, In fact, I had no contact with Gentiles except those who provided services, like the janitor and the maid and the tradesmen.

EG: So, during that time, did you experience any antisemitism at all?

JL: Well, we knew about it, but first-hand I didn't experience it. Always, we only were told not to get involved with gentile kids. Not to get into fights with gentile kids. But that was about it. So, personally, I never experienced antisemitism and we were told that when come, when we walk close to church to cross the street just to, not to provoke anybody.

EG: But did your parents, as far as you remember, did they experience any antisemitism in their social life?

JL: Well, my mother was home. My mother was a homemaker. So, before that when she worked, she was a secretary also in a Jewish firm.

EG: Jewish setting and everything. So, they had mostly Jewish friends and they worked with Jewish...

JL: Only Jewish. Only Jewish.

EG: So they had not have much contact?

JL: Well, my father, yes, because he was a traveling salesman, but I am not aware of any antisemitism that he came home with, you know with stories. I am sure he encountered it, but I don’t remember.

EG: So, then he did business, he probably did business with Gentiles, too.

JL: Yes. Also. Yes.

EG: Excuse me, I just want to make sure that this works properly,

JL: [unclear] I meet Gentiles only during the summer when I visited in the Moravian village of Auspice, not Auschwitz, but Auspice, next to Brno, with my grandparents. That's where my grandparents were and that's from where the family came. And I played with gentile children because there were no others, and I didn't feel any differently about them than about my other friends in the city from where I came except my grandparents, my grandfather was a rabbi. He was a rabbi of the community, always told me that I have to keep my distance and behave properly. Now I was, you know, every summer we went from the time I was born. But I remember being with them from the age of four, five. Last time we were there I was at the age of six. That was the last time before my grandparents moved to [unclear] to be further away from the Germans.

EG: And, where did they move to?

JL: [unclear]

EG: Oh, and your other grandparents lived in…?

JL: My other grandfather had passed away before my birth, many years before, and I saw my grandmother, my paternal grandmother, only once. She came to visit. I must have been five or six years old, and that was the only time that I saw her, and I think, she died before the Germans came, and they deported all the family, all my brothers, my father's siblings to that place. They deported.

EG: You never knew any of them?

JL: He had one brother in Bratislava and that was the only one that I knew and he died before the Holocaust and his wife, his son and daughter were deported and the wife and son survived and after the war went to Australia, where my cousin was.

EG: Where did this uncle, Mr. Rosenthal live? On which side is he on'?

JL: He is married to my mother's sister. And that is how my mother came to Bratislava because her sister, she's the oldest, my mother is the youngest, her sister was the oldest. She was in Bratislava so they sent my mother over there.

EG: So the sister should take care of her?

JL: Yes.

EG: And he was active in the Jewish community?

JL: Well, when my mother first came there the sister wasn't married. In fact, I go to Israel in the spring because I go to celebrate their golden anniversary.

EG: Oh, really, how wonderful!

JL: So, he was very active in *Keren Kayemet*, *Keren Heyesod*, in the Zionist movement, in Mizrachi, because Mizrachi was Zionist, whereas *Agudat Israel* was opposed to Zionism. You know, the ultra Orthodox, but Mizrachi was very much geared to Zionism and I belonged from a very early age on to *B'nai Akiba*, which was a youth arm of Mizrachi.

EG: And were your parents involved in this, too, in Jewish organizations?

JL: Well, my mother belonged in her childhood to Blau-Weiss, which was a Zionist lady sports. It's like *Maccabi*, a Zionist youth organization.

EG: So, when you grew up, you grew up really in a strictly, in a Jewish atmosphere? And, you felt very safe in it?

JL: Yes. I mean we were proud of Czechoslovakia, but that was more removed. I remember the days of Masaryk, when Masaryk died. The main plaza of Bratislava, which was in front of the Nationalist Theatre, they put up the torches to memorialize and the boy scouts stood guard next to the light. [unclear] I don't know in which year that was, that Masaryk die,[3] in '34, '35. I would have to look it up, but I remember it impressed me so those lines and the black draped flags. In Czechoslovakia we knew [unclear]. Everybody was very proud of the state.

[3]Masaryk died 1937 in Prague. [*Ency. Judaica*]

EG: And Jewish citizens had access to everything?

JL: Everything. Absolutely everything. There was, I mean, it gave all civil rights to Jews both religiously and civically. And, in fact, my grandfather who was a rabbi and had to scrounge for a living, he was poor clergy, was put on civil service status and he got a monthly salary like the clergy.

EG: Yes? From the state?

JL: From the state. Absolutely.

EG: So there was no separation of religion and state, under that...?

JL: No, there was civil service without interference by the state. But they wanted to separate the clergy from Rome and the hierarchy of the Vatican, so they were equal rights, the Protestants, Catholics, Jews, everything and everybody got the same pay.

EG: Yes?

JL: Yes.

EG: To provide more security? The government didn't control what was...?

JL: Nothing. Now it may be the bishops and so on--the government had a say in the election of the top hierarchy, but that's about it. But in Jewish affairs, they didn't intervene at all. The Chief Rabbi had nothing to do with the state. There was a Chief Rabbi of Slovakia. I remember the Chief Rabbi in Bratislava, he was Ungar, Rabbi Ungar. They were held in high respect. I remember when I walked with my grandfather in that small town how everybody bowed almost to the ground. "*Herr Doktor, Herr Rabbiner*."

EG: That's interesting. Did your father have to serve in the army, or anything like that?

JL: Well, they were registered because when they called up people after the Anschluss, both my father and my uncle were mobilized. And, so, there must have been some way of quick mobilization of people. It wasn't voluntary. They were called up, so there must have been some system. He was called up and during that period we were sent to my grandparents in [unclear]. They thought that we would be safer away from the Austrian border, further away, because everybody expected a German invasion from Bratislava.

EG: Yes, well it's right at the border.

JL: It's one hour away from Vienna.

EG: Yes, it was really a very strategic location, but at that time they didn't.

JL: No, they didn't come in and they had no such plans.

EG: How many Jews lived in Bratislava, do you know? Was it a large Jewish community?

JL: It was a large Jewish community, because the whole place was, I mean, as a child, you lose perspective. It seemed like a large city, and my world was all Jewish, wherever you went. In the Jewish school, I could only go by the size of my class, which

was over 60, in my class. Over 60 children in first grade. So it must have been a very large Jewish community, only girls. Now, you had the same in boys, and then you had the other school, the progressive school, which had their own school system. There were not as many but it must have been quite a large Jewish community.

EG: You were probably too young to remember how the Jewish community was organized? Was there a regular?

JL: There was a regular Jewish board, a council, a Jewish council, a Jewish board.

EG: That represented the Jewish interests towards the government?

JL: Yes. And you had the religious authority, you know, the Chief Rabbinate.

EG: In your parents' discussions, do you remember, did they feel that this community, this council represented the interests?

JL: Nobody spoke to me about that and I don't recall being aware of it. We didn't have self-government like in England or the United States. Everybody was law-abiding and that's all I know. Things that you just did not do and that was all that was to it. Jews don't do that. That was--I always heard, "Jews don't do that."

EG: They had to be better than anybody else.

JL: Absolutely. "Jews don't do that." There were no thieves, there was no crime, there was not even divorce. "Jews don't do that."

EG: It says a lot for the Jewish religion.

JL: I know, but it was super.

EG: You had to be better than anybody else.

JL: Better than anybody else.

EG: Do you think there was a certain amount of insecurity, after all, that you had to be better than anybody else?

JL: I'm sure, that's what I'm saying, in the background you always had to be proper not to give cause, not to give displeasure. And that's why I never knew of Jewish prisoners, you know, thieves or anybody. I mean, in Poland, you had, they would say, "Jewish *gonif*" and all that. It was never in Czechoslovakia. In fact, after, I mean, there was antisemitism amongst the Jews against the east European Jews, a very strong one, because after the First World War when there was a huge influx of east European Jews into Germany and Czechoslovakia, it created great resentment. They were dirty, they were illiterate, their German was terrible, in fact, it was non-existent. It was Yiddish. And they were poor and my only exposure to them was that you had days you took in yeshiva *bocher*, to feed them a certain day of the week so that the poor fellow got a meal each day from a different service. So we had, that's how I met a yeshiva *bocher* who ate with us. I think Wednesdays, if I remember.

EG: Where did he go to yeshiva?

JL: Bratislava was a yeshiva.

EG: And that's where they went?

JL: They went. Bratislava had a big and a famous yeshiva.

EG: Yes.

JL: And, of course we called them the transitory *Tsigáyner*. And they created great resentment. And we did all we could to help them to go through and move to the United States. [laughing] You helped them financially to get to the United States.

EG: And then they helped us to get to the United States. [laughing]

JL: Because they will give the Jews a bad name, you see. They didn't have the same standards educationally and ethically.

EG: That's really interesting how every group that's more assimilated sort of is afraid that the less assimilated ones will…

JL: Yes, yes. They stood out. They didn't dress in the conventional plain way. They came in their ghetto clothes.

EG: So, what you're saying is that your background was westernized, even going to a Jewish school you had a western...

JL: Oh, absolutely, we looked to Vienna for culture. You had Kafka, Franz Werfel, Stephan Zweig. You had the music, the opera, Vienna. Budapest once in a while. You know, Budapest which looked to Paris. It as all French culture. And I remember my early readings were mostly French--Maupassant, Victor Hugo, [unclear], and although we learned Jewish history and culture, but it was like the remote past. It has nothing to do with our present day. We were Slovak patriots, Czech, you know, Slovak patriots. I don't know how it all mixed with the future in Palestine--Slovak patriots and German education and all--one hodge-podge.

EG: One hodge-podge. Well, you belonged.

JL: But you didn't belong. You know, it was strange. You felt secure, you belonged, but you belonged to a separate world. It was only an illusion that you actually belonged to the state. In the beginning you were really and truly part of it.

EG: Yes, I am sure at that time your parents felt part of it and all the Jewish people living there felt that this was their country.

JL: Yes.

EG: Then, how do you remember what happened when the Nazis came to power and affected your life? When did it start for you?

JL: Well, the Nazis came to power at the time that I was born. In fact, my birth coincides with the rise of Hitler and the election of Roosevelt.

EG: I mean, came to power where you lived, affected your life in Slovakia.

JL: With the rise of Nazis, there was a nationally Slovak fascist party[4] under the aegis of the Catholic Church that pushed for a Slovak independence and they were semi-fascist and rabid antisemitic. But they never came to excesses like the Nazis in

[4]Under Father Andreas Hlinka.

Germany. But there were slogans and they wore the black uniforms and the leather. When I see leather, I wouldn't buy a leather coat now, because of all the leathers that the fascists wore, both German and Slovak and the boots. And so, the atmosphere changed. But, of course, it changed more for adults than for us children because our life, as I said before, was mainly amongst Jews all along. But I am sure that people who came into contact with the outside world felt it more. [Clock chimes] It's half an hour. But the Protestants weren't much better. The Protestants were the very German nationalist in Moravia and Bohemia. The Protestants pushed for annexation with the Nazis. So, I mean, in Slovakia you had the Catholic Church. In Bohemia and Moravia you had the Protestants.

EG: So, and the Nazis took advantage of this.

JL: Whatever they could. Whatever they could. Anyway it started out for me, personally, it started out when we were told to stay away from any confrontation with gentile kids. And we had to leave our apartment which was not particularly in the Jewish center. And all the Jews had to move within a very short time into the Jewish ghetto which had existed for centuries, since the time of Maria Theresa, but in which up till that time only very few poor Jews stayed.

EG: So you had to leave your apartment and all your things behind and move in there?

JL: Well, we didn't have to leave the things behind but we couldn't take it with us. We were lucky in a way because my great-uncle, my grandfather's brother, owned a house in the ghetto. And he occupied a whole floor which had one, two, three, four, six rooms, and he lived by himself. He was a widower and his only daughter was already in Israel with her husband and children in Palestine at the time, because she was married to a Polish citizen, one of those people who came through after the First World War. And when the Nazis came to power, they started to push for the expulsion of all those who were not, who were not citizens of Czechoslovakia. So they left for Palestine in '38, which was very lucky for them and for us, because he was the one who sent us. He was my brother's best friend and they sent us a certificate from Palestine, which eventually helped us out. So, anyway, my great-uncle was a widower and he lived by himself and he offered us the largest rooms since we were four in the family. And my mother would, we would pay not only rent, but my mother would keep house for him, you know, shop and cook for him. So, after few years all the rooms were occupied. It--we had one room, he had another room, my aunt and uncle, the Rosenthals went into another room, his niece from Vienna moved, she was a widow with her daughter, teenaged daughter, moved onto one room and the last room was given to the gentile servant of neighbors. Now, with the takeover, Jews were not allowed to keep servants. Of course, no servants. No Gentiles was allowed to serve a Jew. But since she has been all her life a servant of a Jewish family, she was given the last room as a protection, to say that the whole apartment was hers. She was a protection for all these Jews living there, and she also was what they

called a *shabbes-goy*. She came to make the fire on Saturday and we, of course, paid her well and she did all the chores on Saturday. I remember her coming in Saturday mornings because the stoves were all wooden and coal stoves and she would come and make the fires Saturday morning. Since we were Orthodox we couldn't do it.

EG: So what happened to your daily life?

JL: Oh, I am jumping ahead of myself, years ahead, because when things really turned bad and the Nazis came to Vienna, my father decided it's time to leave. We shouldn't stay around anymore, and we joined an illegal transport to Palestine, which was supposed to board ship in Bratislava and go down the Danube all the way to the Black Sea and via Turkey get to Palestine, make our way to Palestine. However, while we were still in the port of Bratislava, on the boat, the Yugoslavs started their battle against the Germans. Because, up to then the Yugoslav government cooperated with the Germans under the king and then there was a rebellion under Tito[5] and they started the partisan struggle against the Germans. So the Germans invaded Yugoslavia, took over and that was the end of the escape route down the Danube. And so we had to disembark again and go back to our apartment and we were trapped and that was the end.

EG: That really must have been...

JL: Well, for us children it was an adventure, especially since my aunt and uncle came every day to the ship and brought us goodies, so it wasn't so bad.

EG: For you, maybe, because you were very young, but for your parents, it must have been...

JL: I know, but, you see, in those days children were not in confidence of parents and nobody ever spoke to us about what's going on and what will happen and what we are going to do. Nobody spoke to us. So it was all in the air whatever information we could gather on our own, hear bits and pieces and tried to piece it together.

EG: Do you remember, now that you think back, that you were scared in any way?

JL: I don't remember ever having been scared. Really, I mean, it was only bad when...

[End of tape one, side one.]

[5]The resistance was led by General Bora Mirkovic, in the name of King Peter II, March 1941. *The Second World War* by Dr. John Keegan. New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1990.

Tape one, side two:

EG: Side two [long pause before tape starts] of the interview with Mrs. Leifer.

JL: Things got really bad, and fear permeated the atmosphere when the Germans were there. When you physically saw the SS going around the streets, then you couldn't put your finger on it, but there was fear in the air all the time. I mean, it was, I suppose, like a trap. There was nowhere to turn. In addition to which you had the radio for a while and you could hear. I can hear the screaming of Hitler's speeches. I could hear that on the radio whenever you turned on. Later on when we had to leave the apartment, Jews were not allowed to own a radio. Jews were not allowed to own a radio, but as long as we had the radio, and things, you know, got, got really tough and the only beam of light in the darkening atmosphere was when you could catch the BBC. As long as we could and hear the chimes of the Big Ben, "This is London calling," I will never forget. As long as you heard "This is London calling," you still had hope. That was the connection to the outside world. And, you knew there is still hope that maybe, you know, maybe, Hitler will not have his way all around. As long as you heard, because you know the Russians were buddies with the Germans. America was neutral, was out of it. And as long as you heard the BBC, "This is London calling," there was still hope and that's why even later when I was in Palestine and the British suddenly became our enemies, I could never consider them my enemies.

EG: Because they were your link to the outside?

JL: Not only the link, the only hope. The only hope. As long as we heard the chime of the BBC, there is still an England fighting the Germans, and there is still hope. And then we had to give up the radio, of course. Then our only link was bits and pieces. [telephone rings, tape paused]

EG: When you lived in the ghetto, at first you were allowed to leave the ghetto, right? You could go out, outside of the ghetto limits in the city?

JL: Well, actually we were not supposed to. We wore yellow stars which marked us as Jews, and we were not supposed to go without stars and not go around the city. Stay by and large within the ghetto confines, but the Slovaks, as long as they were on the road, didn't take it too seriously. It's only under the tutelage of the Germans that they really started to implement the German, German policies.

EG: Was your father able to travel?

JL: My father was a representative of a Swiss textile firm at that point and he was considered important to the Slovak economy and he received a certificate exempting him.

EG: 1 see, so he had special…

JL: Special exemption, and he could travel throughout Slovakia doing business.

EG: So, through him you had a little link with the greater outside, outside of

the ghetto.

JL: Yes, yes, but we children, we didn't take it too seriously for quite some time. I was considered not Jewish-looking, whatever that meant, because I was dark-haired and dark-skinned with blue eyes, and light hair and so I took my star off and I pretty much roamed around. I made the way to the library. I mean, shopping wasn't one of our considerations those days and so we went to the library and I even went to the movies, which we were not supposed to. The Jews were not supposed to go to any place of entertainment, no theatre, no concerts, no opera, no parks. In fact Jews were not supposed to do anything, just live as long as they could in the ghetto till they were deported. So, that was it.

EG: So, how did the Jewish population in the ghetto organize their time?

JL: Well, I don't know about any official organization. Of course, there was. There was a Jewish Council and it represented the Jews to the Slovaks and through that to the Nazis, and on what basis they were elected, they were not elected. I don't remember any election. I don't know. Maybe people who were activists before, and all those who stayed behind just took charge the best one could under the circumstances. But I remember, before we had to leave our apartment, our schools were converted to living quarters, very early on, for people who had to leave their places, also from, out of the ghetto, outside of Bratislava, the suburbs and the other.

EG: But that school was not within the ghetto?

JL: No, no, the school was outside, so as the Jewish living quarters contracted, we lost the schools, because they were outside the confines of the ghetto and of course, nobody lived outside. And the schools were makeshift schools. I think they were, there were the school was located in a community building which used to serve the Jewish community and there was also a big soup kitchen arranged in that where the school was, you know, to feed people who had no other, other means of support. I remember, as children, we all helped bringing food to elderly people who could not come to the soup kitchen, and I remember those big vats of soups and pudding. For some reason, I remember pudding, I don't know why, chocolate pudding. We didn't eat there.

EG: That's why you remember it.

JL: Yes, probably.

EG: Who organized this?

JL: The council and volunteers and everybody helped the best they could. I, don't remember any meanness, or you know, dog eating dog. I don't remember that. Because, well, after a while there was no school at all because the deportations started in Poland. And so, the last class that I attended really was fourth grade. After fourth grade there were no teachers left. The principal was deported, who organized a school the best that, the best he could, and there was no school at all. There were no teachers, and I read. Not that anybody made me do it. Nobody took control of us children, you know, in organizing us.

EG: Well, you had your parents.

JL: I know, but my father wasn't around too much because he travels and it was all my mother, and just making ends meet and providing was very, very difficult, especially since one was Orthodox. I remember my mother slaving away in the kitchen. Everything had to be made. I mean bread, we bought, but you had to go--there were food coupons. There were no shortages. I have to reiterate that. Slovakia was very well off as far as food was concerned. Slovakia provided the Germans with wheat and potatoes and vegetables.

EG: At that time they were not rations in Slovakia?

JL: Bread was rationed, but there was no shortage. You were assured, even Jews had their rations. You know, even Jews had their rations. Maybe there was less than the Slovaks, I don't know, I cannot tell you. But nobody had to starve. As long as you were not deported, you had your ration. Maybe you didn't have money to buy the bread, but you had your rations to buy the bread, and I remember--and you were allowed to go to the baker shop which was outside the ghetto to buy the bread. You had so much rye bread, so much white bread, which was a delicacy, the white bread. But I remember we had enough bread to eat. And the Slovak peasants who couldn't care less about one way or one thing or another brought in and were very happy to serve the Jews, providing they were paid, anything you wanted. We lived on butter and geese. We had all this fancy stuff because the peasants brought it into your house, eggs and butter and geese. I am surprised that we did not die of high cholesterol. Thinking back now, I couldn't tolerate that, I couldn't stomach, I couldn't stomach that. But we had a huge goose every week and we lived together with my aunt and uncle, the Rosenthals, because my mother cooked for all of us. My aunt was a working lady all her life, so she wasn't much of a housewife, my aunt Jenny, and so she helped. My mother was the chief. She helped. My aunt helped. So we always ate together and we had this big goose every week. Saturday lunch was a goose liver paté.

EG: So when you think back on those times...

JL: There was fear all around, but yet, in your everyday life, I mean, you saw the Germans walking around and you tried to stay away and you'd organize your life not to come face to face with them. But then, of course, they had their days when they came into the ghetto accompanying the Hlinka Guard which was the equivalent of the SS, the Slovak Fascists, and they had their lists.

EG: How soon after you went into the ghetto did that start, that they came along with their lists?

JL: With their list? I think very soon. I think it was like '41, '42, yes. And they came knocking on your door in the middle of the night and there were some Slovaks, Slovak police that took advantage of it and they made it a source of income, like protection money. Came to collect money from those Jews who could either pay them or give them valuables, silver, jewelry, whatever you had. And they say they protect you

from not getting onto those deportation lists. So you never knew when your knock will come. And, in a way, I mean, you was upset when your neighbors to the right and left disappeared. But on the other hand, you were happy that it was them and not you. You never knew when your time will come. So as far as we were concerned, we children, I mean, I really roamed around with my brother and his friends, and I was naive, I suppose. But my brother and his friends, they really apparently lived it up sexually. I put it on the tape because nowadays you couldn't understand that. But kids were really free, not that you had the possibilities, because you didn't have even a place for necking or anything. Where they went I don't know, in cellars, or I don't know where. Because, every little room was taken by somebody, so you did not have extra space. You didn't have the woods or anywhere to go to. But those kids were way ahead of their times and their age, for what would have been normally acceptable, since Jewish society was very straight-laced and very petit bourgeois in their morals. But because of the benign neglect, the kids really learned very early on things that they normally wouldn't have. So, in a way, I think that the kids enjoyed their freedom, those who were around. Although it was very confining space, the streets that you could roam around, but within those confines you had the freedom. You had no adult supervision. Very little of it, and I think my character was shaped more by my brother and being with the boys--two years older--than by adults, who very much preoccupied with things that they tried to shelter us from.

EG: Was it that the adults were more preoccupied with how to get out of there than to...?

JL: No, just staying warm and providing the food because everything, there were no services of any kind. Gentiles could not work for Jews, so you had to not only to clean and cook and fire and bring the coal and everything.

EG: Do you remember what your parents tried to do, to escape from there, to get out?

JL: After our, after this, no. I know they were trying, I know they tried to make contact, especially Palestine. And, but, in order to, in order to be admitted to Palestine, you had to have a certain amount of money. Because the British wanted to ensure that you could fend for yourself and not become ward, public wards of some sort. Because they were not geared to support anybody and they were not too keen on letting Jews in in the first place because unbeknownst to us, I mean, we were not aware of the policies or the events in the Middle East.[6] There were Arab riots in Palestine against the Jewish immigration and, of course, the British interest was always on the side of the Arabs, needing their good will in their fight against the Germans, and the petroleum and the passage to India. So they were more interested in the Arabs than in saving the Jews. So, therefore, in order to be even allowed to immigrate to Palestine you needed what was

[6]The British White Paper of 1939 also restricted immigration to Palestine.

called a certificate, which was predicated on a certain amount of money. So that was our only way to escape. When I came here, when I came...

EG: Could you write to Palestine? Did mail get through?

JL: Mail came only through the International Red Cross, who had form letters, like what we have now aerograms, certain amount of lines that you were allowed to fill and no politics, only personal messages you could write. You could not write anything of world importance, you know, only how members of the family...

EG: If you wanted to apply for a certificate, how did you do it?

JL: Now, how we did it, I do not know. But all I know is that my uncle Leo Rosenthal was a head of the Jewish community in Slovakia, and he was in contact with the International Red Cross and through, in that capacity, he was allowed to travel to Budapest, which was independent. Hungary was an ally of the Germans under Horthy and they were independent to maintain outside contact and everything went through Hungary and what was called Budapest had a *Palestina-amt* [Palestine office]. And through the *Palestina-amt* there was contact with Palestine and the certificates that came, came to Budapest.

EG: I see. Is this how you got it?

JL: No, we did not know that we had a certificate. When my uncle came to Budapest in '43, he saw the list and our name, that there was a certificate in our name. Nobody tried to contact us and they gave the certificate to another family that was in Budapest. Whether they were Hungarian Jews or whether they were refugees already being in Budapest, I don't know but that certificate was given to another family and that family had already used that certificate and was in Palestine. So my uncle made sure that we got a certificate for four people on somebody else's name, who was non-existent anymore, who had been deported. And now started the question how to get us out from Bratislava to get to Budapest, because all the transports left from Budapest. And those transports were paid for per capita by the American Joint, the Jews of the United States paid for every Jew who was permitted by the Germans to leave and who had a place to go to. I think it was part of the deal to provide trucks to the Germans for so many Jews.

EG: You had to have a place to go to?

JL: You had to get a place, because, once you, you cannot, you see, you could not stay in Budapest unless you were a Hungarian citizen. Legally, you could not leave Slovakia and legally you could not come to Hungary because the Hungarians would not permit any Jews in.

EG: So, if your uncle had not been in Budapest...

JL: I would not be here. I would not be here. No, I would not be talking on the tape.

EG: So, how did you manage to leave Bratislava and get to Budapest?

JL: So, we had friends who had a Hungarian passport. You see, when Slovakia, when Czechoslovakia was established, they gave you the possibility to retain

your Hungarian--Slovakia was part of Hungary before the establishment of Czechoslovakia. So, there were some people, instead of becoming citizens of Czechoslovakia, took out Hungaria, retained their Hungarian citizenship. And, so we had friends who were, so to speak, Hungarians, although they lived there and the kid went to school with me. She was my best friend. The mother was willing to take me to Budapest on her passport as her daughter, because her daughter was the same age as I was. She said, I mean, we paid for it, that she would go to Hungary and take the chance, taking me along as her daughter and drop me off in Budapest and return. We had relatives, by marriage, these were really not relatives, but my uncle's brother was already, my uncle Leo's brother was already in Palestine, and his wife, who was also in Palestine, had relatives in Budapest and these relatives were willing to take me in, which was an illegal act, which was an illegal act.

EG: Was that lady who took you Jewish or gentile?

JL: Jewish, Jewish, of course. Yes, that's what I said. Yes. I had no, I had no, friends, gentile friends, so these were Jews.

EG: She was just willing to provide the transportation, I mean, to get you out of there.

JL: Out of there. Yes, take me as her daughter to Budapest, provided she had somewhere to leave me, and these people in Budapest endangered their own security, saying they will take me. They will take me until my parents will be able to come and get me.

EG: At the time you were [unclear]? How old?

JL: I was 11 years, 11 and half. I was 11 and a half at that time and this lady who took me as her daughter across the border to Hungary endangered her life, also, because I spoke not a word of Hungarian. And being a Hungarian citizen and she spoke Hungarian in addition to Slovak, I knew no Hungarian. All I can say is that I don't speak Hungarian. That's the extent of my Hungarian knowledge, and so she insisted that I close my eyes and she covered me with a blanket. And since I am a child, when we cross the border, I am asleep and not open my mouth. And I remember when I peeked and I saw the Hungarian policeman with a *Shako*, with feathers on it, checking the passport. How relieved we were that we made it and this very nice lady took me and dropped me off with these people I've never seen, knew nothing about. I didn't speak Hungarian, but they spoke German. And, she, this lady who brought me, with whom we were very friendly, hugged me and kissed me and that was the last time I saw her, because she and her whole family were deported and exterminated.

EG: You know that for sure?

JL: I know that for sure and only the father, the husband, came back from the concentration camp and he emigrated after the war to Palestine and he wanted to see me, and that was a harrowing experience I will never forget. Because when he saw me, he saw his daughter who was my best friend, and he broke down, because he would have,

you know, had his daughter the same age as I was when he saw me. Anyway, that was the last time that I saw him. And these people in Hungary were angels, absolute angels. It was a beautiful call *bechoved* [Hebrew: full of love, honor], Jewish, intelligent Jewish family, with a beautiful home. And Hungarian Jews at that point were still not free to leave because they had nowhere to go, but in their everyday lives they could still maintain their lives as before. They even had a gentile servant, at that point, that was the end of '43. And they were very religious, but very well educated. He was a principal of a school and his wife was a teacher and their married daughter and her children also lived with them because, I think, they lived in another city and they had to leave at that point, but it was a beautiful home and they were very, very kind to me. Very kind to me, but as my parents had difficulties coming out, they thought it would be best for me, because I endangered them, harboring an illegal alien, to put me in a camp in Bratislava [probably Budapest]. And they thought it would be very easy, like legalizing me, like putting me in a camp for a while, and I will be issued paper, Hungarian papers, and then they would take me out and keep me. I, of course, was in that camp, that was outside of Budapest. It was a camp for immigrants, illegal. See, there were many people who came to Budapest from Slovakia, from Rumania, from Yugoslavia, from Poland, you know, people--because Hungary was still independent, and nothing happened at that point to the Hungarian Jews yet, so there were many illegal immigrants there. So, in that camp were people from the Balkans, from all of Eastern Europe, and they tried to organize us children so that we wouldn't roam around freely, or do nothing. Amongst the refugees there were teachers and they tried to organize some kind of schooling for us, and we lived in bunks and I know we had food. Nobody starved, in addition to which, the gentile servant, the gentile servant, of that family Panaeg [phonetic] who had me, she came to the fence ever so often and brought me food and took my dirty laundry, did my wash to keep me clean. She took the laundry back and brought me clean clothes.

EG: How long were you there?

JL: I was in the camp for two months and I befriended especially--there were many orphans whose parents had been deported or had been killed by the Germans, and 1 befriended a young girl from Croatia, sweet girl, and she taught us a song which I remember to this very day, and, of course, nobody survived from that camp. They were all deported, all deported.

[End of tape one, side two.]

Tape two, side one:

EG: This is tape two, side one. Elizabeth Geggel interviewing Judith Leifer. Where was your brother at that time?

JL: Well, the same thing happened with my brother, except later. I was the first one to leave Bratislava and somebody else, of course unbeknownst to me--I was in no contact, I did not know where my family was or whatever happened to anybody. I was in Budapest. I did not know what happened to anybody back in Bratislava because there was no mail.

EG: You couldn't?

JL: No. No. I had absolutely, I had no knowledge of what went on. So, meanwhile, somebody else took my brother, the same way, as their own son. But he came much later, and where he was meanwhile. I do not know with whom he stayed. Whether he came, I think he came very close to the time that my parents also came. Now my parents had to cross the border in order to make--there was a transport due to leave January, the end of January or beginning of February, 1944. That was the time the transport had to leave. So my parents had to cross the border with a guide who was very well paid to cross in some mountainous area, the border between Slovakia and Hungary, and you always took a chance not knowing whether he would deliver you straight into the hands of the Germans, or whether he will really show you where to cross the border. You never knew. There were many who took the money and brought you straight to the police. Straight. So they crossed the border with a guide who was honest enough just to take the money and show them where to cross and, then, the next thing I saw, I saw my parents and my brother was in the home of the Jewish family Panaeg and only much later did I hear how they got me out. The last minute, they thought they would have to leave me behind in the camp because in spite of, I mean they thought that with the Hungarians, money would get me out. But there were more difficult than they expected and they had to bribe plenty and even so, they got me out the day before the transport left. And they did not know what to do about me, whether they would have to leave, whether they--everybody will stay behind or whether they would just leave me behind. And they got me out the last day, and we were put--next day--we went to the train station and we were put on a transport. This whole group got together under German supervision. They were German soldiers, not the SS, German soldiers. Apparently it was part of the deal with the Joint. They let us leave, not only let us leave, there were German soldiers with us all of time, with guns. German soldiers on the transport.

EG: To make sure you went?

JL: I don't know. Probably to make sure that they kept the deal. You know,

that they delivered so many Jewish heads for the trucks.[7] Apparently it was a deal, the trucks were delivered at the time that we crossed the border into Turkey, because Turkey was neutral and that was a safety, once you crossed the border. So, anyway, we were under German protection, or whatever you want to call it. Now, even then, we did not know, because they could have diverted the train. And instead of going where we were supposed to go--through Hungary to Rumania, through Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and cross from Bulgaria into Turkey. And we stood for, I don't know how many days, on side tracks in Rumania. It was in Rumania and we did not know what will happen to us. We, instead of water, we ate the snow and we had packed provisions. I mean, I can't look at salami anymore because what we ate was salami and fat, you know that solid fat from, salted fat from geese. I don't know what and bread. That was what we ate. Nothing warm, only when we passed a big station, I suppose they let us down to buy a cup of soup or I don't know what. But we mainly lived on salami. And I had my 12th birthday on the train and they gave me a big party, the people in the transport. Somebody had a cake and they gave me the cake. I remember the family, their name was Weiss, and they gave me that cake and I had my 12th birthday on the train. But--everybody, I mean, we sat up most of the time for two weeks, we were two weeks on the train, at least two weeks, if not more. And there wasn't much room to move around. In fact, we were the only real family, father, mother and children who really belonged to each other, although we were on a false name. The certificate was a false name. But we were an honest-to-goodness family, whereas all the others were just thrown together--children who were left without parents and single people. They made up whoever, whomever they could send out on that certificate, and who was in Budapest at the time they took, just to get out as many people as possible. So we were the only real family. And we made it. We made it, and I won't forget, when we came to the Bulgarian border with Turkey and the German soldiers left, it was a halleluyah. It was, I mean, that you knew you are safe. That was the end, when the German soldiers got off the train, and waved the train on in to Turkey. And we arrived in Istanbul and there were people from the Jewish Agency from Palestine waiting for us. We hugged them and we kissed them. It was a Sephardic Jew, I think he was of Turkish origin, who came, who met the train. And they put us up in hotels and they had a dinner ready for us, and I remember, my God, bananas and oranges and grapefruit I haven't seen since '38 or '39. I hadn't seen, and chocolates, and, my gosh, I seen those tables with white tablecloths and all that laden with all the fruit and the dates and figs and nuts, but I remember the bananas and oranges. It was paradise, and we spent a few days in Istanbul and then we went by bus through to Aleppo, through Syria to Beirut and then

[7]Mrs. Leifer may be thinking of the so-called "Goods for Blood" negotiations between Joel Brand and Eichmann, but they did not materialize. Hungary was a sovereign state until March 1944 and may have had some role in the border crossings described. The German government, for its part, recognized the validity of certificates for Palestine.

we crossed the border to Palestine, not Israel. It wasn't Israel. It was Palestine. And we entered Palestine 17th of March, that's how long it took--our odyssey took that long--the 17th of March, 1944. We entered Palestine and we passed the border, the British police, and they had camps--in Haifa, in Haifa they had camps for the immigrants, but we had cousins in Haifa who came and met us and took us home immediately, so that we did not have to be in that camp. And we came with two suitcases. That was all. Two suitcases.

EG: Entering Palestine, you didn't have any difficulty because...

JL: We had our passport. We had our papers, and they already checked us out before that, because you know, only, I mean, the Germans wouldn't let you go on the transport unless they were sure that you could go on wherever you had to go.

EG: But at every crossing they checked everything again?

JL: Oh, sure. Yes. But once you were in Turkey, it was already the Jewish Agency that took over from Palestine. But I remember Beirut and Lebanon, how beautiful. Beautiful. There was, we, the route, the highway from Syria to Palestine led along the Mediterranean and that was a blue Mediterranean and the orange groves. It was spring and that's where the orange blossoms are and the oranges were on the trees, the mountains on one side and the Mediterranean on the other side. It was beautiful and the aroma of those oranges.

EG: Everything is oranges!

JL: And that's how we made it to Haifa. Yes.

EG: That is really quite a story. Do you know, by any chance, if those people who helped your parents cross the border, were those volunteers or was it an organization?

JL: It was a Jews who had contact with--no, those were Slovak peasants who crossed. Oh, no, no, no. These were the Slovaks. The peasants.

EG: Who contacted them?

JL: Now, you would have to talk to my uncle because he knew. He had all the contacts. And, he always found ways to get people out. I don't know how. I don't know how. He was the only one who had contacts with the Slovaks, with the Slovak government and Slovak people, because they saved his life eventually. After we left, and the Russians--we were the last ones to leave Budapest, because, at that point, the Russians were already very close and Horthy tried to save his neck and come to a peace agreement with the American and the British forces before the Russians approached. So the Germans got wind of it and they invaded Hungary and that was the end of any Jewish transport. When we arrived in Istanbul, the Germans took over Hungary and that was the end, and they started the deportation of the Hungarian Jews. And that's also the story of the Swede, the Swedish diplomat who tried to save--that was after we left. Within two weeks, within two week, the Germans took over Hungary and that was the end.

EG: You mean Mr. Wallenberg?

JL: Wallenberg, yes. When Horthy made contact with the Allies to make a

deal with them to stay out of the war, that's when the Germans invaded Hungary and took over. And as they retreated from the Russians, they finished off the Jews, and they finished off the Hungarian Jews, and they tried to finish off, to solve the Jewish question in Slovakia and finish off the remaining Jews. And my aunt and uncle who stayed behind were saved by the Slovaks, who put them in prison as political prisoners, in order to save them from German deportation. And that is how my aunt and Uncle Leo Rosenthal survived, thanks to the Slovaks, who kept them as prisoners during the German retreat. And when the Russians came and, so to speak, liberated them, they were almost killed by the Russians. They had to prove they are Jews, they are not collaborators--because the Slovaks were collaborators. See, the Slovaks got it from the Russians when the Russians came in. So my aunt and uncle had to prove that they are Jews, persecuted Jews, in order--having survived the Germans, that they won't be killed by the Russians. But the Slovaks saved my aunt and uncle.

EG: And the Russians believed them?

JL: Well, they were in prison. When they liberated Slovakia they opened the prisons.

EG: I mean, the Russians believed that your aunt and uncle were Jews?

JL: Were Jewish. Yes. Yes.

EG: And then after that, they could come to Palestine, too.

JL: Well, they did not come yet because they started--my uncle had his work carved out, because he took care of all the returning refugees, the people who started streaming back from the concentration camps, and all the displaced persons who came, went from all over, not having families, not having homes, not having anybody. My uncle worked with the American Joint, in Bratislava, to start, you know, looking, collect every boys [unclear] around and ship people and make contact with relatives in the United States and Palestine, you know, get people. He spent most of his time in Prague with the Jewish Joint, you know, people coming back from Theresienstadt and people coming back from wherever. And he was in contact with the American Jews who came, you know, looking. The American Joint and H.I.A.S. It was mainly the American Joint who came in to help. I mean, what the Americans did was really something. So, he was very active in organizing and getting people out, and then started the Slansky[8] trial. There was a Communist take-over of Czechoslovakia, antisemitism. There was a Slansky trial and my uncle had to--I don't want to get into it because anybody who is interested in the Slansky trial can read it up in the history books, but the situation became terrible for the remaining Jews because Slansky was a Jew and he was very active in Communist

[8]Rudolf Slansky, accused as a Zionist agent, doing espionage for the west. In November, 1952, he and thirteen others were tried. Eleven of them were sentenced to death. Most of the condemned were Jewish. In 1963 he was posthumously absolved of the criminal charges of treason and espionage. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1983.

Party and he was--you know, when the purge of the Jews under Stalin?

EG: Yes, yes.

JL: Well, Slansky was hanged and Slansky was--although the Russians and Czechoslovakia helped the fledgling Jewish state, Israel, with arms and everything else, they had a turnabout and part of it was also the Slansky affair. And he was branded as a Zionist spy and it became a very, very difficult position for the Jews in Czechoslovakia, for those remaining Jews. And my aunt and uncle left Czechoslovakia right there and then, taking whatever they could and came to Palestine, came to Israel--that was already Israel at the time. It was Israel.

EG: After ’48?

JL: Yes, that’s when the Slansky trial was. Yes, it was already after, because Czechoslovakia under the aegis of Russia was very supportive of the Jewish state and trained pilots and sent arms and it was a honeymoon.

EG: Yes.

JL: It lasted only until the Slansky trial and that's when my aunt and uncle came, and there are very few Jews left now in Czechoslovakia. Old, old people, no young people. None.

EG: Yes, I know. In our synagogue here we have a Torah, a little Torah, from one of the Czechoslovak towns and some of the members of the congregation went there and there were hardly any Jews left. Only old people.

JL: My grandmother was--and my grandparents and all of the family from Moravia were sent to Theresienstadt. And everybody was deported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz, except my grandfather died in Theresienstadt and my grandmother survived in Theresienstadt because she was healthy and she worked. She kept a diary which I gave to Gratz, and after the war it was so pathetic, you know, the last entries from Theresienstadt. She couldn't grasp that she’s free to leave. She said, where will she go? She did not know if any of her--she knew two children are in the United States because one son and daughter were here since ‘20, '21 or '22. She knew two children were there, but she did not know if our family, where we were. And she didn't know where the other daughter is, Jenny and Leo Rosenthal, where they were. So first thing my uncle, he knew that she was in Theresienstadt and he wanted to find her.

EG: He found her?

JL: He found her. Yes, and she came to Bratislava to live with them, but her entry!! “Where should she go?" She didn’t, you know, when they opened the gates, when the Americans came there, when the American army liberated them and they opened the gates and all. "You can go." She didn't even want to.

EG: How old was she at that time?

JL: Sixty-eight. She didn’t know. Where would she go? Why would she go? Where would she go out. No home, no family, no nothing. She wasn’t, you know, take my things and go. You are free to go. Where would she go? To whom would she go?

EG: Where did she go?

JL: Well, she packed whatever things she had and they took all of them to the train station, and I think they put her on a train to Prague. And I think my aunt and uncle got her in Prague and brought her to Bratislava.

EG: I think the Red Cross at that time got...

JL: Yes, but her entry was so sad. Where would she go? Why did she survive? In fact, when they took, she had her brother in Theresienstadt, and when they took him with his family to Auschwitz, she said that she's going with them, but they wouldn't let her. She had--my grandmother was an unusual woman anyway.

EG: What was her name?

JL: Her name was Emma Beck and her husband saved the life of the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Leo Baeck, who was the Chief Rabbi of Berlin, because both were in Theresienstadt. And, in fact, Dr. Leo Baeck admitted that much in his memoirs. Because when my grandfather died, who was also a rabbi and he was a doctor, Isidore Baeck. When he died, the Germans thought that that was him and that's why he survived.

EG: So, they didn't look for him anymore. They thought that he was dead.

JL: They didn't look for him anymore. He was dead and that is how he survived again the war and he was liberated. He went back to Germany after the war.

EG: He came here.

JL: He came here. Then he went back to Europe, I think to Paris, or I don't know where he was.[9] But, he went back to Europe after that. But it's my grandfather who was a rabbi, Dr. Baeck who died, and the Germans stopped looking for him. He wrote that in his memoirs. So, anyway, my grandmother wanted to go with her brother. He was the last one of her family to be deported from Theresienstadt and she wanted to go with him and the elder--you know there was a *Judenrat* in Theresienstadt--and he admired my grandmother greatly--the head of the Jewish community, and he wouldn't let her go join the transport. In fact, after the war he proposed to her, but she wouldn't.

EG: No?

JL: No. No. She said no.

EG: She must have been incredible.

JL: Oh, she was a woman--and as long as my grandfather was alive--he was ill--it was more emotional than physical. He could not take. His whole world collapsed. He had a Ph.D. in German literature and, you know, his whole world, it wasn't what it used to be. And he said that he doesn't want to live anymore so they put him in a--there was no hospital, but like a *Krankenstube* [infirmary], and my grandmother worked double shift to earn the food for him, because there was so little food that she felt, you

[9]Dr. Baeck moved to London in July 1945 where he became president of the Council of Jews from Germany and chairman of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. He taught intermittently in the U.S. at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati from 1948 until his death in 1956. [*JewishVirtualLibrary.org*].

know, people said, "How come you keep him? He takes our portions without doing the working." So my grandmother worked double shifts to earn his ration. But he died, he starved himself to death. He did not want to live. It only shows you what religion can do. Now, he was a rabbi and my grandmother became only religious through him. Her family background was different. Her father was a large landowner, which was also unique for a Jew to be a landowner in Moravia. But she became religious through my grandfather, and her belief in God was so strong that whatever God, He had in store for her, she will accept. If her fate, was, you know, if He, God, decided that she is to die, she would die, she will take whatever comes her way. And she made it, strong as she was, without any complaints, and then she spent some time with my aunt and uncle in Bratislava. And then she came here to the United States to the daughter in New York. She was 70 years, having grown up in a small community all her life. She came to a large city of New York without any English. She found her way, she kept home, she went to evening school, she took out her citizenship, starting at the age of 70.

EG: Marvelous.

JL: Yes, English and all. And she got her papers in order, the German restitution, and never a bad word about anybody, what she went through, never cursing the Germans. She said that's what it was, and God did what He did. It's not up to me to ask and the Germans were marvelous to her. I mean the German consulate was marvelous to her in New York. They came to visit her every birthday. Now, I know they did it to check on her whether she is still alive, because they had to pay and so they came to visit her. I don't know whether to see how she was, or whether she was still around, because she lived to 97.

EG: Good for her.

JL: Yes, and they had to pay that long, and the ambassador himself, I think at the age of 95, either came or called her. And she never said a bad word about anybody, of what she went through, you know of how people behaved in the concentration camp. Never. And the people behaved like beasts.

EG: She must have been a very unusual, strong woman.

JL: She was. Strong woman. Highly intelligent, and the only regret she had when she was very old, she said they never sent me to study. That was her only regret. Although, she said, she was the oldest of 14 children, and she had a very tough life helping, you know, everybody had to take--German work ethic. You know the partisan work ethic, although they were Jewish, but the whole way of life. She had special privileges being the oldest. Not only did she have special duties, looking after the whole brood constantly, but she had special privileges and every year she went with her parents to Vienna during the season to the opera and concerts and all.

EG: Was she still alive when you came to the States?

JL: Oh sure, she met my future husband before we got married and we have pictures with my son. She was holding my son. And she had pictures with my daughter

and both my children came to her funeral. I said it's part of it--you know, they saw her in life, and it's part of it. They should come along. They were young. My daughter was four, I think, and my son was in first grade, and they came to the funeral and that will stay with them. It wasn't such a terrible experience because she was 97 years old and she died as she lived. She said, "Enough. I am tired and God forgot me. It's enough." She made every preparation, every preparation for her funeral. She made the shroud. She prepared. She left instructions, she left money. She said, "I am glad." All her life she had to scrounge for money, you know, to make ends meet. "I'm glad. I won't be a burden to anybody. Here is the moneys for the funeral, for the grave." The only thing she wanted was to put the name of her husband on the gravestone.

EG: You could do that?

JL: Yes, she is buried outside of New York.

EG: You really have a remarkable family.

JL: Oh, thank you. No. She was really remarkable. Yes.

EG: Well.

[End of tape two, side one; end of interview.]