

Interviewee: Henia

Date: November 1, 2012

H- Where should I start?

Z- I want you to start before the war because I want to learn a little bit about who you were before the war, your family. Then we'll just very briefly talk about where you were in the war, then the main part of the interview will be when you come over. Because your life now also has a little bit to do with . . . you know, your family. . .

H- My birthday is . . . [laughs] I was born in Warsaw, Poland, March 28 1924. 'Course I had a mother, father, three brothers. I was the only daughter, and of course, extended family. My grandmother was left with us and we had uncles, we had aunts, we had cousins. And of course I went to a public school, until grade seven. And our public schools weren't like here. A class in Poland public school was 60 children, but there was discipline. And when we left seventh grade, you see, if you didn't do the curriculum you stayed a year over in the class. Anybody who finished school knew how to write, how to read and knew the math, and knew the history of Poland and the history of other countries too. So we were like, compared to today education, we were pretty educated after public school. I attended later a gymnasium. And my gymnasium was business gymnasium, with the regular subjects of a gymnasium.

Z- Could you explain what gymnasium was.

H- It's high school. But as you know the Jews were really restricted even when the education came. Very hard to get to the university, and high school also very hard for us, high school that the government supported. So we went to private high schools, so it was rather expensive. So not many Jewish children were able to go to high school in Warsaw.

Z- What did your father do?

H- My father ran a factory of furniture. We were like middle-class.

Z- Did your mother work or no?

H- No, no, no. We all expect help at home, and my grandmother lived with us. So compare . . . because the Jews in Poland were poor. A certain amount of rich people but the majority was poor. So we were . . . I lived in a pretty comfortable house. Especially I was the only daughter and my mother was the youngest in their family, so my cousins always, you know, were like very very nurturing to us. And then when I was 15 years old the war broke out.

Z- So let's just move back a little bit. Was your family religious?

H- Very traditional. My father was not like . . . he was . . . work you know and this, but very modern. Can I show you a picture of my parents?

Z- Yes. Can we wait until after?

H- Oh, okay. My father was a very modern man. And Warsaw, you know, it was a capital, you know, we had theatres playing six days a week. And we had a Jewish theatre, it was very popular, and we had an opera. And to get to a theatre, to opera wasn't like here, very expensive. So very easy.

Z- So you went a lot?

H- Oh, yes. I mean with school every month we had to go to a movie house and it was like culture movies, like Africa, people live in Africa and so on. And we were going once to a philharmonic concert. And with the philharmonic we had, before went there, we had to learn about if the concert was about Tchaikovsky or Mozart, we had to learn about it. So we were exposed to quite . . . and we had museums, beautiful museums in Warsaw. The children's school was taken very often there. And we learned about painters. And as I said it was quite a cultural education, even though we were 60 kids in this school there were never problems, there was discipline. When a teacher was a teacher, and a policeman was a policeman. And we were not allowed to talk during school hours. If you interrupted the teacher you were showed out of the classroom.

Z- And your family, were they cultured too, your parents?

H- Oh, my father and my mother were going every Saturday after the holidays to a theatre, to an opera. And my father liked to play violin.

Z- Did you play anything?

H- Oh no, no I was a reader [laughs].

Z- What did you like to read?

H- Oh I like to read good books.

Z- When you were younger?

H- All my years. I never went to school after the age of 15. Whatever I learned, I've learned by myself.

Z- So you decided to go to the gymnasium for regular studies and business?

H- Yeah.

Z- Why did you decide that?

H- Well I was very good in school. I was a top student. And I loved numbers, and so we like . . . the program, our program, let me say, in high school you were learning geology for a year, we did it in half a year. Because we had to make time for the business subjects. And like geology, theology, chemistry, what the other kids in other high schools were learning for a year, we did it in half a year. So it was pretty difficult courses.

Z- So what was the business, what type of courses were there?

H- Oh, bookkeeping, short writing, but it wasn't useful of course, and then business . . . special math, you know, those things.

Z- So was it women mostly who were there or both?

H- In our class were women.

Z- Okay, so it was sort of streaming toward secretarial work or office work?

H- Something like this. To work in the business section.

Z- So you were there until 15 and then the war broke out?

H- Yeah. Because this is of course like four year courses, four year school. My matriculation.

Z- So when you started did you ever think about going to university?

H- Oh, no, because like after this I was thinking just about working, because as I said very hard for Jewish people. As a matter [of fact] my husbands sister went to the university, she took history, but she was a very very special girl. But when it came to Jewish kids, children, if their parents had money they used to send them to Berlin, to Vienna, to Belgium, you know, to Paris, or France 'cause it was very hard. As a matter of fact one used to come back after the education in other countries, for a Jewish person it was very hard to get it. Poland was very anti-Semitic.

Z- Were you the youngest?

H- No I have a younger brother.

Z- So you were the third.

H- Yeah.

Z- And what about your older brothers?

H- My older brothers went . . . one already was with my father and one were also high school.

Z- Okay, didn't go beyond.

H- No didn't go beyond.

Z- What did you speak at home, did you speak Yiddish? Polish?

H- Polish.

Z- Polish.

H- I start speaking Jewish here. I had a grandmother, you know, my parents spoke Jewish after school very well, but somehow it was like this, kids come home speak English.

Z- Now, that was my understanding of the Warsaw Jews. . .

H- Anyway, I was taking German at school.

Z- So . . .

H- You see in high schools, in the regular high schools, they were taking Latin, French, you know, mostly. I was taking German. It was German, more business language.

Z- Okay so you never took French or English.

H- No. If I would have gone later, the next year, I would have taken it. I mean it was . . . I was taking Hebrew too, because it was a Jewish high school, but English, I would have to take English in school. Like German and English. But it start a year late.

Z- Did you know your husband before the war?

H- I didn't know, but I knew the family because as a matter of fact I went to school with his cousin [0:10:58] and [0:10:59], and [0:11:01] was my brother's good friend, so I knew a little bit some of the friends. But my husband I met . . . I was in the concentration camp with his sister. And after the war we met, because I think it was later on he went to Russia. In 1939, 1940 I think, he went to Russia. He survived it and after in '46 he came to Germany, because he found that his sister and I . . . and he met me right away after he came.

Z- So where were you in the war, what happened to you?

H- In the war, okay. I was in the ghetto, of course, 1939 and the ghetto started in 1940. And I was in the ghetto 'til '43 and I was the last ones, the last ones left the ghetto in the beginning of June, and I was with the very few last ones to leave the ghetto, the beginning of June.

Z- And you were . . . where did you go?

H- Mydonic, Birkanau, Auschwitz, Bergen, I was liberated in 1945.

Z- From Bergen-Belsen?

H- Right.

Z- So was my mother.

H- She went to Auschwitz too?

Z- No, she was in other work camps but ended up in Bergen-Belsen.

H- Yeah so was just about . . .they . . . went to labor camps.

Z- Labor camps, yeah.

H- Where they were very nice with . . . I mean I happened to be in the worst camps and I survived. I don't understand, even know when I look back, I don't know . . . but I was helped a lot by a German by . . . and I was liberated in '45. I wasn't a fighter, but I was really very very very lucky, you know. Because I was always picked, you know, to the labors, and they are always picking up in the blocks and I was always picked up for the good work. I mean good work, I mean easy work. 'Cause [if] I would have had to work outside on the fields I would never have survived. But I worked like mostly in the shoe commando, which was in the tents. I

Z- And you were with your husband's sister for the whole time?

H- Summary –

- together for most of the time, they tried to stick together
- she was liberated by the British in April '45
- was kept in a quarantined because of typhus
- later sent to Bergen-Belsen, was living in Germany soldier barracks (possible DP camp) didn't stay there long, moved to Fulda with friends in Germany, registered at the city office, got a room, doesn't remember paying anything, received food cards, receiving parcels from JIAS and her uncle in the states in Glover's field in upper New York State. She also had cousins there. Uncle died soon after she was liberated. Then she received packages from his wife.

- after the war majority of people were trying to go to where their families were
- her mother had four brothers in the States, only one was alive after the war (uncle who was sending packages).
- Her youngest brother survived, he was liberated and went with a children's group to England, he died young, when he was 47, he stayed in England
- She was 21 at the end of the war and her brother was 16
- Wanted to immigrate to US.

Life In Fulda, Germany – Immigration process

Z- So you were trying to get on the American immigration list?

H- Yeah, so anyway, I registered myself with the American council, but it was very hard to go. We were considered Polish citizens and there was quotas. The Polish citizens quotas had 5,000 a year. This is what I like always to talk about. It was completely different then it is now. And see, I had my uncle, my cousins, and I had Polish quota, but they were taking first of Polish people that were also the way we used to work in the labor camps, so they were the first to go and we weren't. And we were refugees, it wasn't like the refugees could go, so we had to wait for our quotas, so waiting and waiting and waiting. And then in 1948 . . .

Z- Were you with your husband then?

H- No, my husband, you know, came in '46, right away came to see me. Because my sister [her husband's sister] said, my little brother, because he was the youngest of the family. And she said "my little brother survived, you are for him".

Z- Was he the same age as you?

H- Yeah. Exactly. He's the same month only 5 [days] apart. The same year, yeah. So right away he came to see me and that was it. He was living in Ulm I live in Fulda and he living in . . . now what is the name . . . anyway. To get to us took him a whole night to travel. And to get a ticket for the train he had to pay with coffee. The gentleman's coffee was like a drug, and they like the beans, coffee beans, because they like to roast them in the oven. Today like. So for beans you can get anything. I used to ask why my cousin was bringing beans, and he always got beans, because for beans he went to the country there, he got food for the beans, for the coffee beans.

Z- So how did he get the coffee beans?

H- We get in parcels, we asking, . . . if you got, we don't need food, you know, we want beans. Because the food, we were getting noodles, noodles, noodles, for the food cards and we wanted more than this. Because if you wanted anything . . . I piece of cheese, you had to go the countryside.

----phone call-----

Z- So coffee bean was like money?

H- Yeah, it was like drug, you know, drug for the Germans. So let's see, there was store, so everything you have to buy by the card, so there were textile stubs. But you see we didn't see stores that have dresses or something, but I wanted new clothes so I used to buy textile, I paid them, I had to wait for a card. But if I had coffee, I pick up what I want. And then if I gave the dressmaker coffee, she will sew it for me. So this is the way we were living.

Z- So he would come to visit you?

H- Yeah or I would visit him. He lived in Ulm, very famous because the Nazis, it was . . . how did they . . . the Germans there, it was a very historical place.

Z- So when did you get married?

H- I was married here, because later it was very difficult to immigrate and he not only had four uncles that lived, brothers of his mother, but he had a brother that came to United States just before the war, I think '38. And he was in the army, and when he was in Germany, he was still in Italy, and they wouldn't let him in. But his sister somehow got in before him. But they wouldn't let him in.

Z- So what happened?

H- So what happened. So we had to look how to get out of Germany. It was '45, it was '46, it was '47, it was '48. We are still there. You know how many years it is.

Z- Yeah. Did you work at all there?

H- No, what could I do there? No.

Z- But you learned German?

H- Well I was learning a little bit, a girl knew how to sew and she was teaching sewing. And there's no . . . no we didn't do nothing. There was no school for us. Nothing.

Z- So you were just in holding, waiting?

H- Yeah. I was with friends and there was place to go to the movies, to the theatres. I was buying a ticket to the theatre. Anyway, I was traveling around Germany, like to see some friends that survived with me. Then the main problem is how to get out of Germany. How long could we stay there, you know. And of course we want to get

married but we didn't see a way to get married. But there was an opportunity for my husband, also they couldn't, the cousins and the uncles, couldn't get him to the States. My cousin tried to get me as a student, there's no go. Anyway, then there was opportunity to come to the States as a child.

Z- To Canada or the States?

H- To Canada as a child.

Z- The orphan program.

H- So he paid the German officers and he wanted to get some papers to change his birth certificate. So a man, somebody that knew his . . . somehow connected with his uncle. So he tried to get him in. So he changed his name and changed that his mother . . . the name that was Mel, whatever his name . . . so he changed the name of his mother, that she was the sister of this Canadian man, and he's a child. And he tried to bring him in. So he changed his birth certificate, the date of birth.

Z- Your husband?

H- My husband. As a matter of fact, later when he was 65 they knew, the government, that a lot of people they changed their birth date in order to get out as a child.

Z- So he became 18 years old?

H- Something like this. I don't remember how many years he took off. But later on when he was 65 we tried to get his . . . I wrote for him to Poland, to Warsaw, to get like some . . . his birth certificate, maybe they have. So I got a letter that everything in Warsaw was destroyed, they haven't got no proof, no things. We had not proof, no proof at all. So he got a lawyer and the Canadian government didn't make it difficult because they knew what had happened. So he went back to his age when he reached the age of 65.

Z- You know 'cause it was ridiculous right that you had to be under 18. I mean how many survivors were under 18?

H- I can't begin to tell you, I can't believe how horrible that people come here sick with HIV and bring it here, like single women with children, and they bring their whole families and we have to support them. And this bothers me very much that what they did to us, this anti-Semitism, that non-stopping. And what bothers me is that the Christian people don't stand up,, the churches for the people what's going now, what's going now, against Israel against . . . now with the immigration . . .

Z- So he came as an orphan?

H- Yeah . . . what's his name . . . Anyway and ne brought . . . so when he came here it was already 1949, you know, how many years after the war. Four years.

J- So Wolf his here. He took a boat and landed where, in Halifax?

H- Yeah. We all landed in Halifax.

J- So he lands in Halifax and he gets to Montreal . . .

H- To get here. And he took Montreal because this man that helped to bring him here was in Montreal, his uncle.

J- So okay, he was on the orphans program but he was also sponsored?

H- He was also sponsored, yeah. By this man, by this man, as a youngster. So he came '49. How I came here, this is why we didn't marry. So I wasn't in a rush to get married, you know, we saw each other anyway. I had time to get married, he was for me and I was for him. Now with me, how do I get out?

Z- Does he sponsor you?

H- No, he was by himself. I came before him, he came here in March or April '49.

Z- Oh you were here first?

H- And I came Christmas time December 22 to Montreal.

Z- Of '48?

H- '48.

Z- So how did you come to Montreal.

H- Okay, this is how I come. I was waiting and waiting and waiting and then as a matter of fact I left Fulda and was just happened to be in Stuttgart visiting, and I get a telegram to come right back. There's an opportunity, they are looking for domestics in Canada. Just like the people bring the Filipinos. They were looking for domestic in Canada, and I should come right away back to Fulda to register, there's opportunity. Now I'm going to come over as a domestic, I don't even know how to peel a potato, you know. The only thing we were getting there was noodles, so we knew how to cook noodles. But I don't make this, you know, in Bergen-Belsen we had a kitchen that gave us food, but I never cooked. I was with a girlfriend, she knew, but I didn't really cook. I was very protective. My father during the war, didn't let me do nothing said the girl has to have beautiful hands. I was the only daughter, you know the youngest in the whole family, I was spoiled but I wasn't spoiled, today would be spoiled. So anyways like I was skating, all my cousins would invite me out

with the skates. This is the way I grew up. Anyway, I had a good childhood, a terrific childhood. I knew about opera, I knew about theatres, I knew about education, I knew about loving family, you know, about friends, 60 kids in a class you understand. But all finished. '39 all finished, we weren't allowed no schools, Germans came and there were no schools left, nothing, nothing.

So when I came here to immigration, so there was opportunity to go to Canada. But I asked "who is asking for the house-girls?". "Jewish families", and I said "Jewish families, I register to go".

Z- So was it all Jewish families who were asking?

H- That's what I was told, I didn't know more. What we knew was going was nothing. You know how much we didn't know? My husband when he came here he brought from Russia letters and pictures something . . . and when he came here to Canada he tore everything. This is how much he was afraid. You don't understand, nobody told us anything, nobody this . . . he came here with a little suit case not even one letter that came, that had from Russia something that he brought, he was afraid, you know, nothing. So when I heard looking for housekeepers and Jewish families I got very excited because it seems the Jewish families want to help us. But when I would come to Canada . . . and we thought also, what we knew about Canada, we knew about US but not much about Canada, so we thought between Canada and the US it is America, there are no borders. Once we get to Canada I will just cross the border. You know this is how we understood. We come here with no difficulty we'll just cross the borders. And then when I would come to Canada, I'm going to a Jewish family probably, we didn't know names or anything, we knew Jewish family, there's no problem. Of course I register right away, okay. Then there's the line, they called me to . . . this was . . . at port city . . . oh shoot what was the name of the city. Anyway I had to go for interviews. So I come here, there, no info--- . . . first of all I had to go through a medical check-up. I went to two German doctors. German doctors. Then I went to a Canadian doctor. There were two sisters . . . you survived a concentration camp, you were healthy. There were two girls and they dismissed them because they have found they are with child. And after this doctors accepted me. I had to go through a labor commission. So there was this woman and she interviewed. The first question was: where did I work? Where did I work as a domestic? I was flabbergasted. I said "I didn't work as a domestic, I was sitting in---". So, she said "no, I cannot take you". So I started to cry. I said "but I know how to do things". I don't know how to peel a potato. "No", she's sorry she cannot take me.

Z- This was a Canadian?

H- Canadian labor commission, a woman.

Z- So this wasn't JIAS or no?

H- No, no, no. She didn't accept me. But I start crying and I was young and I was good looking and healthy, you know, I was never like this or anything . . . So she says she cannot take me, but when I start crying and crying she says, "Okay", she's a little short . . . if she's to be short she would call me in the afternoon.

Z- Short of people?

H- Short of people, she will call me after. 2 o'clock I was called.

Z- How were you called? Were you waiting there?

H- I think I was waiting there, yeah. And as a matter of fact I was called and those two sisters were called . . . okay so I was called, then we were sitting in this camp waiting when we got a call. So . . . and here I came from Fulda with my suitcase of clothes, you know, but I didn't know . . . here I was making plans. Anyway at two o'clock I was called in the afternoon. Okay, so we went back to this camp and waiting 'till they called us to ship us. And this happened to be December. And people sometimes used to wait for a month, but this was December and they wanted before the holidays to ship us. So actually, so I left just a day before Christmas. I came here the day before Christmas. Wasn't the day before Christmas, because I came here the 22nd I think. So I didn't have . . .

J- Halifax?

H- Yeah, yeah, yeah, I came to Halifax. This was Bremerhaven, I think Bremerhaven.

Z- So must have been a rough ride over?

H- But anyways, so then we had this boat, English boat, Cynthia. It was awful, there's no food there. You know when we went there for breakfast, we're fighting for sugar for the coffee or the tea or whatever there was to drink. We're fighting, we're sitting there, who catch first their little bit of sugar.

Z- How many were on the boat?

H- I don't really know, but mostly they were domestics. We called them domestics.

Z- So mostly women?

H- Mostly women, yeah.

J- You talked to people on the boat, did you know anyone on the boat?

H- No, but I got to know people that were Jewish girls. Okay, there were not only Jewish girls, there were Polish girls and other girls because in the camps they were from other countries too, and most they . . . more of them were gentile girls than

Jewish girls. As a matter of fact I met on the boat [0:38:46] sister and I got very very friendly with her. And so I got right away, we kept together, the Jewish girls.

Z- So she went to Montreal too?

H- Yes, as a domestic too? But other girls there, the Jewish girls, came as domestics. And this is how we came. I think it took 10 days or whatever we were on the boat. We came to Halifax and this Beatrice, [same as 0:38:46]'s sister, they from Hungary, she spoke maybe 10 languages. When we came to Halifax she became a translator. When we came to Halifax there were tables and we had to register, and she became right away a translator. We didn't speak English, but she speak Hungarian and Czechoslovakian and Russian perfectly. French and English . . . and Hebrew. One day the Israeli consulate offered . . . here she started to work right away in the Israeli consulate. So anyway, we came and when we came, like me or others, they ask where would I like to go, Montreal or Toronto. Because in Toronto my mother had four cousins, this is where I found my mother's picture. And I had already a friend that came before us there. Because I said "Toronto" they sent me to Montreal. And the ones they said "Montreal", they sent to Toronto. Because before I came, I make apply for domestic, I had to sign a contract with the government, that I will be working for a year. So they wanted to make sure that I don't go where I want.

J- Oh, so if go where you aren't asked to go chances are you're going to stay longer . . .

H- Or don't do my contract. For whatever reason. There was reason, okay. So they send me to Montreal.

Z- And these were the Feds, the federal government?

H- Yeah. Okay, so, I came here. It was Christmas. And here, when we came here also they didn't keep us long, because was Christmas, was rush, rush, rush.

Z- Were you met by people at JIAS in Halifax?

H- I have no idea, I didn't know nothing about the rules, about this . . . about what to ask. I didn't know nothing.

Z- So no one from JIAS met you or?

H- No, nothing. We registered, and, as I said, it was just before Christmas and I came here. They sent me almost right away to a Jewish family.

Z- Do you remember who there were?

H- Their name was Goldsmith.

Z- Goldsmith. And do you remember where they lived?

H- Yes. On . . . called St. Catherine. Yeah.

Z- One of those big houses?

H- Not actually . . . not Goldsmith. Actually they were supposed to send me to the family Rill, it was two elderly people. But I didn't come to the Rill. There was a duplex. The Rill lived upstairs. I went downstairs to the daughter. The daughter was a Goldsmith. Because the Rill were just two people and the Goldsmith had three children. And I weren't supposed to go there. That was not legal.

J- So they weren't part of the contract program. The Rills had signed up, but . . .

H- Right. Not the Goldsmiths.

Z- So what happened?

H- As I said, we were so afraid of everything here. I can't begin to tell you, we were so used to the concentration camp, to the Germans, that we were afraid to speak up. And what did I know about this. . . they brought me here, I said what's difference I'll go right away to my family in the States. So then . . .

J- Excuse me, when you just show up at their down you like this present of someone who just came, they didn't expect you to come . . .

H- In fact, I had more luck in Germany at the concentration camp than I had here, okay.

J- Okay, alright, it sounds good so far.

H- I walk in and okay, they show me a room. As a matter of fact I found out later like this, that I was supposed . . . they had to write a contract with the government to give me a room, \$30 per month. And the room. And Thursday, half a day off and Sunday I think off.

Z- And they were expecting you, as a Jew, to work on Saturday?

H- Yeah. Or maybe Saturday off.

-----phone call-----

H- So anyway my friends are all Canadian [laughs]. So anyway, so I stayed with the family. But, you see, one thing I said " I don't know how to cook". I didn't know how to peel a potato until I got married, you know. So, and there's three children . . .two boys and a girl.

Z- And you didn't speak English?

H- And I didn't speak English, no. I picked up a little later on.

J- And what did they speak?

H- They spoke English. I picked up a little bit when I was in Germany. But my work was . . . I don't know was it Thursday I just had off and Sunday. So anyway, my work was like this, I got up in the morning and the kids went to school to a [0:46:01] school. So I helped with the breakfast, I was so afraid to eat there [laughs]. And after breakfast make a few dishes and make the beds. She had a woman come twice a week came cleaning. I didn't wash the floors or wash the wall or anything, no this. And then by the time I got through with dishes and make the bed already the kids were coming for lunch. So I help with their lunch. After their lunch . . . she was a woman like "belong to here, belong there", she would prepare supper. So what was the supper? She didn't cook either, that's why I didn't even learn to cook by her. She . . . usually was a roast, a big roast. She would season the roast and made the potatoes and put in the oven. And then she went out and told me like at 4 o'clock I should put the oven at this temperature for so long. And then she came, we had dinner, I had dinner with the kids in the dinning room, with the family. I don't remember if I used to put the wash in the washing machine or something. I know I didn't do any cleaning except for the dishes. Except for put the roast . . . take the roast, and the breakfast and the lunch and that was . . . But I was supposed to have a room by myself, but I didn't have a room. I had to share Janet's. The boys had a room, and they had a room, and the girl had a room, so I shared the room with the . . . But the government used to call every month, how I'm doing, if I'm satisfied. They were to treat me very good because right away my family from the States came, my cousin. And my cousin from the States were high, high, high, high, university graduates and well-to-do and they made sure that I should be treated good. So actually I cannot complain. But of course . . . I didn't ask them for nothing. Clothes - my cousins sent me. I never asked for nothing. I never asked for "give me money I want to buy something". Never. Never asked nothing. I didn't ask special food, I couldn't eat what they gave me. I was afraid to eat it.

Z- Why were you afraid to eat it?

H- I don't know I was too shy or afraid, I wouldn't do it today but I can't explain myself.

J- And when someone called from the government, was it the same person every month?

H- I didn't ask for names. They just said. . . probably they introduced themselves with government and they asked if I was satisfied, of course I wouldn't spill the beans that I'm not, that I'm not by myself in the room.

Z- But they were good to you?

H- They were good, I mean in the sense . . . I don't what means good, I didn't ever ask about anything, you know. And they respected my. They saw that I'm not somebody there from this. They respected me.

Z- Did they ask you about your background?

H- No. Never. No.

Z- Isn't that curious a little bit.

H- Never, never, never.

Z- So they didn't want to know?

H- No. Okay, her mother wasn't Jewish. It's a funny family though because this Mrs. Goldsmith, her father was very much involved in the Spanish and Portuguese. He was a Sephardic Jew. At this time when I came they were building the shul and he was very much involved. He was a friend of Rabbi . . . he was the first Rabbi, very well known Rabbi. Very very good friends with this Rabbi. But his wife was gentile, but she converted [laughs] and the funny thing is those two people, you know, and I became a . . . okay, the Jews who joined at the Jewish committee used to take out the Jewish domestics once a week to Y, which was at this time on Mont Royal . . .

Z- Mont Royal and Park Avenue

H- Okay, something like that. And Rabbi Bender used to come there, must have taken interest . . . and there was another family there when I was coming. Me and Beatrice was very well respected in the group. We're different then the other girls. And Rabbi Bender was very much interested in us. And he used to invite us, he has a sister Mable, and he used to invite us, he lived in Outremont, for Friday nights. But we didn't go because we were with our friends, want to spend time with our friend. But Rabbi Bender was very much interested in me and Beatrice. When I got married he married me off. I had to promise him that [0:51:11] he's going to make a mensch.

Z- So what, was he interested in your background or just you as an individual?

H- Us as individuals. I don't think I ever spoke about my background.

Z- To the Rabbi?

H- Or to anybody.

Z- Why do you think that is?

H- Well I wasn't interested to talk about it.

Z- You weren't?

H- I didn't want to talk about it. It was two things. I tried to start a new life. I didn't want to dwell. And to me, to go through everything that I went through, I couldn't exist. We were different people. The country want to talk about that. Not me. Because when I go to sleep I live it, I live it, go through it again. And this was to me . . . I couldn't go on if I live through it. Either I go on or I live through my past.

Z- And when you went out with Beatrice or your friends did you talk about the war?

H- No, no. We used to go to the beach, we used to live, wanted to live. Don't forget what we missed. We missed from '39 to '49. We missed 10 tens, all our years, you know. We didn't have the education. We didn't have nothing. Nothing. You know, we had to just to learn to live. To learn to trust. Just to learn to live. As I said, I was afraid. I was afraid. With the Jews I didn't want to show that I'm greedy or something.

Z- You didn't want to talk about the past, but why do you think that people didn't ask you about it?

H- I have no idea. I would tell you maybe they were afraid that they would be responsible to help us. Because I can't get over . . . I was by this family, a well-to-do family, well-to-do family. This Mr. Rill was very well-to-do, that was him the funny thing I will tell, that later on Rabbi Bender, there is Israel, very much involved in with Spanish-Portuguese, his wife was . . .

Z- This is Spanish-Portuguese synagogue?

H- Yes, the one here. One of the Rill's family told me whenever his wife had a fight with him he would come back home and one the passage there was a picture of Jesus and she would make sure that [laughs] that . . . and everybody knew about it, you know. What was his . . . he's a famous, famous Rabbi, he was the best friend of Rill because he supported the shul. But then this family, this Rill, has three children. Like this daughter and two sons.

Z- Yeah, and they were very wealthy.

H- Yeah the Rill was there. So . . . and she was the kind of woman that was driving the car, drinking the coffee, smoking the cigarette [laughs]. And anyways, so one brother was in Israel, he was already living in West Bank and his business was like . . . I was at home there when I came here I was wearing a coat, a green coat, and he was producing this for the hospital. The other guy married a gentile woman, you know. They had one child and left and anyway not important. The Goldsmith was

comfortable, the Rill, the son was okay, the other son I don't know how he was . . . but okay from this family I said I didn't ask nothing. All I was thinking to get out of there.

Z- And they didn't offer you anything and . . .

H- No. Never ask. I never talk to the children or anything.

Z- But they never offered.

H- Nothing. No. Nothing.

J- How long did you do this?

H- I had a contract for a year, okay. With this family Goldsmith, but after 10 months I couldn't take it anymore and I said . . . "I have to get out of here, I don't feel free, I want to be free, I want to be with my friends, and I don't care what I'm going to do, I have to make a living, but I want to get out".

Z- And who did you say this to?

H- To this Rill, to I mean to the Goldsmiths, and okay she didn't want to because actually I could spill the beans that she not supposed to keep me. She let me go. And in case I says somebody calls "I don't care, you say whatever you want".

Z- But you knew she would . . .

H- Sure, yeah. But about this I wouldn't do it before, because I would be upstairs by the Rills and do nothing. You know, not making breakfast, nothing. I would have more freedom, you understand. Because she would have somebody to clean and I would be free. And as a matter of fact Rabbit Bender said he can give me a job in the hospital.

Z- Okay, hold on just a second. When you were with the Goldsmiths what did you do in the evenings? Did you go out with friends?

H- I was a babysitter.

Z- You have to work in the evenings?

H- Of course. I wasn't free. I'm telling you I wasn't free.

Z- And were you able to go out at all?

H- I'm telling you only Friday, I went to meet in the Y the girls. And Sunday I spent with my husband, well wasn't my husband was my boyfriend.

Z- He was here already?

H- Yeah.

Z- So—

H- I wasn't free. In the evenings I had to babysit.

Z- And what was he doing at this time?

H- My husband was working. My husband, you see, his uncle from the States came here and he was at . . .like, what is it . . . an Eaton's store, a department store in NY. And here was a factory and this factory was coming usually to his uncle for . . . how do you say . . .they have this sportswear factory and they want sample, like the samples. So he knew this family here, that the factory knew his uncle. So his uncle came to see him here when he came to Canada, and he brought him to this factory.

Z- Do you know where that was?

H- Yeah. On St. Lawrence. Down, down, St Lawrence. Very end of St. Lawrence. And they were a sportswear factory.

Z- So was that around Chabanel?

H- No, Chabanel, it was called . . . it was down St. Lawrence and almost at the end. Not one called St. Catherine. Down.

Z- By Bernard?

H- No further, further, further. So right away he start working there.

Z_ Do you know how much he made?

H- Nothing. \$15 a week.

Z- And what did he do?

H- My husband is a very capable guy. Fast, smart, he picked up right away the language. And what he was do, he became a store keeper, but right away, and with other men working there, he became a seller, it was big factory, a seller in the show room, he helped in the office. Since he start working there they fire four people, but they didn't give him a raise, because there are two partners [0:59:42] and [0:59:34], so Mr. [same as 0:59:34] said look, "when I came here I was making \$10".

Z- And they were both Jewish, and they both knew he came from Europe and it didn't make a difference?

H- Yeah. Yeah. No, Mr [same as 0:59:42] was Canadian he wanted to give him more but Mr.[same as 0:59:34] didn't let him. And Mr. [same as 0:59:34] knew his uncle. Son of a bitch [laughs].

Z- And where did your husband live?

H- My husband live on . . . what's it was . . .Clark St or something, one of the . . .

Z- He had a room?

H- In a room, a room. And she was cooking for him, the woman.

Z- And do you know how much he paid?

H- I don't know. I don't know if he will tell me . . . Also a son of a bitch. Later he lived Esplanade . . . was it Esplanade and Bernard? Later he lived with another one, then he moved. Because he wanted to be close to me he moved there. And as a matter of a fact this woman, you know . . .okay this after my marriage I will tell you about her.

Z- So they were all Jewish landladies?

H- Jewish, yeah. We were so stupid, I'm still stupid, I still let people take advantage of he took, but I don't mind [? I listened through several times, this seems to be accurate, not exactly sure what it means ?].

Z- So did you get any help from JIAS?

H- No. I never asked. I never knew that JIAS gives you anything.

Z- And how did you learn English?

H- By myself.

Z- By yourself.

H- Because, you see, I . . .Later on you see Rabbi Bender wanted to give me job in the hospital. What kind of a job? The three o'clock, like in the afternoon, the patients get a drink. So you have a cart and you go to the rooms and if the people asks, they wanted this drink, this drink, something like this. You work all week. You get off only Wednesdays or something, so I didn't like it. I wanted to be free. I wanted to have Saturday, Sunday. I was anxious to be with my friends. To be friends. To be free. So I didn't want to take. It was stupid because if I would have taken I would have advanced to work in an office or somewhere, because I was learning very fast

English, you know, by myself. I was reading and . . . and so I didn't want. So where do I look for a job. I look in a factory. So somebody gave me a factory and . . . this was called St. Catherine and [1:02:34]. And I walked by, the name was [1:02:40] and making suits. So what I learned to do, sewing buttons. So this was my work.

Z- So you sewed buttons on suit jackets. And how much did you get paid?

H- I think at this time I was making . . . I don't know . . . maybe \$25 a week.

Z- And what year was this '49?

H- Yes this was already '49, beginning of '50.

Z- Was it unionized?

H- No. No. I didn't know nothing about the union. Nothing.

Z- And where did you live, where did you move?

H- Where I lived. I lived on Bernard, a room.

Z- By yourself or with your husband this time?

H- By myself. My husband lived next street . . . Esplanade.

Z- He lived in Esplanade and you lived on Bernard?

H- Yeah. From my kitchen there was a floor that you could go to his apartment. That's why he moved there. But at this time I didn't want to marry.

Z- Why not?

H- Because I thought that the money he makes and I make that I will always have to work in a factory. I'm not going to better myself. So I said "no way". If I have to marry and work in a factory . . . no

Z- So what did you do?

H- I continued to work. I continued yes, I continued to work there. Then he start to get a little bit more money.

Z- At his factory?

H- At his factory.

Z- And he didn't go to English classes either, he just learned on the job?

H- Yeah. And he was in the factory and . . . now let me see if I remember. Yeah, I continued there and we married in 1951, I think.

Z- And you were still working in the factory?

H- Okay, let me see. 1951, my daughter was born I think '52. Let me see again if I remember. She just turned 60, so she was born in '52. So I was married in '51, right. So I married in '51 and I got pregnant right away.

Z- And where were you living then?

H- Then I moved to his room. When I married I moved to his room. There was two old people, so we actually . . . nice that I had a kitchen, used the kitchen. She was son of a bitch.

Z- How so?

H- How so, because I wasn't allowed to keep in the kitchen a pot or a plate. She has a pantry somewhere in the passage, so then it was a pantry. In the pantry I had to keep my [laughs] plates and my pots. And one day, you know, his brother came from Russia too and he lived also by a family that also cooked for him. But the family went for two weeks vacation and he didn't know how to cook, so I offered, you know, "you eat with us". So when I cooked this time, you know, the woman I lived with she saw how I peeled potato she had to get out of the kitchen . . .

J- You still hadn't learned how to peel a potato. You were still stubborn.

H- So she couldn't stand it. Now I know how to peel a potato [laughs] so anyway I asked if my brother can come. "Yes". But if I pay her for using the gas stove. I put a little bit more water in the soup, I had to pay her every week for it. And this Mrs. [1:07:04] her name. He was a nice man. He was a musician and he came from Russian, but had lived in Vienne. She came from Lithuania and she belonged to the societies, and all kinds of societies. But I had to keep my two plates there in the pantry, God forbid in the kitchen, you know, and God forbid in the Frigidaire, she gave me this little place, you know, and we paid them good. Of course the cooking, I laugh now . .

Z- How much did you pay her?

H- Later I think \$40 a month.

Z- And how much money were the two of you earning together?

H- I didn't earn any anymore because I was taking unemployment.

Z- Because you were pregnant?

H- Yeah. Because I stopped working. And when I . . . a very short time but . . . I said, when I told them I was pregnant, they stop I was only allowed so many months, only a few months. But at this time, okay, I was making money, my cousin from the States . . . and I inherited a little bit of money because my aunt died, my uncle died, not a lot but a little bit of money, I inherited. And later on my husband . . . this Canadian boss that was . . . I was married in his house. I didn't want a marriage and said, "look, I know my husband so many years". I wanted to go just to a Rabbi and that's it, but this boss, his boss, the Canadian boss, found out that were getting married. And they just bought a house in Westmont, so she wanted I should get married in her house. And I said "no", because, you know, I explain my people come and she just bought a house and I didn't want to make it dirty or something. So I said "no". So she said "no" she wants to talk to me. She came to this room where I was living and she said "look, we just bought a house and I want you to be married in my house it will bring me luck". And she wouldn't take no for an answer. And she said "look, you don't have to do nothing, I give you . . . I'll make the . . . you give me addresses, I'll send the invitations, you invite as many people as you want and if you like you're going to wear my dress".

Z- I mean that was lovely, but why was she so generous? She didn't even know you right?

H- Yeah but they liked my husband. Oh yes. Very capable, very fast, very capable. And they got to know his uncle that they buy his . . .

Z- Okay . . .

H- She says "all you have to do is show up". I'm going to show you the pictures. When I was sick my husband painted the rooms so my house is just a mess.

Z- Don't worry about that.

H- So I will show you this, but the wedding at their house.

Z- So there was a couple years you and your husband were close by. Who was your social circle? What did you do?

H- We had a lot of friends. We were very well liked. First of all I used to go to my friend to Toronto that I survived the concentration camp with. So if I wanted a change I would go to Toronto and stay with them.

Z- All your friends here were survivors too?

H- Only survivors yeah.

Z- Why only survivors?

H- We understood each other.

Z- So even if you didn't talk . . .

H- I'll tell you, we understood each other. I'm from Warsaw and I'm a comparatively well-to-do family. And Warsaw was the capital of Poland, so I had a little bit of education, you know. I knew about theatre, I knew opera, I know philharmonic. We had beautiful museums that we used to go, so I knew all those things and I read about those things. When I was reading I was reading only good books. Only good books. You know, because I had a friend who had a very intelligent cousin educated in university, he always recommended us what kinds of books to pick. So when we used to meet, like my cousin in [1:12:13] Park, he was a musician, he had a store, musical instruments. So a couple . . . [same as 1:12:13] Park was a resort, and a couple came there from Montreal to buy something and he right away sent regards. So this couple invited me to give me the regard, they were very impressed with my cousin, he was very special person. So she said she is going to treat me to something special. So what was this something special? She brings a watermelon. Watermelon was all that she . . . [laughs]. Funny thing, what it means, that's she going to treat me to a watermelon. Can I treat you to a coffee? A cool drink?

J- No, but I would like a watermelon now [laughs with H].

H- So anyways, it's a watermelon, and of course I laughed. And ever since I never brought a watermelon in my house. You know, because it reminds me . . . never. It's funny you know it means that . . . you think . . . because . . . I reminds me I came there and she was going to treat me, *treat* me with a watermelon. Then the woman, the girl, she came to the house, our house and they says "you know, the radio?". "You know how it works?" "somebody is behind us, behind it". We already had television in Warsaw. No television but in the [1:14:02] you know, so you know she . . . you know how the radio worked it's behind somebody talking there. So talking, why did I bring it up, because when we met together we were talking about the camps, and were talking, we were laughing, because we look back and the things they were doing with us were just unbelievable. So when we talked about it we laughed. The things they were doing, for what they think, it was [1:14:37]. So we're talking and we're talking about home. Yes, we were talking about home. We're talking about brothers, about sisters, about school, what were having in the . . . but never to the Canadian. How can we make them to understand or what should we start first? So we never talked. As a matter of fact, me and my . . . with my children, you know.

Z- So and they had no interest either right?

H- No, they didn't show interest. The only place, like as I said when I was domestic, we used to go there to this Y or whatever, they would make me go. At St. Urbain they had the Y at certain point, coffee, cake, don't remember exactly. And I met

there Rabbi Bender and I met there somebody that owns a store on corner called St. Catherine, I think Pearls . . . and I came here December and when I left Fulda it wasn't cold. I came here, I didn't have a warm coat, and right away there's snow already.

Z- And the Goldsmiths didn't offer to get you . . .

H- No, no, my cousin came right away and took me to Eaton's and they bought me right away coat and a dress and a pair of boots.

Z- And if you didn't have your cousin?

H- I don't know.

Z- You don't think the Goldsmiths would have helped?

H- I really don't know. They never offered me extra. They never bought me a present, a gift of some kind, never, never.

Z- And you had a birthday too.

H- Never, never, never, never, ever, no. And . . . So my cousin came, my cousin came.

J- And where does she live? Your cousin who comes to help.

H- In [same as 1:12:13] Park.

J- So she live in . . . okay same cousin.

H- Okay, my cousin. No, no, she lived in Glover's field. The one from Glover's came right away because she didn't live far. I had two cousins that were helping me. And they used to visit me.

Z- So your friends were all survivors . . .

H- And we used to meet, just are people that you felt at home with.

Z- You felt they were cultured . . .

H- Right, they understand each other and we live through the same experiences you know.

Z- And you spoke Polish or Yiddish?

H- Polish. But, you know, when I lived with this couple this [1:17:75 – their surname] and I spoke with my husband Polish. And she was an old angry woman and she couldn't stand it.

Z- 'cause she didn't understand?

H- No. "how can when you went through" she knew "you speak Polish". We knew Poland Polish, but I understood Jewish and I knew German, and my husband speak Jewish. So I started to speak with my husband Jewish, half German, and I picked Jewish right away because I understood Jewish. Since then I speak to my husband Jewish.

Z- Oh really.

H- Yeah. And when my daughter was born, my children were born, my daughter was born because there's a difference three years, I live on Hutchinson I spoke to her in Jewish. Why? I spoke English at this time, but I didn't want to speak to her in English because I speak with an accent and there were French children and English children . . . As a matter of fact, talking about Jewish, when we moved there . . .

Z- This was in '53?

H- This was in the year when I was married. Just let me see because my daughter was born already . . .

Z- '52

H- She was born on Hutchinson. Okay, I lived in the room. I lived in the room. Oh I'll tell you, when I was pregnant I moved to Hutchinson.

Z- To an apartment? To a flat?

H- I moved to a room.

Z- One room?

H- One room.

Z- With your husband?

H- With my husband. And why did I move there, Hutchinson? Because by the people I lived on Esplanade, when I was married I lived on Esplanade with my husband, one room. But when I was pregnant she almost threw us out.

Z- And she's Jewish?

H- Jewish.

Z- Why did ...

H- She didn't want a child in the house, a baby in her house.

Z- So did she throw you out?

H- Yeah, she says you have to move. So I start looking for a place. So we got this place, a room, on Hutchinson.

Z- Hutchinson and ... ?

H- Hutchinson and Fairmont.

Z- Do you know my father's store? He had a tailor shop on Fairmont and Hutchinson.

H- Yeah? What was it the shop on Hutchinson or Fairmont.

Z- On Fairmont, between Hutchinson and Derosier [spelling?].

H- No, so this was further down. Because let me see, this is Hutchinson and this is Fairmont. And there was a synagogue, a big synagogue, the Ukranian ...

Z- Yeah, right there. And he was just across from there. So you must have ... he had a cleaning and a tailor shop.

H- Maybe my husband would know.

Z- yeah. So anyways ...

H- I lived on this. . .next there was this Rabbi who was giving weddings and this, what was his name. So anyways, there was a widow Mrs. Kramer, a widow. And she had like this double parlor room and bedroom and kitchen and from the kitchen a dinning area. So she rented us her bedroom and she went in the double parlor, yeah. And this bedroom was very very big.

Z- And how much was it a month?

H- I paid \$40. \$40 I think. And we lived in this bedroom and my daughter was born when I was living there.

Z- And you weren't working?

H- And I wasn't working. And I lived off of what my husband was making, so probably was making quite a bit more, because Mrs. [1:22:16] was very good to him, but he had to keep this because this Mrs. [name as above] wouldn't let him. Mr [name as above] I think was his name. And there I gave birth. And when I gave birth . . . years later, I don't know how long, I took over the apartment.

Z- The whole apartment?

H- Yeah. She moved out.

Z- And she rented that place or?

H- No, no she moved out. Her children were having children, she was helping with the children, she moved out. So I moved to the double parlor and I rented my bedroom, because I couldn't afford it. So I moved to the double parlor and I rented the bedroom. And then I had my second baby three years later. My brother was just 60 and my son will be in December 57. I gave birth to my son, so I lived with the two children there. I don't remember for how long?

Z- And did you work at all during that time?

H- No, no, no.

Z- But financial you were able to manage?

H- Yeah. I was married and I was getting a lot of money when was getting married, you know.

Z- So they made the wedding for you?

H- Yeah.

Z- Was it nice?

H- Very nice. I had over 80 people in the house.

Z- And these were all survivors?

H- All survivors, yeah. And we were going . . . my cousins came for the wedding and my husband's cousins came to the wedding and every Passover I used to this [1:24:13] for Passover. We were very close, he's still very close. Because later on when they liquidated they factory, this [same as 1:24:14] went into real estate and my husband was working for him.

Z- And what year was that?

H- I wouldn't know exactly. This is why I wanted my husband.

Z- So this was later, like in the 60s?

H- Not so far in the 60s because I bought this house when my son was . . . we bought this house in . . . my son was . . . it would be 56, I think maybe 56 years ago. Ok, I will tell you exactly, my daughter was four years old and she's 60. So 56 years ago.

Z- So 1958.

H- 1958. And it was actually when we bought the house. I had some money from the wedding, I had some inheritance, and he started to make more money and we started to make more money. Of course later on . . . the three that stayed, he didn't, his boss wasn't long in this business and he had turned to other business, so my husband start working for his brother, older brother. And the older brother had an apartment on Guy and Sherbrook, and the apartment burned down and he rebuilt the apartment and he made little apartments. Like the old apartment, there were big, big cement rooms, and he made a single one bedroom, two bedroom apartments. And my husband started working for him as an administrator. And he start making money. He was admistrator of this building. Still standing, the building, on Guy and Sherbrook, a big building there. And he was like renting the apartments and taking care of the apartments, he was a manager of the apartment. He started making money then. Before that, okay, after he finished with the factory, because this Mr. [] went in real estate so he worked for him in the real estates. And then his brother took over. They have land downtown and from the land downtown they made parking lots. So this one brother who was the manager there after this. So after my husband, he stops, the brother, also the partner and had the parking lots. So my husband starts working for this older brother in the parking lots on Kennedy, after this. So he worked later for the brother and when the brother died, the younger brother took over the parking, and my husband worked there 'til he retired from the parking. They owned later on outside parking, inside parking, they owned 30 street parking downtown and my husband was the manager there for the parking lots.

Z- What about religion? Were you religious?

H- Okay, when you talk religion, I'm very much Jewish.

Z- But that's cultural.

H- Not culture. Okay I bought the house, right away I joined the synagogue [1:28:16].

I'm still a very very good member of synagogue. Friday night, I mean Friday night Shabbat we . . . holiday is holiday. We celebrate the holidays. And my husband is very much involved with charitable . . . raising money for charitable donation, but mostly for Israel.

Z- So you are basically similar in terms of how you were before the war? In terms of religious . . . or is it?

H- Yeah, yeah. I'm not kosher. Not kosher. But I wouldn't eat butter with meat or milk and meat, you.

Z- Cheeseburger.

H- Or I wouldn't eat cheeseburger with cheese and I wouldn't eat pig, bacon, you know.

Z- So was your mother kosher?

H- Very much kosher. I have a daughter and my son-in-law is very traditional. My daughter is kosher at home. We celebrate there every Saturday night. We go Friday night for Shabbat. Now that my daughter is away now, so my grandchildren, not married, they make Friday night, tomorrow we're going to my grandchildren.

Z- And they all like in Montreal?

H- Yeah. My daughter's children went to [1:29:53], went to [1:39:54].

Z- So my question to you, my last question, and this part of what really interests me, is you've described coming to . . . oh, no one more question before I get to my last question. Is the Jewish, the synagogues, like you talk about your husband being involved in charity and fundraising. . .

H- Okay, let me say my husband created a running group. Right away when he came he joined the Y. But he didn't have money for a membership, so they gave them memberships. So he says he has to repay this. So he is very much involved with the Y. And he organized a running group, he and another friend, and then more and more women and men. And he has this group for over 50 years.

Z- The Wolf . . .

H- Pack.

Z- The Wolf Pack.

H- And over the years he's touched hundreds and hundred of people. But for him it wasn't enough just the running group. He got involved with a group [1:31:06] and charity work.

Z- So I'm wondering, so my question is, were the synagogues when you came in the 1950 or late 40s, were they involved in any charity work to help the Jews who came from Europe?

H- I have no idea.

Z- You see I can't find anything on that.

H- I'm . . .okay, you must know the kind of people me and my husband are. My family didn't help me, or his family, what they could and should. But I don't care. I never asked for anything. He never asked for anything. And I don't feel any . . .I'm not angry about it. I'm not looking back. We are survivors and we lived in camps. I told you 'til 1949, came. And we came here with nothing. My husband brought a little suitcase like this and he had in his pocket \$10 or \$15. I didn't have even this, okay [laughs]. And we didn't ask anybody. We didn't even know that you can ask anybody, you know. And he started working right away, and I was working right away. And I always . . .we were like this. We live on what we have. We lived in the ghetto, we didn't even have a piece of bread . We lived in Germany with what they gave us 'til we came here. We came here, we didn't have much. We survived. Why should I ask anybody to help me. But we knew . . . we want to help somebody else. My husband didn't let me work and I could have worked anywhere in an office. When my children started to school my daughter wanted to know everything. With ballet, she wants to take ballet. There was type-writing, she says "no" she don't want to take school type-writing, she wants to take it private, she want not to miss on other classes. She . . . art she didn't know but she wanted to take art. She was that kind of a child that she wanted to know everything. And right away I start helping in her art class and her ballet class, you know. And my son . . .I was going to take the children to expo, the kindergarten. And then a neighbor of mine came to see Mrs. Pick and she said "I see that you're a woman that doesn't work, but we could use your help at the school". She was on PTA in the school. I said "fine, I work, but okay". She took me . . . she said took me to the . . .they need mending books. Fine, mending books. They said I have nice handwriting, I should quit mending books I should write the titles on the books. And I was the only newcomer there. The only . . . and this was [1:34:05] school. That was district . . . the children went from the, you know the from the Circle Road , the parents were already doctors. And here I am the newcomer, I speak with some accent, I'm talking about 50 odd years ago. And after a few she said to me, "Henia I want you to come with me to the library". I come to the library and the librarian is Mrs. [1:34:34] and she heard me talking a few words to this [1:34:40] and she said "I'm sorry I cannot take". I was supposed to help her. "I cannot teach you here in the library, I haven't got time for it". So she said "you don't have to teach her nothing". So I worked until my son finished school in Iona [same as 1:34:05]. And I was from one day, I went to three days, and they wanted me to mend books, and this, and that . . . and I was a reader I told you. I came to the library and there were walls . . .

Z- And this is volunteer work?

H- Of course volunteer work. And there were shelves with books, each wall had a . . . and I look. What kind of book this shelf? What kind of book this [she describes helping children find books, difficult to transcribe, many broken sentences]. She [librarian] needed me, you know, to . . . when the children come for the books, to help them with the books. She wanted the kids, comes the class, to introduce them reading and to this. She should be free, I should do her work. And I was doing. And when I finished my work I got for Chanukah a card from her. Only a few words "since you left my work is not the same". I kept only two letters, I kept. My daughter works since she was nine years old. She wanted to travel. She worked, saved, and summers she traveled. And I had a neighbor from Yugoslavia, she was nine years old, she would babysit teaching her math, teaching her writing. And then she was a champion swimmer in Quebec. She established a record when she was eleven years old, so . . . and she also learned as instructor. So she was giving, later, children lessons at the Y. And later when she started at McGill as the [1:36:49] school in Outremont opened and they was modern, and they had the swimming pool, and they didn't have a gym teacher yet, and they were looking for somebody to teach them swimming. So my daughter got the job Sunday to go to teach them swimming. So one day a woman approached her and said "look I have a son, my husband goes to the Y and he wants to take my son with him, my husband swims and he cannot swim, and nobody can teach him swimming, but my daughter recommended you, that you might be able to teach him swimming". And she became, you know, it was a challenge for her. She taught him swimming, so she got a letter from this woman, a beautiful letter. How she cannot thank her enough what she did with this boy. Now he can go with his father to the Y. Not only that he learned to swim but what it meant to him to go with his father to the Y and swim together, that his whole personally changed, he got now confidence. So it was such a . . . those two letters I kept from . . . one I gave back to my daughter, one I cannot find. So anyway, but I so . . . we never ever . . . I told you my husband just joined right away the Y, got right away involved with people and got right away involved that he wants to help.

Z- My question that I end with---

H- I never knew there's such a thing as join, you know, and then when my husband starting making more money of course, he didn't want I should work. "You work too much, you stay home". But how could I stay home, you know, so I was a volunteer at school. Now when I finish volunteer work I was looking for a job, a volunteer job, didn't want to work. And then I said "where can I work?", you know, I want something decent job, where can I work. For a little while I work in a stationary store here . . . was very challenging, a learned a little French there, was challenging. Then he sold the shop. So I became a volunteer. I went to the Jewish family centre. They trained us for a while, we should pick our job. We want to work with elder, we want to work with big brother, like this. . . so I went to a lecture, it was very interesting. So I gave two years I worked with elderly. Then I spent maybe 20 years working for [1:39:35].

Z- What is that.

H- It's Hebrew word. I don't remember what . . . But we were helping at the JIAS, the immigrant came, we're helping them with food, we're helping them with clothes, you know. And we worked with Jewish poor people, Jewish family. But I never thought about asking for something, never. And my husband started charity work, like he was like raising money for the [1:40:04], for the elderly, bicycle boat [?], then the [1:40:10] in Israel. My husband raised for [1:40:14] for Israel and now he's trying for 11 and 12, and working for the women of [] and help the children in Israel and we helping people here, like some people that were running with him and needed help. But . . . and then of course, lately I work only for 12 years in the [] centre for the Holocaust survivors. What is my work? I'm a German . . . okay, I work with the claims against Germany.

Z- So my question to you is, and this will be the last question, is when you first came there was very little interest about what happened to the Jew in Europe in Canada among the Jewish community, but that has changed dramatically now . . .

H- Yeah, I know, where I work upstairs I have people that come in for help, Holocaust survivors. I sent them to OMES, Jewish family service, now they are OMAS, okay. And with the Holocaust survivors we get money also that we have . . . that we help the Holocaust survivor, before I never knew about it.

Z- So why has it changed? Why has it gone from no interest in the 50s were a lot of people could have used to help, to now, complete interest and complete identity?

H- Okay, what we did actually, the survivors. We started to make societies like the [1:41:55] society, the [1:41:57] society, the Warsaw society and we start meeting right away and we start right away raising money for Israel. Okay, this is what we did. But maybe after survivors did ask for help, we didn't. I mean maybe there was help, I don't know. 'Cause I don't know, I never asked and he never asked, we never knew. Nobody ever approached me if I need something. Oh, I will tell you something, talking about helping, okay. I give birth to my daughter. What did I know about a baby? Okay, I came home to this Mrs. Kramer and in the hospital there you don't keep the baby.

Z- Was this at the Jewish General?

H- Yeah. I say I no . . . not feeding [possible 'feeling?'] my breast. They teach you how to give a bottle . . . and then right away I went home after eight days. So I come home and this Mrs. Kramer was home and I take the baby out on the bed and I tuck the baby, and she said the baby is a little nothing, a little nothing. She was 6 pounds and 6 ounces. And I look at this and I look at Mrs. Kramer, and I started crying, she says "don't be afraid, she want break". She started to teach me how to diaper the baby. But when I was in the hospital I was other three women, and one day I see one woman gets a big package, and I said "what is . . ." and I told my husband this

Mrs. that I was working, she right away went out and bough a bed for the baby. And I think she bought a few things for the baby too, when I came home. And I asked the girl, "what is this?". She says "oh they brought it to me". I said "who brought it to you?". She says "I ask". "Who do you ask?" "Well a woman will come here, you ask her also?". So I said what is this everything for the baby. And my husband, I will never forget, my husband comes, and I said "you know, she got a package like this and she says the woman comes here and I can ask her also". He said "don't you dare". I will never forget. He said "don't you dare".

Z- So there was a lot of pride?

H- Yeah. "Don't you dare". "Don't you dare" And I told you, okay this Mrs. I used to, I wore her dress for the wedding, and when I came I had a bed. And I had some diaper and this Mrs. Kramer told me how to . . . the baby, and I learn of course right away. I learned so much that when my friends had babies and they wanted to know, they called me. At about this time was a book Dr. Spock, I don't know it you heard about it? And they called and I never read this book. I said "look, I learn what I learn by experience and I use my judgment".

Z- So it was all about self-help?

H- Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Z- What about health care? If you got sick or went to doctor?

H- Private doctor. I have to tell you something about doctor. They recommended me a child doctor.

Z- For your . . .

H- I knew so much about the child, I knew a child needs fresh air, so if it was winter, it was cold . . . so I used have a carriage in the house, I used to bundle her up, open the window, I had opened to the window to play. . . in the meantime she was sweating inside and constantly having colds, you know [laughter]. I didn't know a thing. And I used to feed them like at home, I used to push her, push her, push her, and she would throw up. I didn't know a thing, because by those . . . I had a baby and first of all the bottle, I boiled those bottles and I have a little glass for her. I never let her drink from the glass if I didn't boil the water and 20 times rinse the glass. So stupid you know.

Z- But that's from the war, right?

H- No, we didn't have anybody to teach us.

Z- But you were also super careful about germs right.

H- But no experience, when did I have . . . when did I touch a baby, you understand. I had nobody to teach me anything, to tell me anything, you know. Now we have television, radio, we have books, the internet. Who knew this? Who knew this, you understand. We had to learn everything by ourselves.

Z- So you have a children's doctor, a pediatrician?

H- Yeah, this Dr. Gordon. 'Cause she always had colds, so I call Dr. Gordon. [Story about receiving a watch from her husband, difficult to transcribe, Dr. thought she had money because of the fake diamonds, interview ends on that note].