HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

ROLAND D. TURK

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Harriet Richman
Date: June 14, 1982

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RT - Roland D. Turk[1] [interviewee]
HR - Harriet Richman [interviewer]
Date: June 14, 1982

Tape one, side one:

HR: ...Mr. Roland Turk and it's taking place on the 14 of June of 1982. Mr. Turk would you please begin the tape by telling us a little bit about where you were born and when and something about your family.

RT: All right, I was born in Perigueux, Dordogne France in 1940, April 15, 1940. My mother and my grandmother, my mother's sister and her son had moved from the Strasbourg area, from Alsace Lorraine area to that area in order to escape the oncoming German invasion. They heard that things were getting very bad in Germany so they moved south.

HR: Let me just interrupt one minute. Was your family originally from...

RT: No, my family, my mother was born in Hungary, Budapest. My father was born in Czechoslovakia in Bratislava. They met and married in Strasbourg, had lived there for a number of years. Had been married five years before my mother became pregnant with me and this was I guess 1939, '40 and had planned to remain in Strasbourg, liked it and wanted to remain there. Of course because of the problems with Germany, they decided to leave. My mother's sister had a time, was at the time living in Paris with her husband and, and son. When they all moved south, the father, my, my uncle remained one last time to close the store. He had a tailor shop and he was deported. He never made it to Southern France, Central France with, with the rest of the family. But my-- but the others did. And they remained in the small village outside of Perigueux, Clairevivre was the name of it. And the reason they chose that particular village was that my grandmother cancer and that was one of the places that one goes for if you were inflicted with that disease. She remained alive for about a year and a half and died in 1941, '42 and then at that point we all moved from that area. We were told that the area was no longer safe for us to, to remain. During that time, my father had joined the Czech Army. He was a Czech National and had gone to war. He came to visit my mother and me when I was newly born and I think he left, he came when I was a couple days old, and left and went back to war in England. There he remained throughout the war and miraculously finally found us in 1945.

HR: Well before you get ahead with your story...

RT: Yeah, I'm kind of jumping...

HR: Tell, tell, tell us how it is that you, your family was able to travel south. Did you have contacts and how did you support yourselves?

[1]Former first name, David.

RT: The contact, my father and mother had worked for five years prior to the time I was born and had accumulated some money. They had left the apartment and their house in Strasbourg. So whatever they had they earned-- they, they used to come south, and from what they told me they did, you know, try to get false papers, they try to do all the things that are necessary to survive and did survive as best they could. I suspect my grandmother also had a little bit of money that she and her husband had accumulated. So they pooled their, their resources and came south. Frankly, after a while my mother worked odd jobs and things for the farmers in the area and sustained herself that way, but again, I'm getting ahead of the story. In 1940, when I was born, they had accumulated a little bit and were able to support themselves that way. My father was there at the time, as I said, he had joined the army but he kind of helped them set up and then left. But the family included, I don't know if I mentioned, my aunt, and my mother's sister, my grandmother, my grandfather and my cousin, who is a year older than, than I am. And we lived in Clairevivre, as I said, a small city, village outside of Perigueux in Dordogne which is in South Central France. And you know they lived there for-- as I recall, as I remember the story, it was about a year, year and a half, subsequent to my grandmother's death. And to this day, she's, you know, she was buried...

HR: She was buried in...

RT: ...in a cemetery outside of Perigueux. We went back to it in 1946 and again in 1948 to visit the gravesite, my mother and I.

HR: Were there Jews in...

RT: Yes, there were Jews in Perigueux and I remember…

HR: [unclear]

RT: You know, Clairevivre was the little village, Perigueux was a larger city. There were Jews in Perigueux. In the little village I don't remember Jews. It was a kind of an isolated spot. I have very, very, sketchy memories of that area, of that era. Again, I was very young.

HR: Sure.

RT: You know. Most of what I remember were, was described what I heard after the war.

HR: But in the other-- in the town there were Jews...

RT: Yes, it was...

HR: …and a cemetery I suppose.

RT: Yes. Yes.

HR: A Jewish cemetery?

RT: Yes, there was a Jewish cemetery. As far as I remember there was a Jewish cemetery but there were Jews living there. And my parents often spoke of families and in 1946 when we went back to visit my grandmother's grave, my mother stayed with family, Jewish family in Perigueux**.** I can't remember the name, I can't remember...

HR: But you did go back more recently than that. Didn't you mention...

RT: We went back in 19- three years ago, to Clermont-Ferrand. Perigueux I had such a, a very hazy memories that I didn't think, and we had limited time so we went back to Clermont-Ferrand, we didn't go back to Perigueux, although someday I'd like to go back there too and kind of see what else, if anything I can remember of that particular community, yeah.

HR: That would be good.

RT: Yeah.

HR: Okay, let's move on then. What-- well then you lived in this town, for how long?

RT: In Clairevivre?

HR: No that was the...

RT: The village.

HR: ...when you moved from there into, what's the town?

RT: Perigueux.

HR: Yes, how long did you live there?

RT: Perigueux, I don't believe we lived very long, we lived in the small village near the-- it's not a hospital but it's close where people stay who have terminal cancer. And my mother and her sister and her family lived there for about a year, a year and a half as far as I can remember.

HR: So what are your first memories of what it was like...

RT: My first memories were wandering after that, after that period they left and they wandered through the Massif Central, the French highlands from that period of time until 194-, '44.

HR: From the time you were born...

RT: Right.

HR: ...a year after that...

RT: 1944.

HR: So, so you were four years old?

RT: Four years old.

HR: Do you recall that?

RT: I really recall traveling. I remember bits and pieces of, of memories, events that are very, very hazy in my mind but were kind of helped by the stories afterwards, going from one village to another, experiencing variety of, of things. For instance, I remember being in a, in a barn one night sleeping with my, my family and trying to be very quiet and hearing dogs come. And you know that kind of memory. Again it's hard to determine which was real, which was, you know, part of somebody else's things. But there was tremendous amount of movement during that period in my life, between 1941 and '44 with no stability, absolutely none, no, you know, my father

was away and my par- my mother and her sister traveled in groups, they never traveled together.

HR: Well, the cousins?

RT: My cousin, right-- traveled in groups.

HR: It was your mother, your sister, your cousin and your...

RT: My grandfather.

HR: Oh your grandfather.

RT: My grandfather, my grandfather...

HR: Yes.

RT: ...and you traveled in, like in groups. We...

HR: Separated, even your mother...

RT: We were always within some knowledge of where the other was.

HR: You did that purposely?

RT: Purposely, because if we, you know, we felt that if one was going to be caught, not everybody would be caught. So even in the, when we traveled I remember once we were in a train, and we were seated in different parts of the train. Now the other important thing I saw on the thing-- the issue of being Jewish, very interesting. I, from, from the earlier, earliest recollections I remember being told that a Jew you're inside of the house, outside of the house you're not. And you know that's something that was kind of drummed in.

HR: Well do you recall tradition, or ritual as a little child?

RT: I remember my mother making efforts. For instance, on Passover she never ate bread. Why as she told the others because she was sick, she needed a special diet. So, you know, these little things to, I can do, do the best you can under the conditions.

HR: Right.

RT: But, you know, those are the kinds of things I recall but at that point I, you know, just didn't make much, it made enough of an impression, of an impression for me to remember, but I don't remember specifically, you know, what she did, what she didn't do.

HR: Was your grandfather observant?

RT: Yes, yes.

HR: So do you recall him...

RT: I remember him davening [praying] in the morning and my mother being scared stiff because something might happen.

HR: Oh.

RT: I remember him, you know, when-- one special recollection, the train we were on stopped. And he-- there was a little gully, he went to get some water to wash his hands and to say the morning prayers, you know.

HR: She was right, and he …

RT: Yeah.

HR: You don't remember that he had phylacteries[2] or yarmulkes[3] or things of this sort. He didn't use them...

RT: Well if you see a picture of my grandfather, he, he had a Jewish look.

HR: Look.

RT: And yet, he survived in spite of it. He died only recently in Metz. He was a real, an interesting character, a, but, he maintained something throughout. He had his tallit [prayer shawl] with him and it was almost suicidal.

HR: Yeah.

RT: And yet he made, and he did that.

HR: Managed to...

RT: Right. You know to this day we marvel at that ability and in fact, and then the luck, I think, pure luck to survive that kind of thing when so many people died.

HR: Yeah. Well do you recall any stories or incidences of things that happened during those years? Did your mother relayed anything and tell us?

RT: Oh absolutely. I remember being in jail a few times and how he escaped, how he got there, I'll never know but he was in jail. I remember, you know, I remember that incident. I don't know how he got out of it. I remember a lot of other things that related to again moving and escaping something, a spot, moving to, from one spot to another and barely making it, barely escaping. One of the stories that I, that I've told, you know, many times to my kids and to others was the fact that one day we were, you know, we escaped death by just, again a miraculous event, a miraculous thing. We were supposed to go from one town to another using a train. I don't remember the town, I remember where we were going and somehow I misbehaved that day. I made my mother late for the train. So the next day, my mother found out the next day the train was either destroyed or bombed or something and you know, people, heavy casualties. And yet, you know, we survived. These are little stories that she remembers and I remember telling after the war. And you know, she told constantly that kind of were essentially miraculous.

HR: Yes.

RT: And of the fact that we were, you know, that we able to survive. We have another one where we were on a train going from one town to another and the train stopped and I remember seeing army German people on the outside. Mama pushed my head underneath and I remember somebody coming up into our wagon, a German officer and before he went too far up, he left again. Why? I can only guess.

HR: Yeah.

[2]A pair of square black boxes, containing parchment inscribed with biblical passages, bound by leather straps to the forehead and left arm and worn by Jewish men for weekday morning prayers.
[3]A skullcap worn by Jewish men, especially during prayer or religious study.

RT: But again very close, because we had no papers at that time, our papers had been taken.

HR: During all this time you were traveling without papers?

RT: We had papers initially, we had papers. I remember hearing that we had papers, the Mayor of Perigueux was able to give us some papers but somehow they either were destroyed or taken away. We didn't have them. As far back as I can remember we had no papers. And again, you know, we were...

HR: You could have been accosted anytime, any train or any...

RT: Anytime, anytime.

HR: So you were always one step ahead of the Germans?

RT: We were always a step ahead. I remember again, something else, my mother used to say, ask people where, how far back are the Germans? Where are they now? And then we kind of moved out. My aunt first and then we followed. And this is throughout the, you know, central part of France. And as I said, three years ago when we went back I looked on the map, I looked at the, at the area, and again, the fact that we survived is again, more even more miraculous, because mountains in central France, they're not hills, they are huge mountains. They're big and the fact that we didn't get lost, the fact that we didn't get arrested, taken, taken away, is simply beyond belief.

HR: Now, you must have been helped by the French people a great deal...

RT: Some, yes.

HR: ...or the fact that they...

RT: Some.

HR: ...[didn't] turn you in...

RT: Turn us in, yes.

HR: ...didn't you say your grandfather looked Jewish?

RT: Right, well but, we, as I said we never, we're, were together and we helped one another. The one person gets something and then we kind of helped the other in terms of food, in terms of other things. In 1944, when my mother got, got a job working for a farmer in, outside of Clermont-Ferrand and she worked in that as a maid for this fellow for a year, the last year of the war. Recently, we went there, we found out why. His wife had left him and he needed somebody to take care of the house. My mother happened to be there. She came in and she, you know, she got a job. Now the guy didn't know that he was helping a Jewish family. He didn't know we were Jews. But he, because of his needs and because of our needs, we kind of [unclear].

HR: So you lived there as well?

RT: We lived there for a year and that's, you know, I remember that vividly.

HR: In their house?

RT: In their house, yes. I remember that vividly and we went back and we, I looked up the, that farmer's daughter who was living, who's still living in a neighboring village. We didn't see her but we saw her husband and he told us a little bit about the,

the events of that year because he had, I think the husband had lived there too. But I remember the woman, she at that point, she was a young girl. And we saw the house, of course, it's boarded up now, but I took pictures of it, and we talked to a neighbor who lives, still lives there and she remembered us. She remembered the family with the child and all that.

HR: It wouldn't be too difficult for them to think that you were perhaps Jews. Why do you, unless your mother had a complete story? Where did you come from? Where did you live? Who was she?

RT: There were apparently a lot of people wandering in those days.

HR: I see.

RT: So that before 1944, I remember that whenever people started asking too many questions, we left. I remember that's again, something else that, that, you know, when people started to, you know, to ask things and to kind of, of, we left and very often in the middle of the night.

HR: Yeah.

RT: Yeah, very often, I remember you know, just taking off and leaving, you know, the mother said, "Come on we've got to go" and whatever and she said and we left. Until 1944, when we stayed in one spot for, for, for a year, but prior to that very few days, sometimes a week, sometimes longer. I remember going to church during, it must have been Easter where my mother asked me to go to this church and we went together and she asked me to kiss the ring of the priest of whatever they do, and I didn't do it and she was frightened but I guess, we walked toward the procession to see the figure, figure of Christ, that we did.

HR: You knew how to do things.

RT: We had to do it.

HR: You had to do it, right.

RT: We had to do it, so we did it. So we tried to play the game, if you will, as best as we could and still maintaining some type of identity as Jews. Because I never had any doubts, you know, who I was but still, you know, we played the game.

HR: That's really remarkable.

RT: It's really is, it is, yeah...

HR: That you had those feelings as a child and your mother had really nothing to, to instill it.

RT: I don't think it was a question, it just was, it just was, it just was. So it was interesting.

HR: Very. Amazing, too. Well go on from there. During this time, do you recall any antisemitic experiences? No one...

RT: During that period of time I don't remember, just the fact that you just didn't say that you were Jewish. You just didn't say it.

HR: Or because you just didn't want to stay around long enough to bring up the question.

RT: Exactly, exactly, but a...

HR: But other than that, you were...

RT: No, I don't remember...

HR: Did you, did you encounter anybody else that was Jewish, that you think was in the same situation?

RT: No, I think we kept pretty much away from one another. I remember that, you know that we just, there was no association with other people. We were functioning as a small-- my mother and I, my cousin and her and his mother and she had a friend who gave, she kind of befriended him during the time that her husband was deported and they kind of lived together for, well in fact, they eventually married but they lived, you know, together and my grandfather wandered back and forth. I don't think he was with, with anybody, but it was essential, you know, these two, the three groups with him and we wandered, you know, from spot to spot, surviving the best we could, again, how we...

HR: And everyone survived, the cousin, the sister.

RT: We all survived, we all survived. We made it and my aunt is living in Israel now and my cousin is living in New York and my grandfather lived until just a few years ago in France, in Metz.

HR: He decided to stay.

RT: Decided to stay, he came to our wedding, my wife and I, 20 years ago next month, in two months and he visited us for, for that.

HR: Why did he remain in France? Who did he have there? Did he have family?

RT: He was a strange character, he was a strange character. I never knew what kind of a business he was in, always seemed to have money, always seemed to deal and finagle and survive. He was a strange character.

HR: And he stayed in France alone.

RT: He stayed in France. Well, no, he married, he met another people, he was a real ladies man apparently. He had married I think three or four times, or lived with people or seemed to do very well that way, and seemed to have money somehow. Not sure what kind-- never seemed to have job but always seemed to function. I in this, as I understand through our family stories, it happened before, before he was, you know during the war, he seemed to simply manage.

HR: So the last time you saw him was for your...

RT: Was for our-- no, he came after that, too. He came in 19- for our wedding and he came again, for my sister's wedding which was about 15 years ago. So he came to America a couple times.

HR: Then you, you saw, when you went back to France...

RT: Well we came back; we went back to France four years ago.

HR: Mr. Turk, tell us again about your father and his military service?

RT: He, having been born in Czechoslovakia, he, in 1939 decided to join the Czech army or the Czech volunteer as I understood, it wasn't a real army but it was a contingent of Czech Nationals who ended up going in England. Yeah, going to England and joining a kind of like a, a quazi-English army but with, you know, with the Czech brigade. He then joined the English army, as far as I remember, as I understand, and came over to France during the Normandy invasion, tells me the 14th brigade, the 14th wave or something. Fought in France, in Northern France and in 1945, I guess it was maybe late, late in the year, he decided to start looking for his family. The war was coming to a close I guess and he decided to figure out, find out where, where we were. We hadn't had any contacts with him and...

HR: And where was it that he saw you? Where were you at that time?

RT: The last time he saw me was in Perigueux. I was eight days old.

HR: And then?

RT: And in '45 when he joined, when he came over and started to, to I think join the French army, he decided to go back to where we were in 1940 in Perigueux and see whether he could figure out where we were.

HR: And in fact how far from there were you staying? What was the distance between?

RT: Oh goodness, it took us four hours by train.

HR: Oh my.

RT: I guess that's a long way.

HR: A long way.

RT: From Paris rather. I'm sorry from Paris, you asked me from?

HR: Your father went to the small village...

RT: Yeah.

HR: ...where you were staying when you were eight days old...

RT: Right.

HR: and then?

RT: Oh, from Perigueux to Clermont-Ferrand.

HR: Right.

RT: [unclear]. Oh my goodness, it's through mountains. I can show you on a map. We can kind of see where that is.

HR: But how many miles would you say?

RT: It's hard for me to, to...

HR: But it's quite a distance?

RT; it's quite a distance[4] but even more in terms of distance it's through fairly high mountains and villages...

[4]Perigueux is 251 km from Clermont-Ferrand.

HR: So...

RT: …and many small three, four houses villages.

HR: And he had no idea where you were?

RT: He had no idea where we were.

HR: So he went back to this Perigueux?

RT: Went back to [unclear] I'm sorry no, Clairevivre I'm getting these names all-- Clairevivre which is outside of Perigueux and started to search and as I under-, as I understand it he had 10 days of, 10 day pass and on the ninth day he had given up and he was going back and by that time he had wandered through the northern part of the Massif Central and he walked down the village, my mother opened the wooden shutters and there he was.

HR: Oh my G-d.

RT: It was that kind of miraculous kind of thing. Hard to believe.

HR: Right.

RT: But my father swears to it, my mother swore. I was there. I remember I was lying in bed, on a-- I was five years old, so you know memory wasn't so ...

HR: To remember that...

RT: ...and my mother looked out the window and she sees a soldier out there and says, "Hey Roland, I think your father's here."

HR: Oh my G-d.

RT: I mean that kind of a thing, because prior to that, she kept telling me, "You know, tomorrow your father's going to come." Because I wanted to know, no I had only pictures, very small, very few at that, and that one morning there comes my father. He stayed with us overnight I guess and then he left because he had to go back to his [unclear]. By that time, he knew where we were and then he started out. Unbelievable!

HR: An absolute miracle that she's [unclear] the windows and there he is.

RT: Shutters.

HR: She must have nearly fainted. Oh my G-d.

RT: They were shutters, they were shutters. You know, they close the shutters at night and open them in the morning. And fortunately our house or the house we lived in was on the main road.

HR: Right.

RT: My cousin and his mother were also living in that village but they were living elsewhere. In a smaller, you know, outside of, of the main road and had we lived there, we wouldn't have seen him. And she...

HR: And if she hadn't been at the window [unclear]?

RT: ... had she opened up the window a half an hour later, no way.

HR: She wouldn't have seen him.

RT: And my father somehow never met, I mean the coincidence and the, it's unbelievable and yet...

HR: It happened...

RT: It happened, absolutely true.

HR: And you remember this visit with your father?

RT: Yes, I was lying in bed, I don't' remember what time it was. My mother looks out the window and, and tells me. In French, you know, you know, your father is here. You know, out of the clear blue, absolutely unbelievable. My kids made me take a picture of the windows opening the shutters.

HR: Oh my word, what a happy reunion.

RT: It was, you know, to say the least, a very dramatic thing.

HR: Yes.

RT: And of course at that point, you know, I was, you know, I wasn't sure, is, it was a rough time for us, too. And he stayed as I said, one night and the next furlough he had, he came and, of course, brought me candies and all that kind of thing that one gets to expect, and then shortly thereafter we moved to Clermont-Ferrand which is, as I said, very close to that village, and you know, began to put the pieces together again for us.

HR: And then your father joined you there?

RT: Then my father joined us.

HR: And how soon after that?

RT: My recollection is a few months later. It wasn't right away because he still had service to complete or do or whatever they did up there, and he then joined us in Clermont-Ferrand. We got a small apartment and that's where I went back to visit several years ago and we remained in that area until 1940, '51 when we...

HR: '51...

RT: …came over to, came to America.

HR: And is your aunt and cousin...

RT: Yes.

HR: ...and grandfather, that you all went to...

RT: Yeah, and then we lived in Clermont-Ferrand for those six years, six years.

HR: Well now tell us about those years.

RT: They were not as easy as one would expect. The end of the war had, had occurred and...

HR: What was it like in France? What was the food situation, the housing, the...

RT: The housing we had a three bedroom, a three room flat on the second floor of a [unclear] very modest area in Clermont-Ferrand. My father worked. He was always a very, very hard worker and I remember his first job was not in a brewery but he ended up working a brewery, shoveling coal in a big, big oven to keep, I guess to keep the things going. And very tough life, extremely tough life but he was able to get work,

he was able to, you know, for us to have enough money to sub- you know to live. Nothing fancy, minimal, minimal standards, absolutely minimal standards.

HR: Did your aunt and cousin live nearby?

RT: They lived nearby, yes.

HR: And your grandfather?

RT: MY grandfather, he lived all over. He decided to go to Paris, he lived in Paris for a while, he lived in other cities in France for a while and he also lived in Clermont-Ferrand for a while.

HR: And your first school experiences there?

RT: Was in Clermont-Ferrand, yes.

HR: [Unclear]

RT: Prior to that? In, I guess I enjoyed it. I was always quiet and I didn't, you know of course, again no one knew I was Jewish. No one, no one,

HR: You didn't, even all during all those years, why did you...

RT: No one knew. My parents had a rule that you couldn't, that no one-- one would call it almost paranoia about sharing the Jewish experience. No one knew, even our closest friends.

HR: But why were they afraid after the war?

RT: I guess they were afraid because of whatever...

HR: Left...

RT: ...leftovers and other kinds of antisemitism existed. The fact that French, France is an antisemitic country is, to me, was almost a given. When I came to America people kind of said, you know, they questioned me on that. We went back to France three years ago. We were driving in a taxi in Paris. He was telling me that this hotel was just sold by the Jews to the Arabs and that he was telling us that the Jewish ministers in Paris are selling the, selling the Jews, the country down the tube and that they are making alliances with-- the antisemitism is there because we experienced it.

HR: Well what do you recall then as a youngster?

RT: Okay. The one vivid experience was on a, on a, one of the high holidays, a group of married friends saw me going to a synagogue. It was a synagogue relatively close to our house. What we usually did to go to that synagogue was go all the way around and come in through the other side. We didn't want to see anybody, anybody following us or going to the thing. One day somebody, one of my friends saw me there and the following day I was beaten up by some of these kids, and I kind of convinced them that I had to give something to somebody. I kind of tried to point out that it was not something, that you know that I wasn't a Jew. I hid my Jewish identity until I came to America. You know, my best friend, whom I spend my summers with never knew I was Jewish and to this day when I spoke to him and again the story kind of describes our relationship and what happened. When he came to America and talked about the fact that

I kept this, he said, "You were right". And to this day his parents don't know that I'm Jewish. I went to visit them and we didn't tell them.

HR: And you didn't tell them?

RT: Because, as far as he's concerned it was best not to know.

HR: Even parents?

RT: My best-- even now, he says it was good. And now, you know how they are, kind of a thing. He's liberal; he's actually liberal, very nice, you know. We get along very well, wonderful relationship. He's probably going to come to visit us again within the next year or so. We met family, you know, absolutely, but as far as, as far as being a Jew is concerned, you were right not to tell me and you were right not to tell my parents, and I didn't. My wife wouldn't go to their house several years ago because she just felt that uncomfortable. My picture of us as kids was on their mantel piece. And yet the, the, you know, from his perspect- my friend's perspective, to tell them that would be to shatter everything that we've, you know, that was.

[Tape one, side one ended.]

Tape one, side two:

HR: Continue to tell us more about what you know of antisemitism in central France in those days. You can also [unclear].

RT: Okay. As far back as I can remember my mother and her sister and the rest of our family were aware that the situation for Jews in Germany is very poor, was very bad. The, I remember hearing the radio announcement, Hitler's voice on the radio and some of the things that he said, and it kind of reaffirmed what they were feeling. After the war, 1945 and on up, my parents and my aunt and Jews in the area of France that I'm familiar with, did not share the fact that they were Jews with anyone. It was out of fear, as I understand it, and as I felt at the time, the fact that we were Jews was something that we kept to ourselves, was not to be shared with anybody else. There was another Jewish boy in the class in, in France that I attended. He and I knew we were Jews. We saw one another at, at, in synagogue, but during the classes we never talked, we never shared any kind of, of information. You know, I knew enough to say hello to him but that's all. And it's my feeling that all of us, all of us Jews felt that it's best not to say anything. Why? Again, I think it was a fear that we would be hurt in some fashion if it was, if we, we shared that information.

HR: Well now this-- what was the name of the Synagogue in, in Clermont?

RT: Clermont-Ferrand. A small synagogue, don't remember.

HR: Don't recall the name?

RT: It was an Orthodox *shul*…

HR: …a very, just a very small synagogue.

RT: Right.

HR: So it didn't have any social functions there. It was a place to go and go *daven* [pray] when you could.

RT: It was a place to go, go *daven* when you could. Generally we went on, on-- and by the way on High Holidays there was not only one synagogue, but there were two services because the Jews whenever they had to have, you know, because of a format and because of the way they *daven* there was a less observant synagogue and a more observant synagogue, I think. It could have been Ashkenazic and Sephardic differences. There were differences that the men often discuss at synagogue and this is why they, they had, there were several, a couple services at High Holidays. At any rate, the *shul* was relatively near, near the house that we lived in.

HR: Do you think there was a daily *minyan* [quorum of 10 adult Jewish men needed for communal prayer] there?

RT: No, oh no...

HR: No.

RT: There was something on *Shabbos*, on Saturday morning, I believe, if I recall. My father sometimes attended at nights and sometimes attended-- never directly,

never did we walk directly from our house to the synagogue. It was closer obviously, it was just that, we always went around, and as I indicated before, once someone, when my friends saw me go in, on the next day I was beaten up because they thought I was Jew, Jewish and I had to say, "Look I just had to do something for somebody. I'm not even Jewish", and that was the feeling that we had.

HR: Your name is T...

RT: Turk, T-U-R-K...

HR: T-U-R-K.

RT: It was T-U-R-G in France.

HR: T-U-R-G.

RT: Yeah, we changed it.

HR: And that is not a...

RT: No, not particularly Jewish.

HR: And is that your family name or did you change it?

RT: Yes, no my father's family name was T-U-R-K, I believe. My given name when I was born was David, but my mother felt that David was too Jewish, so she gave me, Roland was a good French name...

HR: …good French name.

RT: It's only after I came to America did I use my Roland David Turk as my, I, I used that as my middle name.

HR: But in France, you spelled your name T-U-R...

RT: G.

HR: G.

RT: It was a clerical error as I understand it. It was just a mistake.

HR: So how-- and how did you pronounce it?

RT: Too- argh [phonetic].

HR: Oh.

RT: Turg.

HR: So it didn't sound the least bit Jewish?

RT: No, it didn't sound Jewish at all.

HR: I see, and your aunt? What was her name?

RT: My aunt was Stahlberg, their maiden-- my grandfather's name is Stahlberg, S.C. Hoffman but she changed it to Weinberg which apparently was not terribly Jewish over there, I'm not sure.

HR: Weinberg.

RT: It sounds very Jewish American but apparently it's a Germanic name and I don't think that, you know, they went along with that.

HR: Huh! And your grandfather's name was?

RT: Was Stahlberg, and that doesn't...

HR: That sounds rather German like.

RT: Yeah, Germanic, yeah, German sounding.

HR: But how could they get away with it being German. I mean, weren't the French more anti-German than anti-Jew?

RT: I'm not sure, I'm not sure. Again, my recollect- very naive recollection, recollection of so very many things, talking to some of the German, some of the French peasants and their children, they kind of blamed the war on the Jews. If the Jews weren't around, the war wouldn't have occurred. I remember that a number of times which to me sounded ludicrous but you know I never argue with anybody. I went along with what was being said. I guess it is a not very brave thing to do, but it was a survival thing to do.

HR: Yeah.

RT: I suppose.

HR: Now you, you started school...?

RT: In Clermont-Ferrand.

HR: And you went to school?

RT: Yes.

HR: About five years...

RT: Yes.

HR: You have five years of school there.

RT: Right.

HR: So you have some good memories about school.

RT: Yes.

HR: Now, you didn't go to church during this time as you had done before?

RT: No, no...

HR: You stopped that?

RT: No, we were, we were actually-- we did go to Christmas parties and that type of thing, and I recall my mother having to justify us not, not having a Christmas tree to all of the people who were, who were living in that area.

HR: And Easter must have been a hard time.

RT: Easter was a very difficult time because everybody went to church and went to those processions and we often, you know, had excuses not to, not to go.

HR: Or you had to get involved. Because even here in America, I remember as a youngster from Harrisburg, you somehow get wound up with this...

RT: Yes.

HR: ...in the school...

RT: Sure.

HR: Because they have assembly programs and so that must have happened to you.

RT: It was, it was hard to stay, but we did stay away. It was hard not to get involved.

HR: Not to get involved.

RT: But we didn't get-- I did go to Christmas parties and receive toys and things like that. I remember vividly, you know, having that. I also remember my mother having, as I said, to justify us not having a Christmas tree to her friends, especially Jean Claude Banière the fellow, my childhood friend whose parents were very close with my parents and they kept asking, "Why don't you have Christmas tree," each Christmas and there's always a reason.

HR: But, they didn't question your not belonging to a, or going to a church or anything, I thought-- not everybody...

RT: Not everybody went, went and we were less religious I suppose, I mean that was one of the arguments that my mother must have used. And also during Passover, as I said before, she always never eat bread and always had special diet because she wasn't feeling well she said to, you know, to others during that particular, you know, particular period. So we tried to maintain something of our Jew-, you know, Jewish involvement but it was, it was very hard for my, my folks especially. After, in 1946, '47 they did ask me to go to Sunday school, I, to be taught by somebody, Hebrew and to go to classes occasionally [unclear], to, to learn the language.

HR: And you did...

RT: Which I did, right.

HR: In...

RT: Very [unclear], in France, in France.

HR: In France. There was some sort of a school.

RT: There was somebody, somebody. No, there wasn't, there wasn't for a formal school. It was a tutor. Some guy I remember going to and learning the beginning alphabet in Hebrew. When we came to America, of course, I went to Hebrew School and you know began that. But over there, it was something. It was not as structured obviously as it is here. Very elementary, but it was something.

HR: Was this one little boy that you remembered the only other Jewish child that you had...?

RT: No, no there were others, there were others.

HR: Did you have friends or not?

RT: No, no.

HR: No friends.

RT: None were my friends. All were people I knew. My cousin was the only other Jew that I was exposed to.

HR: No other Jewish family?

RT: No other Jewish family that, you know that I'm aware of, that I remember in any way. There were other Jews in the city, in the city of Clermont-Ferrand. But we never-- as I say it was a very, it was like an unwritten type of thing. You, you know, we didn't get together.

HR: Were there any-- was there a kosher butcher…?

RT: No.

HR: Or anything?

RT: No.

HR: No, no, nothing of that sort. Just this little...

RT: There was a synagogue where...

HR: Synagogue, that's the only sign of...

RT: Right, where, you know, where Jews came to and on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and other place to *daven*, but that's all.

HR: What else do you want to tell us about those school years in France in particular?

RT: That's, I guess as far as I remember. It was, you know, I guess the simplest way to put it, is that it was...

HR: Was there food available during those years?

RT: After the war? Yes.

HR: There was plenty of food available...

RT: Yeah, I remember after the war not having any problems. During the war we had a lot of problems trying to, you know, to, but after the war it didn't seem to be that difficult. My father as I said was very, very active. Always worked, always found a job very quickly and seemed to manage to make ends meet and that's certainly not in any way, you know, very modest. In fact one of the reasons we decided to come to America was that things were not going anywhere in France for us.

HR: Yes, tell us about your plans to emigrate.

RT: Okay, my father had wanted to come to America even before the war had started but somehow never managed. In 1946 and '47 he started to make some, some real plans, concrete plans, primarily because we were going nowhere. For six years we were there, we existed from day to day.

HR: He couldn't make a living any other way?

RT: He couldn't make a living, no other way. There was nothing else to do.

HR: Was he trained?

RT: He wasn't, didn't have any particular training. He was-- his father was a tailor but it never interested him and he never really developed that particular skill.

HR: And he had...

RT: He was unskilled laborer.

HR: ...couldn't have had much schooling I guess because of the war.

RT: No, right, right. He didn't have much schooling so he, his options were quite limited. It was hard labor in France and my mother of course was home. So they decided to immigrate to America. They figured it would be best for their children. That was the reason they came here was best for the children. My father had a sister who lived in America who sent us the necessary papers to, for us to come and it took a number of years for us to receive the appropriate documents to come to America. Again,

interesting that when we finally found out that we were coming, we said goodbye to no one. One day we were there, the next day we were not.

HR: Really?

RT: Yes, in fact, that's one of the things that Jean Claude Banière and I talked about. He said he was absolutely flabbergasted. One day he comes up to our room, to our apartment, we were living no more than three, four blocks apart and we're gone. No word, nothing.

HR: Now why do you think that you did...?

RT: Again, as far as I remember my parents were afraid to let anybody know less they get involved and start making it difficult for us. They said nothing to no one. My aunts knew and there was one other family who had left, who had left, a Jewish family, who had left for U.S. a couple years before. I remember talking, my parents talking to them once, and they told me where they were living. It happened to be Buffalo which is where we ended up, but that was it.

HR: Wait, you talked to this family?

RT: When we found out we were leaving, going to, to the U.S., I remember my parents...

HR: Talking to them.

RT: ...going talking to them and we went to their house. That was the only time I remember going to another Jew's house.

HR: And you shared with them the fact that you were going to go...

RT: That we were probably going to come.

HR: And you went to the same place?

RT: As it turned out. We came to New York and of course, HIAS helped us come to New York. My father looked for a job in New York for a number of-- this was in the summer of, in the summer of '51, couldn't find anything in New York and decided to go to Buffalo and found a job in Dy-dee Wash in Buffalo. Buffalo was selected simply because he had heard or he remembered that this family lived in Buffalo and that's where my parents moved and my-- and we lived for-- in fact, my father still lives there and my sister lives there. So [noise on tape; short pause]…

HR: Mr. Turk, let's just talk again about the fact that your parents made a very dramatic move from Strasbourg in Alsace-Lorraine and your feelings about what motivated them to move and then how they had to again make a very, very dramatic move and what you think about it.

RT: Well the question comes up, why did they move initially? Why did they move in 1939 from Alsace-Lorraine? And obviously they were aware of something coming. They were aware that what was happening in Germany, was happening in Poland was going to happen in, in Alsace-Lorraine and it was probably going to happen in that area of France. So they felt, they felt they needed to leave a very dangerous area,

so they moved south. The point is, what kind of effort did it take? Here was a couple, my father and mother, who had lived in Alsace-Lorraine in Strasbourg.

HR: Since when, their young twenties?

RT: They were, well, they were a little older than that, I can't recall exactly, I guess I could figure it out, the difference between my age and their age but they were, they had been married for five years.

HR: I see.

RT: And my mother had a difficult time getting pregnant. Finally she became pregnant and the war break out and they left. And that move, as you pointed out, was extremely difficult, extremely painful. And yet, it felt very-- they had to do it, there was no question in their minds that moving, leaving the area was critical. I guess the war broke out, and that was the major thing. And being Jews certainly made them aware that they were, they were on the firing line. That they were very, very, in a very dangerous situation. Now again, why did they move in 1946, is when they started thinking about moving to America. This is after the war. Essentially, similar kinds of reasons, living in France my father was not getting ahead. Keeping quiet about being Jewish, keeping quiet about-- I mean something as powerful as that I think, was, you know, very difficult. Although we never spoke about it, I certainly sensed a tremendous amount of discomfort, not really being part of anything, feeling part of a country, of the country and yet to become French, they became naturalized French citizens. Now they said it was because the quota for French citizens was-- I guess you could, could join the, come to America much easier than if you were an East European citizen. So they joined, they became French citizens with only the one goal and that is to leave France. Again, very difficult move, very painful move. When it occurred, they didn't say anything to anyone and we talked about that before.

HR: I don't think we did that on the tape. But what do you remember of that?

RT: I remember the planning...

HR: You knew that the planning was...

RT: I knew that they were thinking about it. I knew that they were, that they wanted to very badly. That they had asked me not to say anything to anybody and I didn't. When the day came I remember again, some, a short anecdote. We were supposed to be involved in some kind of city-wide function where everybody in schools, in the French schools, one day every year in the spring or summer they all the school kids parade down the major part of the street and the major, main street of Clermont-Ferrand, end up in the stadium and there are festivities. I wanted to be there. I got the jacket, I remember the white jacket and little, little sign of our school, a little flag of our school and I never went because it was after the time we were leaving. And we picked up and left, without telling a soul other than, of course, my, my aunt who was the only one who knew we were there, no one else.

HR: Do you remember-- did you go to a train? Do you have any...?

RT: We went by train. All I remember we went to, we had something like 16 boxes, crates. We went to, to at the train station. My father kept counting them to make sure they were all there and I remember staying there. We were totally by ourselves. Nobody was there to send us off. Nobody was there who knew we were there and we went, we took off. We went to Paris for a few days before we went to La-Havre and came over by boat from, from La-Havre to, to New York. But yeah, I remember it was, it was strange in that it was exciting and I was obviously very excited about the move. But there was no one there; no one there to assist.

HR: And anyone to greet you in New York?

RT: I had a cousin and an aunt, second cousin, second and a great aunt in New York. They were not at the station, but we did see them before we came to, before we came to America. This was a sister of my mother's mother who was...

HR: Oh you're talking about Paris?

RT: In Paris. I'm sorry, in Paris.

HR: Paris.

RT: But in New York the HIAS people greeted us at the, at the quay where the boats depart. And we stayed the entire day going through the various procedures and again, my father kept counting the crates to make sure that everything was there and then all that he had, was not terribly good stuff but it was something that, the only thing that they had. And we ended up in a old building in New York city where I guess all immigrants came to.

HR: Was this the lower Eastside still? Or…

RT: Pardon me?

HR: Was it the lower Eastside in…?

RT: It was. You know, I've been trying to find this for the last, since I've been in America and I've yet to find it. It's on Liberty Street somewhere, near Liberty Square. I'm sorry, Lafayette Square.

HR: Lafayette.

RT: Lafayette Square. It was an old building where different floors and we were in room 1313, huge room with partitions. And I guess in each partition was a family and there were the five of us, my father and mother and my two sisters and I, and we were in this partition and it was no more than what, five, six foot high maybe and huge room, you could hear people. It was not the greatest thing in the world. In fact, the first night something-- again, I tell, first night, I wake up in the middle of the night and a rat on my chest. It was wandering around. It was not a very auspicious beginning in the U.S. but...

HR: And here you were all of 11 years old...

RT: I was 11 years old...

HR: And don't speak a word of English.

RT: Not a word of English.

HR: And nor your sisters...

RT: My sister-- and my father was an English army and he thought he could use some words but he wasn't terribly proficient either. He kept looking for jobs. He also kept looking at telephone books for all the Turks, always looking for relatives. We came here and who's still here to help us.

HR: Did he find any?

RT: He found a distant cousin, not terribly, you know, not even closely related but he did find somebody. But I'll never forget he kept looking through that New York telephone book, looking for the, for the names of, of families he knew.

HR: This would be a good place then for you to tell us about what happened to both sides of your parents' families?

RT: My mother, her sister escaped as we did, [unclear] she was a couple years, a few years younger. She lives, went to live near us in France.

HR: And where is she?

RT: She is now living in Israel. She has three sons, the boy, the son who is a year older than me is still living in New York; the two other sons were born after the war. Her husband died just recently, in the last few years or so. My mother's, also, my mother also had three younger brothers who instead of leaving, remaining in Perigueux where we remained, moved down across the Pyrenées and into, into Spain and then to Morocco. And they remained there for-- one remained there for many, many years, came to America about 10 years ago; the other, the older of the three lived, went to, to France and lived there, went to France after the war and lived there and the other, the younger one came to America and is living now in Buffalo, came to America shortly after, after we did.

HR: Now your mother's parents they were...

RT: My mother's mother, of course died in France, in Southern France, and her father remained in France, came to America for the first time for my wedding in, 20 years ago. And then came for my sister's wedding, 20- I guess this was about 15 years ago, and died about three, four years ago in France, in Metz, remained there. Then on my father's side, my father was the youngest of some 11 children...

HR: What about his parents?

RT: Yeah. His, his father died before the war, I think it was 1933; his mother was deported. His...

HR: In, in...

RT: In Czechoslovakia, right.

HR: And was she in camps or did she...?

RT: She was-- as far as he knew, he went back to Czechoslovakia just recently, within the last five years and found out an awful lot about her. In fact, I jotted down some of the things he found out, what happened to his family and, and essentially they all perished. They and their relatives, children and others perished there; they never, they

never left. The only relative my father had left was the brother who left about the same time my father did, left, left Czechoslovakia. Brother's a year older and ended up in Toronto, and his sister who had lived in Vienna and came to America way before the war. So she-- the three of them were the only survivor of this large family. Everyone else perished, and right now I'm the last remaining Turk, so that's one of those things. I guess that's about all the relatives that-- I'm really not, not that, that familiar with, you know, with that. I spoke to my father a few times about it and he remembers bits and pieces of it, I don't think he remembers a whole lot. Maybe he does and maybe he needs this type of thing too, you know, to kind of catch his memory a little bit and...

HR: All right and now would you want to tell us then about your return trips to France and what happened to...

RT: Okay, it relates to the article that, that I shared with you.

HR: Tell us the story.

RT: Okay, Jeanne Claude Banière and I met in 1946. His parents became very close, close friends to my parents because we were all from Alsace-Lorraine. So that when they lived in Clermont-Ferrand they somehow found out that they were from that region and they became very close and we spent...

HR: They, of course, were non-Jews.

RT: They were not Jews. No, they were, they were Catholics. They spent their summers in the house that they owned in a village outside of Clermont-Ferrand. My mother and I and Jean Claude's mother and Jean Claude went spent some marvelous times in [unclear]. My father worked and his father worked in Clermont-Ferrand, so we were extremely close to his famil-- and as I said earlier they did not know that we were Jewish, at any time. His parents still don't know that we're Jews. We spent our winters together, we went to school together, we were inseparable, essentially. He was my best friend. Christmases he had a nice Christmas tree and my mother found ways telling why didn't have Christmas tree. Although when, when his father's business had a Christmas party, of course, I was invited and we had a Christmas present like everybody else, I suppose. We always felt very bad, they always felt very badly that I didn't get Christmas presents like everybody else. But it was a very close relationship, I can't over emphasize that. And yet at no point did my parents even think about telling them that we were Jews. It never entered their mind. It was something that was kept very private, very, just no one needed to know. In fact, when we left, Jean Claude told me that when he came to visit us in 1974 I guess it was, that one day I was there and the next day I was not, and he couldn't figure out what happened to us. It was later, quite later that I wrote a letter to the school principal of the school I attended to describe where I had gone and then I had sent a letter to Jean Claude.

HR: And you didn't say why or anything like that?

RT: No.

HR: And why you left so hastily or...

RT: No, no, it was-- I'm not even sure why. I mean, I, you know my parents kept saying well, in case something happened, in case they would do something to prevent us from going. They could still hurt us if they, if they knew at the last moment, so then we never shared that with, you know, with anybody. I'm not sure that I remember that clearly or that they even cared-- well yes I cared, it was just one of those things, I, you know, we left. And so, Jean Claude and I corresponded for a number of years. I went to college, told him where I was, he sent me pictures. I worked in Kalamazoo, Michigan and sent him letters and we were-- I moved from Kalamazoo, Michigan I, I began to work at the Jewish Y's and Centers here in Philadelphia. I was the Assistant Executive Director of Program and I sent him a letter saying that I was moving to Philadelphia to work in the Jewish Y's and Centers. That's the last I had heard. So I figured ah ha, he figured it out. He figured I'm Jewish now. Never said anything to him. Never heard anything from him from that point. About, I guess I'll have to get my dates now, in 1974, I guess right before, he came, let me see the date here because it will give me a little bit of, he was here in September. This was in September of '74 that this article was written so it must have been in '73, in, around Christmas time in '73 I received a Christmas card from Jean Claude Banière. The card had gone to Kalamazoo and it kind of followed me to, to Philadelphia. And the Christmas card here said, you know, wish a Merry Christmas. Write if you have a chance, something to that effect. So I wrote him a letter saying, you know, where we were now and said, you know, if you hap-, happen to come to America ever, look us up. I get a telephone call shortly thereafter, when do you want me, in July or in August? I'm planning to come. So I said, fine, come in whatever month it was, must have been August and we were living in Willingboro at the time, Willingboro, New Jersey. Told me what time he'd be here. I went to pick him up at the airport in, at the Philadelphia International Airport and between the airport and Willingboro I had to tell him that I was Jewish because it was on a Friday night and we were -- didn't know what kind of a reaction I'd get and you know...

HR: And you are an observant Jew...

RT: Well you know we...

HR: You keep Sabbath and everything.

RT: Yeah, we are *shomer Shabbos* and we keep kosher and you know try to do some of the things. And he, took it very well I must say. Told me that he pro- he suspected, after a while he suspected there was something wrong and probably we were Jews. But because he's so liberal, it didn't really matter, it didn't matter to him and that we, you know, that he could understand and as I said earlier felt that I was absolutely correct, and my parents were absolutely correct in not sharing that information with him then, because at that point he didn't say how he would feel, but certainly it would be quite different than what was. And never told his folks, again as I said earlier. He spent a month here. He spent a lot of time with us and saw much of the country, went to Toronto and some other areas and then I guess it was two summers ago, we went to

France, my family and I went to visit him. He was extremely courteous and did help us in so many ways, you know, we spent a good, he lives outside of Versailles...

HR: What does he do?

RT: Outside of [unclear]. He works as a, in a, in a, some type of engineering firm that deals with constructing nuclear plants. So it's a fairly technical kind of a thing and I don't think he has a PhD but he is very close to it, and he's very skilled, apparently very skilled at what he does. He travels extensively and is a, you know, he leads a very interesting life. He has a daughter and a wife and they live in Versailles. So we spent a week, a few days in Paris and toured, he showed us Paris, and then he and his daughter drove to Clermont-Ferrand and my family and I, you know, took a train and we spent a few days in Clermont-Ferrand. We went back to his house, to the house we spent in summers toward Clermont-Ferrand and he and I and my family went back to the village outside of Clermont-Ferrand which he didn't know anything about. Which, by the way, I remembered. I had been, I had not been there since 1945 and I just received general directions, looking at a map to where it was but once we got close, I knew exactly how to get there, I told him …

HR: This was Perigueux?

RT: This was outside. No, not Perigueux, outside of Clermont-Ferrand, Fond-Clermont…

[Tape one, side two ended.]

Tape two, side one:

HR: ...one of an interview with Mr. Roland Turk, June 16, 1982, Harriet Richman interviewing. [brief pause on the tape] Mr. Turk, tell us how this trip back to France affected you. What were your thoughts? What did you really feel about it?

RT: It was extremely traumatic, much more so than I expected. I thought I would be back and it would be all fun and games and we could share some of the good times. But what I found was that the mountains that I remembered were as high as I recall it wasn't-- I mean people kept saying, well they'll be little mountains because, you know, you were a little kid then. They were quite high, quite difficult to negotiate, and I guess the experiences of our, of my early life kind of came into focus a little bit more. The fact that we were, that we escaped, the fact that we survived, near one of the markers, there were some markers as we traveled, one of the markers showed a burnt house, house that had been burned and three people had been killed. The date was April 14, 1944. Well April 14, 1944 I was living there, and you know, I guess the reality kind of really came down, came down hard and it was shocking. Of course the language problem trying to converse with my friend who could not speak English and translating his words to my wife, who did not speak French, and to my children was very tough, and I was almost in a, you know, torn between those two worlds.

HR: And your personality must have been really...

RT: Oh sure, sure. He was extremely possessive of me during that, during those two weeks, he wanted, during that one week, spent one week with us, and one week we were by ourselves, elsewhere. But, extremely possessive, he wanted only to talk and to remember, and to reminisce, and to understand what America was like, what I thought, what my thoughts were like, what. We spent hours and hours just talking, which I think made my family a bit jealous and it kind of created some tensions at that time. I guess the reasons-- why did I survive? That kind of came up time and time and time again...

HR: And I think...

RT: I was younger, too.

HR: Yes you must have been experiencing now all the feelings that as a child you really didn't.

RT: It wasn't right, right...

HR: But now you could look back at...

RT: Exactly.

HR: ...this child of you...

RT: Right.

HR: ...that was still in you...

RT: Yes.

HR: ...and you could experience those feelings.

RT: Yes and it, the feeling...

HR: The fear. And, yes.

RT: And there was another thing that I was really...

HR: Was surprised that you...

RT: Really surprised and also my reaction afterward for next to the last, next two weeks after I came back to the U.S., I was very depressed and I think to G-d, why?

HR: Yeah.

RT: And I guess, you know, it, it was tied into those kinds of experiences and trying to sort what was, you know, what was part of my imagination and what was and what wasn't. In a way, I was trying to kind of perhaps think that much of it, it was not real. But it was real.

HR: It was real and you really realized it finally, that it was real.

RT: It did happen to me and-- right and that was shocking.

HR: Yeah, yes.

RT: And that was something that I reacted to there and also here afterwards.

HR: Yes. I wanted to ask you one other thing. Did you have a bar mitzvah when you, you came here when you were 11.

RT: Yes, yes, I had a bar mitzvah, yeah.

HR: You did, you were, you immediately went to study?

RT: Well, I studied and, yes, and we went to a school in Buffalo, and yes I had all of that here.

HR: Now when your parents set up housekeeping here and in Buffalo and everything, was your home more Jewish, did you really identify then or were they unable to do so.

RT: Very, very conflict-, conflicting, sometimes very Orthodox, sometimes not. They struggled with that for years afterwards. Knowing what, how much, what's right, what's not right, and as I said there was terribly, a lot of inconsistencies. For a while, my mother wanted me to become an Orthodox Rabbi. We had a fellow from a rabbinic college in, in Cleveland to visit our house. He wanted, she didn't, but she wanted to keep something of that so my sister and I, my sister who was born in 1946 ended up marrying an Orthodox Rabbi and living in Israel, very, very Orthodox family.

HR: And this sister by the way has seven children.

RT: And that, who has seven children, right. And my other sister also married an Orthodox fellow, and she too is well, she is living in Buffalo. A kind of a traditional, traditional setting.

HR: And when did you make your commitment to be *shomer Shabbos*? Did you marry a woman who is...

RT: Yes, yes, I married someone who was committed, and we decided when we were married. In fact, she wouldn't, certainly wouldn't marry anyone who was not,

who didn't go along with that, and we have since, you know, we've remained as traditional as we could. Trying…

HR: Are, do you belong to an Orthodox...?

RT: No, no, we belong to AJ and *davening* in a *Havurah* so it's again more traditional than anything I suppose. I mean I wouldn't consider ourselves Orthodox in any way at all.

HR: Now do you work now for a Jewish...?

RT: No, no, I work for-- my wife does. My wife works for, she's the Director of the Guttman Branch of Federation Day Care Center. I work for the Path Needling House Health Center. I'm the clinical director for mental health services at the Path.

HR: Right. But you have worked for Jewish communities?

RT: I worked for AJ's, for the Association of Jewish Children for a while and I worked in the Jewish Y's and Centers. In fact, that's what brought me to Philadelphia, working there for a summer.

HR: Where did you go to school?

RT: My undergraduate work was done at the University of Buffalo and my graduate work at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

HR: And you have now two girls?

RT: I have two daughters, a 17 year old and a 14 year old. My 14 year old is packing today; she's getting ready to go to Camp Ramah. She's going to be going her fourth year, and at Camp Ramah she attended Gratz this past year.

HR: Oh that's wonderful.

RT: Yes, it is very [unclear].

HR: Well Mr. Turk is there anything else you would like to add? I think we've...

RT: I think we've covered an awful lot...

HR: ...covered an awful lot. I do appreciate you giving us this interview.

RT: Well thank you.

HR: Thank you.

[Tape two, side one ended; interview ended.]