Anita Winer Transcript

Devorah Steinberg: Okay. This is Devorah Steinberg interviewing Anita Freeman Winer in Needham, Massachusetts, on June 18, 1999. This is side A of tape one. Anita's life. Where to begin? Why don't you begin by talking a little bit about some of the most important aspects or achievements of your life? And then we can get to specific categories.

Anita Winer: The first thing that comes to my mind in trying to sum up the reflections on my life is a gratitude that I feel by having lived this long and for having had a very full life, much of it very happy, some of it very difficult, but I'm just filled with gratitude for the gift that I've had of life all these years. When it comes to important events in my life, it's hard to assess one's achievements. I'm going to use up so much of this tape by thinking. I guess my greatest achievement is having worked with my husband on a marriage that lasted almost fifty-two years, and having raised two children, of whom I am really very proud because they are very good, real people. My life really spans a lot of – it really reflects a lot of the history of Reform American Jews in this country, and a lot of my thinking today is influenced by the classical Reform Judaism in which I was raised.

DS: What are some of the principles, values, morals, or teachings that are part of you now?

AW: I never thought of myself as being a pious or deeply religious, ritually observant person, but I guess that the mitzvot in the Torah, the commandments, and some of the others that have been added to or interpreted further have been the guiding principles of my life. I hope that when people remember me, they'll say she was a mensch. It's hard to describe what a mensch is, but it's all virtues that one finds admirable. In addition to being accomplished and hard-working and having a conscience and being guided by

being a good person, it would include sensitivity to other people's needs, having a loving heart, and reaching out to other people. I'm really getting very embarrassed by this, Devorah.

DS: Why?

AW: I wish I had had more time to just think about these things.

DS: Well, these are the hard questions, and we can shift shortly to historical telling stories.

AW: I wish I had specific assignments to focus on, instead of such a general thing. I feel as though I'm sort of swimming in a vast ocean, and I don't have my bearings.

DS: Well, why don't we start with history, and then, as you tell those, some of the larger, ideological pieces –?

AW: You mean my personal history?

DS: Yeah. Why don’t you say –?

AW: Yeah, I was born right here in Boston.

DS: When was that?

AW: 1918. I really don't remember too much about the first couple of years of my life. I remember some things. I remember gaslights, visiting somebody who had gas lights, not electric bulbs. And another time, I was probably about two and a half, I fell down and cut my lip, and I remember my father being angry and asking the doctor if it would leave a scar. I think he was blaming my mother at the time for not watching me or something, and I'm sure that she was as caring as anybody. It was an accident.

DS: What kind of house or apartment did you live in growing up?

AW: We lived in a house in Dorchester on Colonial Avenue. It was a three-family house, and we lived in the middle flat. Aunts and uncles lived within either a few houses of where we were or within a few blocks. Then I started kindergarten there, and I loved school. I remember feeling left out when it came Christmas time. We had no observance of anything in the wintertime, and a lot of my neighbor friends were excited about Christmas. I was simply told we don't have Christmas, period. We never celebrated anything else. It was with my own children that I wanted to make much of Hanukkah, not to compete with Christmas, but to enrich – as a matter of fact, I got all kinds of books on the Jewish holidays and made a real effort to start observing these things at home, but I remember feeling left out. I was not part of the main group, and I felt this in school as well.

DS: So, it was mixed with Jewish and non-Jewish.

AW: It wasn't that Jewish. There was very little that – I didn't have a strong Jewish identification, maybe because my father had come from Russia, I think, as a young teenager, and he was throwing off what he felt was the yoke of a very orthodox upbringing. His brothers came, and two brothers – there were ten children in the family. Two brothers remained in Russia, and the two sisters – there were eight boys and two girls in the family. His parents never came. I grew up knowing my father and five of his brothers. None of them were at all observant. My mother's family – Mother's mother came here around 1850 from Germany. She was, I think, seven or eight years old, and she landed in Savannah, Georgia. She came with two sisters who, I think, spent most of their lives in New York. I don't know what brought Grandma up to New York, but I know that she got there eventually and met and married my mother's father, her grandfather, whom I never knew because he died three months before my mother was born. But there was sort of a glamor attached to him, because he had fought in the Union Army in the Civil War. There was never any Yiddish spoken. Mother didn't know anything about Hebrew. When Mother was born, Grandma and this new baby and one or two other

siblings who were teenagers – Mother was much younger than [inaudible] – went to live with one of Mother's married sisters. So, Grandma had children running all the way – she just never expected to have this last child so late in her life. My father was very anxious that we be well-educated, but he wanted to be as Americanized as possible, as soon as possible. Had he been able to have a formal education, I think he would have achieved a great deal in an academic sense. He achieved a lot in a commercial sense. He and his brothers were in the furniture business. We just never really felt poor about anything. In the Depression, we were very aware of the fact that we didn't have things that we had had before [inaudible]. But we were never hungry. I realized that we had a car. I realize, in retrospect, now that I was trained to live frugally, whether we've had a lot or not. The evidence that I knew that we were living more stringently because of the Depression was that my father used to go to furniture shows in New York and in Chicago, and he always brought a present back for me, and he didn't bring a present back this time. I realized then that there was much more belt-tightening.

DS: Can I ask you what your dad did, if you have any awareness, to become Americanized?

AW: Oh, yeah. He went to night school immediately. He worked in a bakery. Used to tell me stories of how he'd get up at two o'clock in the morning and go to this bakery. Oh, there was a wonderful story before that about when he landed.

DS: How old was he? I'm sorry, you might have said that. When he came to America, that is?

AW: I think it must have been post-bar mitzvah, however that was done in Russia. He was probably thirteen and a half or fourteen. His father's brother, my great-uncle John, had come first. My father's parents never came. But gradually, Dad's older brothers came and linked up with Great Uncle John and his family, who were established here by then. My father was the fourth to come. There were two [inaudible], and they came singly.

DS: Wow. He came across from Russia on his own when he was thirteen years old?

AW: On his own. Each one came singly.

DS: By boat? I guess.

AW: Yes, by boat. I remember he told me that he ate horse meat in Holland. I haven't thought of these things for a lot of years. Obviously, we heard lots of stories. My dad went to – he worked in this bakery. I used to have tears in my eyes when he'd tell me. I was about five, I guess, or six, when I can remember he was telling me these things, and I was always interested in the background of the family. As a matter of fact, I became the historian of my husband's family as well because I was interested, and it never occurred to them to tell their [inaudible]. And today, I'm the matriarch, so if anybody wants to know about the Winer family, they call me. But as hard as he worked, and he had to learn English rapidly, he had a strong aesthetic sense. He loved music. I think he was earning the equivalent of about two dollars a week, but for twenty-five cents he could go to the Boston Opera House for standing room and hear and see an entire performance. He loved the violin. I started playing violin when I was seven years old. Mother? Oh, you wanted to know how Dad became Americanized.

DS: Yeah.

AW: He was very enterprising. He found out that he could take pictures down on what we know as Charles Street between the public garden and the Common, and he was taking pictures of people and then showing it to them. I don't know how he got such instant – well, it wasn't that instant. But he had a stand-up tripod camera, he told me. I guess he dove under the hood. I don't know how he was able to distribute them that fast. Maybe he had to take their addresses, I don't know, but he was trying to earn money by doing that, and somebody came along and said that was his spot. So, my dad went down and spoke to the mayor or the governor, who told him that he had every right to be there – I even

forget who the official was – but if anybody bothered him, he was to quote so-and-so's name. Eventually, Dad got into the upholstery business. He and his brothers all worked together in various aspects of furniture, some retail and some in manufacturing, and they were extremely close. There was a legend that the Freeman boys, if one were cut, the others bleed. It was a lovely feeling that I grew up with, knowing that. My mother was so much younger than her siblings that she really – her contemporaries were her nieces and nephews, and life was on a much more formal basis. I never called my cousins by their first name without the preceding proper title – or aunts. It was always Aunt Sadie, Uncle Martin, Cousin Mildred. Cousin Mildred was my mother's contemporary, and Cousin Mildred's children are my age. I still think of them as Cousin [inaudible] or Cousin [inaudible]. We played together all the time, but it was always by a title. Mother went to school in Boston. Dad became very interested in a lot of intellectual pursuits. I mentioned that he loved music. He loved music. We had a Victrola with a lot of opera arias on it. I know Dad would come home from work, and he'd be whistling operatic arias. We had a car as far back as I can remember. We did some unusual things as a family. We went camping. I think we were the only families East of the Mississippi – Jewish families – that went camping in the 1920s. But we'd go for a week or two weeks at a time. We had a luggage carrier on the running board. You probably don't know what a running board is. And we had World War I surplus army supplies.

DS: Wow. [laughter]

AW: We had a big tent and no floor or anything like that. I still get excited when I smell citronella or kerosene, because we had kerosene lanterns, and citronella – I don't know what – it wasn't a spray. They didn't have spray cans then. I guess it was a liquid, and we rubbed it on ourselves. I love the smell of it today, because it reminds me of camping. I remember saying goodbye to neighbors, like on a Saturday night before we went to sleep, because we'd leave by two in the morning in order to set up camp by 2:30 in the afternoon, beyond Albany, New York, which is today, maybe a three-and-a-half or four-

hour drive. In those days, it was a minimum of twelve hours.

DS: Because it was all side roads and things.

AW: Oh, sure. There was the – I think it was called the Boston Post Road, and that's one of the big turnpikes now. But it took so long to get anyplace.

DS: Was it unusual for a family to have a car when you had one? Cars weren't even around for outrageously long at that point.

AW: This is in the ’20s, and most people – by then, we were living in Mattapan in a house that we owned. It was a two-family house. All the houses had garages. I don't remember any of my friends' families not having cars. I remember one car that my father bought was a Nash, and I remember it was so much money; it was $595. I went to a local school through the sixth grade, and then I went to Latin School starting in the seventh grade or the sixth class. I know that my father would pick up some of the neighbor's kids because his factory was beyond – he would drop us off at Latin School. I never took the streetcar into school in the morning, but I always came home by streetcar, and we did a lot of walking. I was very athletic in school. I swam, and I was on the basketball team. A well-kept secret for most Bostonians is the gym on the top floor of the Trinity Church at Copley Square. We used to play basketball there. We had intramural sports [inaudible]. I remember climbing up all those stairs to get up to the top. It's literally among the gables and terrace, and everything. The next time you're at Copley Square, you should look up, and you'll see how [inaudible] beautiful [inaudible] church. I started Sunday School at a very young age at Temple Israel.

DS: Where was Temple Israel located at that time?

AW: There were two buildings, plus a satellite. Because we were living in Mattapan, I started, I think, in about the second grade, and there was a little local school. It started in classrooms over what was the Morton Theatre. After the first year or two, Temple Israel

bought a house on Blue Hill Avenue, a single home that was quite large and that was converted to a school. The principal's office was on the first floor, and a few other administrative things and classrooms upstairs. I was able to walk there. I went there on Sundays, and I learned a lot of Bible stories, and I really enjoyed it. I was the only one of my friends that went to Sunday school, and this was my father's doing.

DS: Were there many girls in Sunday school then? Or is it unusual for you to be a girl having some kind of Jewish education?

AW: No, there were girls and boys. There was no Hebrew, no preparation for bar or bat mitzvah. But we learned a lot about Bible stories. As we got into the upper grades, we learned a lot about Jewish history, philosophy. But it was a very sterile classical academic education. I was getting a classical academic education at Latin School as well. So, when I think back now, in public school, we had no music, no art. It was ancient Roman history, ancient Greek history, Middle European history, mostly Middle English history, six years of Latin, lots of reading, only one science, and that was chemistry. There were no options at Latin School; everybody took the same thing in the seventh grade, the eighth grade. In the fourth class or the ninth grade, freshman year, you had a choice. No, you could add French to your Latin. In the sophomore year, you continued with the French and Latin, but then you had a choice of German or Greek, and I took German. None of the teachers were allowed to be married, and they were all older than God, and they wore these faded black taffeta dresses. I learned a great deal, I realize in retrospect, but it could have been a much more exciting and flourishing atmosphere. It's too bad those wonderful years were wasted on a young person who wasn't ready to absorb it. But maybe I did. Maybe I did absorb as much as I could at that point in my life.

DS: Walking back home through your neighborhood or into your home – I don't know, when you think of your home, if it’s the Dorchester or the Mattapan –?

AW: Yeah, we lived both in – in Mattapan, we lived way up at the top of Wellington Hill.

DS: Is the house still standing? Do you know?

AW: Well, I haven't been there for a number of years, but I took my children to see it because we had a gardener, and I realized, as an adult, with a house and a big yard and a garden, they just came and mowed the lawn because I took care of it. My husband really didn't take care of the outside. The children and I did a lot of it. But we had a gardener that was really a grass cutter; he and his men came and did the lawn. Then I got to thinking, because we had half an acre or a little more. Why did we have a gardener in Mattapan? We had a little postage-stamp front yard with a privet hedge. I don't think that it was as much lawn as there is space in this room. But my mother never did any gardening. My father didn't. My father worked every day, including Saturdays. Anyway, I took the children back, and I was shocked at how little everything was, how close together everything was. By then, it was a totally Black neighborhood, and this was when I took the children. It was about 1950. We had moved away. My folks moved away in 1939. I was married in ’39 when they moved.

DS: Going back to your memory of when you lived there, what did you remember about your neighborhood?

AW: It's very close.

DS: Were there stores and restaurants?

AW: Down at the bottom of the hill, there were lots of stores. There was one restaurant that became very famous in the history of Boston; that was the G&G Delicatessen, and that was a hotbed of political rallies and all that sort of thing. I remember a Chinese restaurant in Grove Hall, Roxbury, where, for twenty-five or thirty-five cents, before one o'clock on Saturdays, you could get a complete lunch. And that was a big treat. Although my father had a car, my mother never learned to drive. During the day, we walked everywhere, and at night, I walked. When I think of it now, a friend of mine and I – she

lived two streets away from us – because we played basketball so much of the time, we had basketball games with other groups down as far as – not Codman Square. I can't remember now. It's on the border of Roxbury and lower Dorchester – Upham's Corner. You're probably not familiar with these places because you've not grown up here.

DS: I know Upman's Corner.

AW: We walked to Upham's Corner for the game, and then after playing basketball, by then, it would be 9:30 or ten o'clock at night, we would walk all the way back to Mattapan up the hill. Although I didn't feel comfortable walking alone, after Ruth would turn down to her street, and I had to go two more blocks up the hill, I ran like crazy because it was dark, but I don't remember being afraid of things. There was somebody that was murdered when I was about six or seven years old, and it was in the newspapers, and people talked about it for weeks or months afterwards. That was a rare thing. I don't remember people talking about having their homes broken into. When we lived in Waban, in our house, we lived there for five years before we owned a key to the front door. We never locked the door.

DS: What do you remember about your house? If you walk through, in your mind's eye, through the rooms, are there –?

AW: I remember it very well.

DS: Are there particular items that were your favorite, or particular rooms you'd like to be in?

AW: In retrospect, it was pretty unusual.

[Recording paused.]

DS: This is side B on tape number one. Anita Weiner, June 18, 1999.

AW: There was a radio program sponsored by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, and I remember Mother and Dad and my brother and I standing in the living room doing exercises to this horrible voice that commanded you. There was a piano playing in the background. In the dead of winter, every window would be thrown open, and we were doing these exercises. They were setting up exercises, stretching, and all kinds of stuff. I guess in that respect, Dad was a [inaudible]. It was never, “Do you want to?” This was what one did. Then we would take showers. It was unusual, I think, to have showers in those – we had a shower over the bathtub – because most people took baths. It was a copper hot water heater, so you had to make sure that that was lit before you did the exercises. Then there’d be enough, I guess, for the whole family. We took fast showers followed by a cold shower. In six years of Latin School, I don't remember ever having a cold. My father believed in a rugged, rough, stoical upbringing, and he expected a great deal of himself and a great deal of all of us. In retrospect, it must have been very hard for my mother.

DS: Anything else you remember?

AW: I had a very, very close relationship with my father. I adored him, and he expected to be proud of me, and his approval really governed a lot of my young decisions. Later, I regretted a lot of that. I was sorry I didn't have the guts to do what I felt was right for me, not what my father felt was right for me. On the other hand, this was the mores of the times too. Your parents said, “This is what you're going to do.” And if you say, “Why?” they say, “Because I told you to.”

DS: And you have a brother.

AW: My brother.

DS: He's two years younger?

AW: Two years younger than I.

DS: How was life different for him as a boy, as opposed to you as a girl?

AW: When I had hoped to go to college after graduating from high school, I had wanted to go to medical school, which meant four years of pre-med and then four years of medical school. Because my brother had to be educated, there was no chance of my even having four years of pre-med, let alone four years of medical school. This was really in the deepest part of the Depression, the middle ’30s, and this was one of the great frustrations of my life, and that was why I went – the closest I could get to medicine was going into nursing. Many, many years later, I started taking courses at BC [Boston College], hoping to get an undergraduate degree. Actually, I had been given an opportunity after graduating from the Beth Israel School of Nursing to go on to college, Columbia University. Columbia had a nursing program. It was a five-year thing, and you could get a BS degree. Well, the head of education at the hospital had worked it out for me. I had done very well at the hospital. There was one award given at that time, and I [inaudible]. Academically, I had done extremely well at the hospital. She had worked it out so that I could get enough credits for what I had achieved there, so that with two full semesters and a summer semester – two years, that would be six semesters, and I forget how many credits it would be – I could get a BS. But at the time, I had become engaged to my husband, and I figured, “Well, I'll do that for a couple of years.” He said, “Oh no, it's me or Colombia.” He was twenty-seven at the time. He was twenty-eight, and I was twenty-one. I chose him.

DS: How did you meet?

AW: Blind date. One of my classmates was dating somebody that worked for my husband's family. They had a chain of food stores. The fact that he was seven years older than I, I thought he was so worldly and representative. I think their family lived far more lavishly. They were in a much higher economic bracket than I was raised in, and I realized that maybe it's just that they were accustomed to living more lavishly. Anyway,

you wanted to know about what I remembered about the house. I told you about the postage stamp lawn and [inaudible] the living room.

DS: What was in the living room?

AW: Regular upholstered furniture. I can't remember much artwork on the walls. I think there was probably a print of the Roman Colosseum. It was a classical kind of thing. Why we had that, I don't know. There were no religious objects that I can remember. Many years later, I inherited a pair of brass candlesticks that my grandmother had brought from Germany –

DS: Your mother's mother?

AW: – when she was a little girl, because grandma was only seven or eight when she came here. After Grandma died, my aunt and grandma always lived with Aunt Sadie and Uncle Matt. Aunt Sadie gave me those candlesticks, and my daughter has them now in Vancouver. We had a dining room. We had Passover seders, and I remember my father reading in Hebrew, and I understood no Hebrew at all, and it was brief. We didn't have a Friday night Shabbat observance. I think occasionally mother lit candles, but I don't really remember, and I don't know whether she said a prayer. She just lit the candles. I remember feeling it was strange. Sometimes she'd cover her face, but my mother had no education Jewishly. She knew nothing about history, or any of the prayers, or any of the songs. If my father knew any of it, of course, he was very literate in Hebrew. In all the years that we belonged to Temple Israel, when it came to the High Holidays, he and my uncles used to buy tickets to sit in Mishkan Tefila when we lived in Mattapan. I remember walking all the way over to meet him outside. It was maybe four or five miles, I'm just guessing. Then, when they moved out of Mattapan, they lived in Allston, and he was still at Temple Israel and went there mostly to hear the sermons. He still would buy high holiday tickets to go to Kehillath Israel. There was something that drew him back to the more traditional upbringing that he had had.

DS: Only at the high holidays, though?

AW: Only at the high holidays. I was not involved in any of that, except as a young child walking through Franklin Park from Mattapan to meet my father. My uncles would come out of temple.

DS: Did your dad go to services other than at high holidays?

AW: Well, he went to Sabbath services at Temple Israel, Friday nights because he enjoyed the sermon. There were no Saturday services, and Sunday morning, there were services. The sermon was broadcast on radio. But he didn't usually get to that because he went to Community Church, which was held in Symphony Hall.

DS: What's that?

AW: Community Church was a wonderful forum where religious leaders representing various aspects of Protestantism and Judaism would come. Mostly, it was Reform rabbis that would come from Cincinnati or New York, or maybe occasionally from Boston. John Haynes Holmes was a very well-known Protestant minister. It was interesting because in my confirmation year at Temple Israel, you had to go to Sunday school Sunday morning and Tuesday afternoon. This was just in the confirmation class. Dad used to take me occasionally to Community Church with him Sunday morning. Tuesday afternoon, I had basketball practice at Latin School, and we were Rabbi Harry Levy's last class. He had severe Parkinson’s. He seemed very old to me at the time. He was so frustrated with me because I remember in confirmation, he was saying to my folks, my family, “It's very difficult for me to recognize that perhaps she should be confirmed with the class because she was either at basketball practice or Community Church, much more than she was in the confirmation classes.” There was quite a conflict there in my life.

DS: There was no bat mitzvah for girls yet.

AW: No.

DS: That hadn’t even –

AW: There was no bar mitzvahs for boys.

DS: Really? Your brother never became a Bar Mitzvah.

AW: My brother did not go through Temple Israel. My brother never went to Sunday school at Temple Israel. I don't know why.

DS: You did, but he didn't.

AW: Yeah, I was always more scholarly than my brother. My brother was sort of a playboy. He was a wonderful jitterbug. He was a great dancer. He was very handsome. Unfortunately, he has Alzheimer's now. He looked like Gene Kelly. He rode a horse by himself when he was nine years old. I told you we went camping, and he would take a horse through the woods on his own. I went fishing. I would go upstream in a canoe when I was eight or nine. I'm probably one of the very few people who, for her eightieth birthday, got a new fishing pole for a birthday present. That was Deanna and Dan Douglas and Rosetta, because when Danny found out that I love fishing – and he's a superb fisherman – he started taking me fishing. My husband never cared for fishing, and I always loved it. After many years of not being able to do it, I was able to start fishing. Boy, I've been all over the map.

DS: There’s a lot to tell, huh?

AW: Yeah, a lot to tell. You have to rein me in.

DS: Anything else about either home life with your family or neighborhood life, friends or activities, or school life that bubbles up before we move on to more of your adulthood? And what's interesting –

AW: I remember feeling guilty singing Christmas songs in grade school. I remember feeling very much the minority at Latin School.

DS: Because you were Jewish?

AW: Because I was Jewish. To my great regret, there was something that I am ashamed of now that took place when I was a junior in high school. Maybe I was a senior. I don’t know. We had a prom. And traditionally, the proms from Latin School were always held at Longwood Towers. Longwood Towers had a very restrictive policy. It’s still in existence. It's a residential hotel, primarily with function rooms. It was like two blocks away from Latin School, very close by. It's two blocks from Beth Israel, where I spent three years of my life. It's within a very close proximity. While they wouldn't let Jews live there, for the prom, they didn't have a restrictive policy, but they didn't allow Blacks in. There were two Black girls in our class at Latin School. I remember at the time being told that they wouldn't be able to come if we had the dance there, but the dances were always there. I don't know what – I don't think these girls were even asked if they intended to go to the dance. I think it was just an automatic policy that they couldn't go because they were Black. I guess I was very conscious of that, because I've never forgotten. All through the years, I have berated myself for not having the guts to speak up. I'm ashamed of that, but there was such a need of belonging that I just didn't have the courage to go out on a limb.

DS: And you were a minority, too. So, you of all people –

AW: Being a minority, you're always more vulnerable in that respect. It's getting into the lifeboat. Well, they let me in, but I don't want to let so-and-so in.

DS: If I say something about letting them in, maybe they'll toss me out.

AW: Right, right.

DS: Do you remember anything specifically antisemitic happening?

AW: Oh, certainly. There were snide remarks in high school from the teachers, more than from – I don't remember suffering any trauma from contemporaries. I had an argument with one of my classmates, who became the very illustrious – she was Mary McGrory, the columnist in Washington. She was in my class all through Latin School. Mary and I were talking, and she said something about the Knights. Maybe she said the Knights of Columbus. I said, “Oh, my father belongs to the Knights.” And she said, “[inaudible]?” And I said, “Listen, I know he goes to large meetings, and he belongs to the Knights. I hear him talking. He's got a meeting.” Well, I didn't know there were two kinds. The Knights of Columbus was a Catholic organization. My father belonged to the Knights of Pythias, the King Solomon lodge of the Knights of Pythias. I just assumed that was it. I remember Mary saying, “He can't be a member of that. You're Jewish,” or something like that. And it was only later than realized [inaudible] – I’ve always been amused by that. There wasn't any deep feeling of resentment about that. But when I wanted to apply to nursing school, I really got smacked between my eyes. I had an appointment to be interviewed by the superintendent of nurses at the Children's Hospital, and when I came in – I don't think she even asked me to sit down. She said, “Miss Freeman, I can't imagine why you would even think of applying to Children's Hospital. You have your own hospital.” Beth Israel had been established maybe fifteen or twenty years before when I was applying, and that was the end of the interview. I was crushed. I had thought maybe I'd go into pediatric nursing. The other thing was having gone to Latin School for six years, it was located in the heart of Harvard Medical School, Children's Hospital, the Brigham, the Beth Israel, Simmons College, Boston Teachers College. These were all within a block and a half. It was, at the time, the Boston Lying-In; the private part was the Richardson House. But all of this was bordered by Huntington Avenue, Longwood Avenue, and Brookline Avenue. That was all right in there. Anyway, I am very amused now because I remember all the quotas at universities and the heads of all these hospitals, and there were very strictly observed quotas, and now today, the directors, the

chairman of all the hospitals, the presidents of the colleges, they’re all Jewish, whether it's Dartmouth or Harvard – all around.

DS: Anything else about childhood? We can always get back to it again when you think of other things.

AW: I went to camp. We used to rent a house at Winthrop Beach every summer, even during the Depression. When I was eleven or twelve, it was 1929, 1930. In the summertime, my father thought it'd be a good idea for me to go away to camp. There were very well-known camps that were expensive, and there was a camp called Camp Emoh. And this will resonate with many men and women my age. Emoh is home spelled backwards. There was an orphanage in Dorchester; it was the Home for Jewish Children, and the Women's Auxiliary that supported this facility was on Canterbury Street in Dorchester. They wanted to have the children at the home benefit from camping experience, so they bought a facility in Alfred, Maine. The month of July, the boys from the home went there as campers, and the month of August, the girls went there as campers. In addition to the people that lived at the home, people from the community would go there and pay. It was sixty-sixty dollars for the month, including bus fare, but you had to get your own – bring your own clothes. My father thought that would be a good experience. I remember my mother saying, “We’re going to be at Winthrop for the summer. Why does she have to do that?” There was a lot of tension, a lot of difficult dynamics in the family, I realize now. I guess I was aware of it then, too, and I think I probably felt pretty guilty that it was my fault. But later, I realized I was trying to be husband to my mother and wife to my father. I was trying to make up, somehow, what they were lacking in their lives. I became aware of that working with a social worker when my mother was in McLean. My mother had a lot of emotional ups and downs as an adult. I remember being told that it was a nervous breakdown from time to time. It was difficult. On the other hand, I realize now that if Mother had had a gentler, less demanding husband, she could have been encouraged and nurtured to develop more. She was

always known in her family as “Poor Esther.” She grew up without a father, this kind of thing, and I'm sure that that contributed to this emotional vulnerability that she had. But it was only as an adult that I realized this. Anyhow, I had the wonderful experience of going to camp, and as a result, I used to spend a lot of time going to the home on Canterbury Street, playing with the kids there and being part of their lives. I can't think of it without smiling. It was one of the richest – I went for two years. It was during the Depression. It was 1929, 1930. Oh, I won the senior cup, being the best all-around camper. I was real gung-ho. Oh, I loved it. The wonderful thing was that unless the kids told you, you didn't know who lived in the home and who came from outside the home. I think that you could sense it because there was a camaraderie among the kids that lived at the home that we felt privileged to be included.

DS: What were some of your favorite activities at camp?

AW: Swimming. Track. I loved high jumping. I loved the drama programs. I loved the campfires at night. It was an extension of my camping with my family, except I was away from family.

DS: Did you sleep in tents or bunks?

AW: There were bunks, and there was one toilet to a bunk. I’m trying to remember. No, we didn’t have an outhouse there. There was one toilet, and there were about twelve kids to a bunk, and there were two counselors to twelve kids, and some of the – oh, and then there were kitchen boys, and all the campers had to do KP [kitchen patrol] duty as well. Phil Marson was the director of Camp Emoh. Later, it disbanded when the philosophy of having children in foster homes took over. The home for Jewish children was disbanded, and the camp was disbanded. Phil Marson then ran his own camp, Camp Alton, which I think is still in existence today. He was a teacher at Boys Latin School. As a matter of fact, his grandson has become the authority on – what's the famous rock and roll thing? – Elvis Presley, and he's written definitive biographies about him.

DS: Were there Jewish rituals at camp because it was a Jewish camp?

AW: Yes, there was a Friday night candle lighting ceremony. So far as I can remember, we had regular activities on Saturday. I can't remember a heavy Sabbath day of rest kind of thing, which I know that some of my grandchildren have had going to [inaudible] Reform Jewish camp in Massachusetts.

DS: Kind of Jewish style more than really religious camp.

AW: Oh, it wasn't a religious camp at all, except for a Friday night observance. I'm trying to remember if there were non-Jewish kids there. I can't honestly remember any, but there might have been, and I don't know about the staff.

DS: It sounds like you had a lot of opportunities offered to you growing up for learning, camp, and outdoors.

AW: Yeah, at the time, I didn't realize how privileged I was in exposure to so many things. It was only later, when I heard stories of some of my friends that I met later and became close to, and they had these wonderful stories of a Jewish heritage. They had grandmothers and grandfathers that were so religious. I had none of that.

DS: Well, did you know any of your grandparents?

AW: Just my grandmother. My mother’s mother.

DS: Your mother’s mother.

AW: She died when I was a little over eighteen. I loved her. She used to tell me wonderful stories. She taught me to sing “O Tannenbaum” and some other German songs she knew as a child. She was so much older than my friends’ grandmothers.

DS: And she never lived in Boston, did she?

AW: Yes.

DS: Oh, she did.

AW: Yes. Mother was born in Boston.

DS: Oh, okay.

AW: Grandma came to Boston with the grandfather, and I always think of him as the grandfather, because I never knew him, except that, as a child, when the family would go to visit graves, we always went to grandfather's grave, and there was always an American flag on it that he –

[Recording paused.]

DS: This is side A on tape Number Two, interview with Anita Winer on June, 18, 1999.

AW: I had a very sheltered childhood. My mother was a homemaker. I was brought up to feel that cleanliness was next to godliness and work came before play. In her own way, my mother was a very strong disciplinarian. I remember putting a safety pin in a bra strap that had broken, some part of my underwear, and Mother saying, “That has to be sewn right away.” And I would say, “Well, this will hold.” “But what if you were in an automobile accident? Would you want –?” And so, I figured that would be very sinful to be in an automobile accident and have a safety pin in your underwear. And later, I realized if I were in an automobile accident, that would be the very least of my worries. But this was very important to Mother. Her world was very limited.

DS: What did she do when you were growing up? She didn't work outside of the home, which would have –

AW: Oh, absolutely not.

DS: – never been the case for [inaudible].

AW: Actually, I don't think Mother ever worked. I know that one aunt used to tell me stories of how she was an errand girl for a milliner while she was in school, either after school – I think she left school in ninth grade or something, and was earning money to bring money home because her father had died. But mother never worked, or at least I never knew about it, because she went to high school and then probably met my dad and married.

DS: Was she very interested in cooking and keeping a home? Is that something you remember about her?

AW: She loved to bake. At the time, I figured that she could cook as well as everybody. It was only later I realized that Mother really was a terrible cook. She didn't do any traditional cooking. The aunt in whose home she grew up, my Aunt, her married sister, most of my wonderful recipes come from Aunt Zadie. Grandma never did any cooking that I can remember. But grandma used to come and visit us and stay overnight once a week, and she would do all the mending. I remember joking with my mother after I was married and had children, saying, “You're not a proper grandma. You don't come and do the mending the way grandma always did it.” I have very warm feelings about my grandmother. Of course, I didn't know the other three grandparents, so all of the need and love that I wanted to give and receive was centered around her. But she was really adorable. She always spoke with a German accent. I don't know how she learned English when she came here, but she spoke English all the time I ever knew her. She knew no Yiddish. As a matter of fact, when I entered training at the Beth Israel, I [inaudible] 1936. I had to wait a year between Latin School and that because you couldn't enter unless you were eighteen years old, because you couldn't take your state boards until you were twenty-one. I remember that was a wonderful year in between because I went to school days and nights. [inaudible]

DS: What did you study in that year?

AW: Oh, I did all the wonderful things that I couldn't take at Latin School. I went to Girls High School, which I think is no longer in existence, during the day on a full schedule. I took social studies. They called it civics, and I remember it was at the time of the Mussolini invasion of Ethiopia; it opened up a whole new world for me, because I had never studied modern history at Latin School. We had American history up until the 20th century, I guess. But I had never had – so, I had that. And I took biology and English, which was a whole different thing because the English Lit that I had had all those years [inaudible] Shakespeare. This way, I had a chance to read some of the other good stuff. I took typing, and then at night, I took physics and economics at English High School, which was an all-boys school. In those years, there were very few coed high schools. There was Girls' Latin School and the Boys' Latin School. I never went to school with boys beyond the sixth grade, and then, being in training in those years, it was the most cloistered existence in the world. We had one late pass a week until twelve, and if your hairnet wasn't on right, or your shoes weren't polished, you lost your late pass. I met my husband while I was a student nurse. Later, his mother told me she couldn't understand. She knew that at that point, Herb was only taking out one girl. But how much could he like her? He was home by ten o'clock.

DS: [laughter] Because you had a curfew.

AW: Oh, sure. Much of the time, I didn't see him for six weeks at a time because I'd be on duty, on what we call the relief shift, which was three to eleven. It was very hard. It was very rigorous training because you could be on night duty from eleven at night until seven in the morning. You never got off duty on time. If it’s seven o'clock, you might not get off until 8:30 or a quarter of nine. Then you had to have breakfast, and sometimes you'd have a class nine to ten, eleven to twelve, so that there was an hour in between, and then two to three. You had to somehow sleep in between those [inaudible] things, or else

you slept after your three o'clock class until it was time to go on duty, so you had no social life.

DS: That's right. Where were you living when you were in school?

AW: At the nurses' home.

DS: With other girls?

AW: Oh, yeah.

DS: Dormitory style.

AW: We each had our own room. When we first entered, we had roommates; after the first year, we had our own rooms and affiliations. I and a classmate were the first from Beth Israel to have a psychiatric affiliation. We went to Taunton State Hospital for four months, and that was a wonderful experience.

DS: What was the state hospital like then in the late '30s?

AW: All locked wards. Exposure for me to a totally different world. It was a relatively new facility, so it didn't have the Dickinsonian environment and aura that I had read about, but there were plenty of older buildings that I'm sure were bedlams. This was a very unusual experience. It was a rather rural setting, a large-lawned campus, totally different from anything I knew before. I learned a lot, even though psychiatry was really in its infancy. Then we had a three-month affiliation at Children's Hospital because Beth Israel had a pediatric ward with just maybe twenty patients, and we needed a lot more experience. As a result of that, whenever later I would hear somebody say, "Oh, it's too bad they wanted a boy or they wanted a girl," I would say that parents should be made to walk through Children's Hospital, and then be so grateful if they have a normal child and not worry about – you have to want a child, not a son or a daughter. Then I had a three-month

obstetric affiliation in Boston Lying-In, and that was wonderful. Loved that. Just loved it. As a result of that, I realized the importance of nursing one's child if you're able to do it. A number of my nursing contemporaries all nursed our babies at a time when it was very unfashionable, and people were using modern methods. I haven't even come to my marriage.

DS: I know. [inaudible]

AW: I got married within a few weeks after finishing training, and that was a frustrating thing for me. I always wanted to do nursing, and I really had the option taken away from me in a sense of going on to school and getting a degree, and it was unthinkable for a woman to work at that time. It was before World War II, and it would have been – my mother-in-law felt it would have been very demeaning if her son's wife went to work. It would look as though – it would be a bad reflection on the Winer family, as if he couldn't afford to support me. This was the ridiculous value that was prevalent in the Jewish community anyway, and I think, in the community in general. Unless you were widowed or very poor or in an abusive marriage, you just didn't go to work.

DS: You were twenty-one when you graduated.

AW: I was twenty-one when I got married. I remember my father saying, “I want you to take the state boards and be registered.” I got through in October. Our graduation ceremonies were at Temple Israel. I had started to tell you about the buildings of Temple Israel. Until I was in about the sixth grade of Sunday school, I was in that house at Dorchester. Then we started going to classes at the Meeting House, which is today Temple Israel on the Riverway. But in those years, it was the Meeting House that had an auditorium and classrooms. The temple is the domed structure on Commonwealth Avenue that is now part of BU [Boston University]. The high holiday services were there. Any kind of special events were held there, but it was sort of a cathedral-like building.

DS: Is that the First Reform synagogue in Boston?

AW: No. Ohabei Shalom was the first, and that was – I think it was called the Park Street Synagogue, or was named something. That was established a few years before Temple Israel. Temple Israel was established primarily by the German Jewish immigrant community. Temple Ohabei Shalom, I think, was established by more of the East European, although the German immigration really preceded in greater degree – the Eastern European, the [inaudible] 1880-something were what contributed to the big influx of Russian immigrants. But Temple Ohabei Shalom was not classic Reform. They didn't use the Union Prayer Book. They used the [inaudible] Prayer Book. And in a sense, it was neither fish nor fowl. It had much more tradition than classical reform did at Temple Israel. Actually, Temple Israel was a lot like Unitarianism when I grew up. We had to memorize the “Articles of Faith.” I knew a lot more about history, but I didn't have the [inaudible].

DS: You were saying about graduation. You said your graduation was at Temple Israel, and you were going to tell me about your early –

AW: That was the Beth Israel [inaudible] School of Nursing. I had become engaged on my birthday, on my twenty-first birthday, and I was also dating somebody whom I had known. I did some dating before that, but I was seeing these two guys. And Herb’s family all came to graduation. You go into white on your last day. We have a white uniform. [inaudible] wearing a student uniform all those years [inaudible]. It was really amazing to see those uniforms. We had blue checked dresses. We had starched collars and cuffs that we had to – we called it stringing uniform. You had to put all these things in, fit all the buttons into the buttonholes. They would use snaps probably now. You had to string up a uniform before wearing it the next day. We had a heavily starched bib and a starched white apron that the bib attached to. We were very modern. We wore white shoes and white stockings. Mass General and Children's Hospital, all the other hospitals around had

black shoes and stockings. But it was a cloistered existence. Because I had been sick for a few weeks while I was at Children's Hospital, I had to make up that time. It was six or seven weeks. And so even though I graduated in June, and then the week we had a three-week vacation, I had to continue on in September into October, to make up those seven weeks. And then I was in – and I was wearing a student uniform all that time, and then I went into white the last day. I was dying to work, but my mother-in-law was having a luncheon for me the next day. I was just thrown into this world of social activity that was so glamorous, and that I had never had. It was all very exciting. And it was very social. Oh, I just reveled in it. It was sort of a fairy tale kind of thing, after a very realistic, practical experience. Then we got married on Thanksgiving Day. We were married at the Kehillath Israel. My husband's family had always had a more traditional temple affiliation. They belonged to Mishkan Tefila for a while when they lived in Roxbury, and then Ohabai Shalom when they were in Brookline, except that Ohabai was much more ritualistic than Temple Israel. Actually, their affiliation was mostly going to high holidays. It wasn't [inaudible]. But I wanted to be married in the temple. So, Herb's family decided that they wanted [inaudible]. His family wouldn't be happy with that. My husband's roommate from Harvard, his family was very active at Kehillath Israel. My family made the wedding, but it was done there. I wanted to have – I didn't care about dinner or a fancy party afterwards, but I wanted all my friends from the hospital to be able to be there. My husband came from a family that owned, along with – my father-in-law and his older brother had established this chain of grocery stores. They were very small stores. There could be one on each block in a particular area. They were grocery – they had some fruits and vegetables, and some of them had fish. They had no meat. But in those years, my mother went to a butcher shop for her meat, the fish store for her fish, a produce store for fruits and vegetables, and the grocery store. Some people even had eggs delivered or went to a dairy store, but that was how you shopped. My mother shopped probably every other day or so. I remember we had hot rolls delivered. There were four of us in the family. Hot Vienna rolls delivered every morning by a delivery boy who climbed up that

hill in the dead of winter, all year round, eat in the summer, and it was eight cents, because the rolls were two cents apiece. I remember my father saying, “That's not enough to give him. Give him ten cents.” But that was how one shopped. Well, anyway, because of that, by then, my husband was a supervisor for a number of the stores, and he wanted all these people that worked in the stores that knew him from the time he grew up. He wanted them there. I wanted all these people that I knew from the hospital there. So, it was the most ridiculous [inaudible]. We were married there, and then they had some kind of Kiddush. There must have been maybe four hundred people, because all the family – there were 250 people at the formal reception at the Kenmore Hotel. I remember that my in-laws said that there were some aunts and uncles that were very Kosher, so it’d have to be a Kosher dinner. I remember my father saying later – he made it a Kosher dinner. But it was crazy, because the ones that were so Kosher wouldn't eat anything anyway. We had never had a Kosher [inaudible].

DS: What was early marriage life like? You were socializing with your mother-in-law and folks that they knew.

AW: I didn't socialize with my mother-in-law so much, but I was so assiduously keeping house. I wanted to learn to cook. I wanted to learn to bake. I knew nothing at all about cooking. In my training, I learned how to make – how to properly take off the rind of grapefruit and oranges, so you got clean sections. I learned how to make nourishing drinks – eggnogs and stuff like that. I don't think we were ever taught to make custard, but I wanted to – and my husband came home every day for lunch, so I was cooking three meals a day. We had no freezers, no washing machine. I did send out laundry, but other things – I had a glass-ridged washboy. When my daughter was born, I was boiling diapers. There was no diaper service and nothing disposable, of course. I was shopping every day. We had one of the wine stores within a block and a half of where we lived in Brookline, and my husband had been brought up with fresh dairies the whole time, so I had to buy a quarter of a pound of butter every day. He didn't want Wednesday's butter

on Friday. [inaudible] The war changed all that. I learned to cook. We had a lot of company for meals, and it was like playing house. I loved it. Because his older brother was married and had a child, my husband wanted children right away, and I wasn't ready. I wasn't ready when I had children. I wasn't ready to be married when I got married because I had gone from my father's house to my husband's house. It wasn't until I was in my forties that I woke up one day and said, “Who am I? How did I get here?” I had a real identity crisis because I had done what people expected me to do.

DS: As most girls did then.

AW: Of course. Of course. And I always said I was the sandwich generation, because my parents did what was expected of them, and I did what was expected of me. It was a pattern that went for generations. Then, when I had children, nobody ever said to me, “Are you happy? Are you fulfilled?” But we were concerned about whether our children were happy, fulfilled, and when they had a problem, I'd say, “Well, let's talk about it and see what you think.” We were reasoning with them. We were encouraging them to be their own persons. But underneath it all, we just hoped the choices they made were choices that we would make for them, that our approval would be important enough. Anyway, that boomeranged, and that contributed a lot to an identity crisis, too. It's only with the wisdom now that I can look back and see all this. Oh, I played according to the rules all the way for a long time.

DS: What was it like raising your kids when they were school-aged? You have two.

AW: We moved out to the house. We bought the house before David was born.

DS: And this is in Newton?

AW: In Newton. Everybody in Brookline said, “Goodbye, we'll see you when you come to the city.” I mean, that was just the ends of the earth. I remember my father saying, “You want an acre of land, you want a good-sized house, you want it on top [inaudible], you

want it within a certain price range, and you're not going to find it right next to Coolidge Corner. You have to go out further." We had been looking in Brookline like so many of our friends, and we just couldn't find anything that we could afford to buy that gave us the size house and the land and everything else. So, we buy our house. Oh, and one of the indelible memories that I have is that of the Cocoanut Grove fire. I was pregnant with my daughter. I think it was November, right after [inaudible]. I remember it vividly. My husband was part of the – they called it the Home Guard. Later, it became the National Guard. It was a volunteer thing, and they were called [inaudible] the emergency to Cocoanut, down there to help with all the [inaudible]. We knew a lot of people that were lost in that. It was just terrible. The first drink I had ever had, alcoholic drink, was with my husband on my twentieth birthday, and it was at the Cocoanut Grove. That was dreadful. Anyway, we bought the house before David was born. I had no car because my husband was using the car in business. I used to walk Jeanie in the stroller to Coolidge Corner. That was the big outing for the day. I didn't start to [inaudible] study group until we got out to – I belonged to a study group while we lived here, and that was a Hadassah study group. Because one of my very dearest friends had been in – I met her when we were training in the hospital. She and her family were very involved in Zionism and in Hadassah, and so she got me involved in that. I was able to borrow my husband's car an hour or two a day, because we had workmen working on the house before the baby was born and before we moved into it. I remember buying a folding cot because after the baby was born, and I was nursing – we hadn't moved in there yet. When I would go out to the house, I'd have to nurse him in the middle of everything. So, there was – what we later called – a maid-less room off the kitchen, and I set this folding cot up there so I could lie down and nurse him. My daughter, by then, was starting to go to a nursery school, I think, two hours in the morning, two days a week, in Brookline. So, that was how [inaudible]. We had trouble making up our minds about buying a house because by then, the rumblings of war kept me closer. My husband was deferred because he was in a vital capacity. By then, he was the buyer for the chain of stores. Two of his cousins that had a

greater proportion of responsibility and financial interest, were in the service at a very high level. One was a commander in the Navy. Anyway, I don't know how they received that training earlier, but they had. So, Herb was deferred, and he had to go up Selective Service. Then, they would classify you, and finally, he was classified –

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Devorah Steinberg: – 6, 1999, interviewing Anita Winer. This is tape number three, side A, our second round of interviews. We're sitting at the card table in Anita's living room in Needham, Massachusetts. We're looking at an incredible scrapbook of photographs. Anita will describe some about when they were taken and who they're of, and stories about the people and circumstances. I'm lucky because I get to see the pictures.

Anita Winer: This is a picture of my mother and father. Dad's in a stiff collar; Mother's in a silk taffeta long dress, and it was taken at the time of their engagement, which must have been about 1912 or 1913. They had a three-year engagement before being married. There's a wonderful picture here of my grandmother, my mother, of me, and of my brother. I was four. Al was two. The costumes are incredible. Mother's wearing a black silk taffeta beach dress, and Grandma is wearing the same. Grandma has a top knot on the top of her head. At the time – well, I'm trying to figure out the – this was taken in 1923, and Al and I, my brother Al and I, are wearing woolen bathing suits, and I remember getting in the water. Now I think, “How did we not drown?” You take a woolen sweater and soak it without wringing it out; that's what it was like, except that they were long. They came down to our knees. I can still feel the weight of the water bearing me down. We lived in a three-family house they called three-deckers.

DS: Who’s that little baby?

AW: That is I. That is I.

DS: What are you wearing? A little sweater suit.

AW: It’s woolen leggings and coat with a belt, a sailor collar, and a knitted – a matching beret that almost covers my whole face.

DS: With a pom-pom.

AW: With a pom-pom on the top. And the next picture – these are great. This is a picture of my husband's mother and my husband's father. She was a very grand lady, and when I first knew her, I was terrified, because I was a country bumpkin next to the very sophisticated, well-known Winer family. But she was a remarkable woman, and we got along fine.

DS: And those are beautiful, colorized – they look like hand-painted, colorized portraits.

AW: Well, what happened – they only had black and white photography then, but artists would color stuff afterwards. Here is a picture of my husband and his three brothers. The youngest one hadn't been born yet. There's Manny, who was the oldest, and he died very young. He was about not quite forty when he died. The twins, Mike and Morty. Mike died when he was about sixty. Morty just died three years ago. And my husband, Herb, who died eight years ago. This is a picture of –

DS: Oh, that’s beautiful.

AW: – my father and his five brothers that came to this country, I think I told you that two – well, I won't go into that.

DS: Right. They're wearing these very beautiful suits, tailored woolen suits.

AW: Oh, yeah, definitely.

DS: Very formal.

AW: The whole thing is in a sepia tone, which was very common at the time, all the things. At least, I call it sepia. The oldest was Uncle Jack, Uncle John, and Uncle (Alec?), my father, who was Edward, Uncle Sam, and Uncle Al. And Uncle Al was always known as Izzy, and I loved my uncle Izzy. Each of my father's brothers that were not married lived with us until they got married. And I remember when Uncle Al came and told me that he was getting married and I was going to have a new aunt. He said, “From now on, you will call me Uncle Al, not Uncle Izzy.” And I resented Aunt Rhoda so for my early years because she took away my beloved uncle Izzy and gave me an Uncle Al [inaudible].

DS: And he moved out of the house.

AW: Oh, yes, yeah, but it was mostly that – because Uncle Sam had moved out too, early. This is Grandma [inaudible]. You can see the very old-fashioned –

DS: Like hand-tailored, lacy.

AW: Yes. There was something that grandma used, and I still think of it. Grandma had a tremendous bosom. She was short and very plump. When she'd come and stay with us, she would share my room, and I'd see her getting dressed. She was modest, but there were certain thing, and she would say, “Hand me my bust supporter.” That's what we know of as a bra today.

DS: [laughter] Oh, and there's a picture of you at Camp Emoh, which you talked about last time, you loved so much.

AW: Yeah, I loved it. Then, this is a sign of the times. My husband and I became engaged on my twenty-first birthday, and his brother, Manny's wife's younger brother, was graduating from Dartmouth in June. Herb’s whole family and the (Tallows?) – that was Franny's maiden name. The whole (Tallow?) family – they were all going up to Hanover for the graduation. Herb wanted to take me. My father said, “No way,” even

though we were engaged. We weren't married. And he said, but his folks were coming, and the (Tallows?) were all coming, and it would be perfectly proper. And my father said, “No way.” Herb's mother called my dad and said, “Eddie, it's okay. We're going to be there. They will be properly chaperoned.” So, my father let me go.

DS: Oh, there's a picture of you two.

AW: There’s a picture of the two of us. And we stayed the whole – both families stayed at an inn in White River Junction, and that's at the graduation. And then these are when we attended supermarkets. There's a Freeman family picture. There were a lot of uncles and aunts and their children, their married children [inaudible]. I had a pen pal when I was in high school. I had two, as a matter of fact. One was (Annalisa Morgenrote?), who lived in Germany, and until Hitler became very prominent and (Annalisa?) started expressing very antisemitic sentiments, we had a real steady correspondence for several years.

DS: In English? In Yiddish?

AW: I wrote to her in German to practice my German, and she wrote to me in English to practice English. Then there were times that we would switch so that we have the benefit of translating. Well, it was a two-way street, but I stopped writing to her when she started expressing all these antisemitic things. I had a girl from England. She was Scottish, and then [inaudible] – (Jean McLean?). I loved her daily. This was her school uniform. It's a jumper and a white long-sleeve shirt.

DS: Did you ever meet?

AW: We never met. People didn’t travel.

DS: Travel across the ocean was –

AW: Going to another town was a big adventure. These are my children. When they were young. That’s Jeanie.

DS: We didn't talk last time too much about your adult life. So, we can do that now.

AW: I think before we do that, you got to get me married.

DS: Oh, you got to get married before the kids are born. [laughter]

AW: That’s right. This was my class at the Beth Israel. We graduated in 1939.

DS: In your nursing – where are you?
AW: Here I am. I had hair down in my waist, and I used to roll it up [inaudible]. Sometimes I would braid it and put it around the top of my head. And when we were on duty, we had to wear hairnets. We had to have our shoes polished. This is our graduate uniform. In those years, you wore a complete uniform. You were identified as a nurse. Our student uniforms, which I wore until this last [inaudible], were blue and white checked dresses with white starched collars and cuffs that we had to string up on buttons, a white starched bib that covered the top of us, and then a white starched apron with a tight waist and very [inaudible].

DS: [inaudible] Betty Crocker. [laughter]

AW: [laughter] I never thought of that. We wore caps without a band. You didn't have a band on your cap until you graduated, and then you went into white.

DS: So, earning this outfit was a big deal.

AW: Not only earning this, but earning a cap. You had to be in training for six months before you earned your cap, and just having a white cap instead of being bareheaded was very significant. We were among the fortunate schools because we were allowed to wear white stockings and white shoes. Mass General, Brigham – they all wore

[inaudible].

DS: Oh, I’m looking ahead. Look at your wedding portrait. So beautiful.

AW: Yeah, yeah. This was the temple, Kehillath Israel, in Brookline. We had an enormous wedding, tremendous.

DS: With a beautiful silk –

AW: Oh, it's a satin dress –

DS: Satin.

AW: – with a train and a seated pearl crown holding the veil. But I had saved it, hoping my daughter would wear it, and my daughter – I’ll tell you – she was an early hippie. None of that for her. So finally, when we moved out of the house and into the apartment, I gave things away, and this was one of the things. Now, my granddaughter is getting married next summer, and she will have an outdoor on-the-farm wedding, so she wouldn't be wearing it either. I don't have regrets about giving it away.

DS: Lovely.

AW: My regret was that the kids wouldn't wear it. We had a very formal wedding on my parents' 25th wedding anniversary.

DS: Was your wedding?

AW: Yeah, which was not – it was really a mistake because each one should have their own day. After the folks died, I had mixed, ambivalent feelings. But anyway, this is Mother and Dad. My mother was very beautiful, and my brother, who looked just like Gene Kelly, and my young cousin, who was the ring bearer. This is my mother-in-law and father-in-law at our wedding.

DS: Just beautiful.

AW: And here I am seated. I still have this Bible. And the one concession that my daughter made to me was to carry my Bible in her wedding.

DS: What did it mean to you to get married? I assume that was a very significant event.

AW: Oh, it was the thing that I was born and raised to do. There was no thought that I wouldn't. I was supposed to, and there was no thought about whether we would decide to have children or not.

DS: Do you remember it being something in addition to the expectation, something that you personally wanted? That's a hard question to answer because they weren't really two different things, but in your memory now.

AW: Well, you mean how I feel about having gotten married when I got married? I wished I had waited. I went from my father's house to my husband's house. I never worked, had my own apartment.

DS: That's what everybody did, though, right?

AW: Yes, until World War II. But in retrospect now, I was most unready to be a wife, and certainly unready to be a mother.

DS: You described that last time.

AW: I had to find out who I was.

DS: Hopefully, in the next little part of our interview, you can fill us in on how you did that. Maybe it was after you were married, but you certainly did that.

AW: Long after.

DS: In the last sixty years.

AW: Long after. This is my daughter's wedding. She's carrying my Bible. My daughter and her first husband. [inaudible] Oh, well, let's get into my children. And we have some pictures of the kids when they were little.

DS: And if I could ask you, because certainly I and anyone who's listening to this would be interested in your kids, when you talk about your kids and your grandkids, if you can reflect on you about them because it's really about you and your life.

AW: If I mention them, you can see I'm smiling, and that's how I feel about them. We went through very difficult times with the children. Had I been older and wiser and more relaxed, it would have been easier for them and easier for me. I was the disciplinarian. My husband came home at night after working all day, and he was just pure pleasure for the kids. I was the one that had to enforce the rules. On the other hand, because I had felt so suppressed as a child growing up as a young adult, I encouraged them to have their own thoughts and make their own decisions as much as they were able to after we talked about things. But it always boomeranged because I wanted them to make their own decisions, hopefully, as I would make them for them. Jean was born in 1941. February ’41.

DS: Jean's your daughter.

AW: Jean’s my daughter. She is now going on fifty-nine. David was born in May of 1944, just before midnight. My birthday was the 6th, and his was the 5th. They're terrific today. They're wonderful. I'm very proud of them and proud of their kids, and I'll tell you about that later. When they were each three years old, we had pictures taken, and this is a picture of Jean, who was, at the time, docile and dear and helpful and welcomed her new baby brother because she was three. We didn't suffer any of the consequences of her feeling displaced or any of that. This is David at three. These were not color photographs.

The photographer's wife tinted them because that was all black and white. Here they are, high school pictures.

DS: Oh, look at those. Beautiful.

AW: My son, who has been bald since his early thirties, had a full set of hair as attested to by this. This is my brother and his wife.

DS: Your son looks like your husband.

AW: Yes, yes.

DS: Very much.

AW: Yes. I haven't seen these for so long. This is Jeanie’s bat mitzvah prayer. And Rabbi [Murray I.]Rothman was brand new at the time. He came that September, and this was in February.

DS: Is that unusual for a girl to have a bat mitzvah [inaudible]?

AW: She was the very first.

DS: She would have been. 1954, I think the first –

AW: Yeah, she was the first bat mitzvah at Temple Shalom. She has been married twice, and neither time to a Jewish boy. But part of that was my own ecumenical drive. When she was in the – this is a sign of the time. She was in the ninth grade at the Warren Junior High School, and one of her class – and they were having a dance, and one of her classmates called – Tommy (Theriot?) – and asked if she could come. She said, the usual, “Wait a minute, and I'll ask my mother.” And I said, “Jean, I don't think it's a good idea.” She said, “Why?” And I knew this kid. He was a nice kid. And I said, “Well, you know, he's not Jewish.” And she said, “Mother, you always told me I should be good

friends with everybody.”

DS: That’s a tough bind, huh?

AW: Yeah. This was something that she grew up with, I grew up with, and it was difficult because I had such ambivalent feelings. I couldn't tell her not to judge people for their basic values. On the other hand, I just hoped, and I did tell her that I hoped that she would find somebody who had all the good virtues, good values, who was Jewish. But when kids go off to school or – it turned out that her first husband graduated from Newton High School with her, so that it isn't quite a territorial thing either. This is my daughter. Well, that's later. That's Wendy. I don't think there's anything else in the first thing that I had. Oh, I am going to skip up to World War II.

DS: Okay. Yeah, I would like to hear about that experience.

AW: World War II was a time of bomb shelters, blackout curtains, and great anguish, great sorrow. There were gold stars in people's windows. You knew that that was a gold star mother living there; it meant that her son had been killed. My husband's college roommate and his closest friend was Arnold Bain, who retired later as a brigadier general in the Marines. He was at Guadalcanal. If you went to the movies, there was always news [inaudible] news.

DS: Newsreel.

AW: Newsreel. It was a newsreel always of current photographs taken at war scenes. I can remember when they showed – we knew where Arnold was some of the time, and he was in the South Pacific fighting Japanese. I would just sob and break into tears. It was just heart-wrenching to see these places because we were so worried about Arnold. This is his picture after Guadalcanal. He was six feet, four and a half inches, which was very tall at the time.

DS: He survived the war, obviously.

AW: He survived the war and subsequently got married, and as I say, retired as a brigadier general. There he is. This is a picture of my husband and his five brothers – his four brothers now. This is (Bert?), who came nine years after the twins. This is the oldest brother with his son, Robert, and Herb with our daughter, Jean, and Mother and Dad Winer.

DS: Did somebody have a house in Nantasket?

AW: Yes, yes. The Winers had a house, and we stayed with them the first couple of years.

DS: Oh, here was your house.

AW: This was our house on Evelyn Road in Waban, surrounded by woods on three sides. Later, the street was extended up to Commonwealth Avenue. But this was in 1944.

DS: That was the house where you described nursing – I think it must have been your daughter. Was it your son?

AW: Well, I nursed both of them.

DS: Lying on a cot while they were doing work in the house?

AW: That's exactly right. Did I tell you about when I was a violinist?

DS: I don't think so.

AW: I started studying violin when I was seven.

DS: Yes, because you loved music, as did your father. You did that.

AW: So, I told you that, and then I studied with two of the BSO Symphony players.

DS: I don't think you talked about that.

AW: Well, when I was a student nurse, I didn't take violin lessons. I would play when I had a chance. After I was married and after the kids were born, I studied. Well, I studied before going in training with Boris Kreinin, who was one of the first violins at the BSO. After David was born and we were out in Waban, I studied with another violinist at the Boston Symphony. As a matter of fact, I was working on the Mendelssohn concerto. I was really into it, except it was so difficult. I didn't know whether to stir the chicken soup, nurse the baby, or practice the Mendelssohn, and it was tearing me apart. I had to give it up.

DS: It was very hard to have other pursuits other than the home and the family.

AW: Absolutely, and no help. I was isolated. I was out in what the in-towners called the country, and no transportation.

DS: Right, because you only had the one vehicle, and your husband had it.

AW: That's right. On the other hand, there were such wonderful compensations because we had the radio, we had records, we played games. I did a lot of reading, and a lot of reading aloud to the children. Smoking was very fashionable. It was socially acceptable, and I smoked for forty-five years, except when I was pregnant. When I think back on how Madison Avenue manipulated an otherwise intelligent woman, I get [inaudible]. It was only when smoking became socially unacceptable. It wasn't the threat of disease that began to be recognized. It was just I began to hate myself being addicted and not being in control over this stupid thing that I needed a fix from periodically. So, I did stop smoking when I was – I had started when I was, I guess, in my middle sixties, or early sixties. Back in the 1920s, we shopped at small stores. Did I tell you I went shopping with my mother? She bought groceries in a little grocery store, fish in the fish market, and

went to the butcher.

DS: And the bakery.

AW: That's right. It was all small stores.

DS: Was it like that in the ’40s in Waban, or did they have supermarkets there?

AW: There were no supermarkets in Waban. There was no food store in Waban. My husband worked Saturday morning. When he came home, Saturday afternoon, I took his car. I didn't say our car. It was his car. I had accumulated a list of things to do all week long. If I needed thread on Monday, I had to write thread down, sewing thread, for Saturday. I ran around like crazy, doing the food marketing, doing the errands, doing all kinds of things. That was my time away from babies, and that was my time. It was filled with chores, but it still was my time. The first time my son went to nursery school, Jean was in kindergarten. The most luxurious feeling. I got into the shower and stayed as long as I wanted to because I didn't have to worry about where the little one was. Trying to think now. Did I tell you that my husband was a pianist?

DS: No.

AW: Very fine classical pianist.

DS: I don’t think you did.

AW: Very fine.

DS: Music must have been prominent in your home with your children. Both of you had a love for music.

AW: Yes, and my daughter became a professional musician. Herb and I used to have a wonderful game that we played, especially in the car. Because we both had been

exposed to so much music via records, and we also had season tickets to the symphony – we used to get a sitter in Saturday night, and we went to the symphony every Saturday night for many, many years. It was much more affordable then than it is now. We had a wonderful game that we played because we knew most of the classical symphonies, and we knew even non-symphonic works of classical composers. When we break in on the car radio – there were no tapes then – we'd guess. We didn't know who was playing, and we weren't sure whether it was Mendelsohn's second or the fourth. We knew that Brahms wrote four symphonies, but we weren't sure which one, and also which orchestra and which soloist.

DS: Wow.

AW: So, we used to guess, and we had a lot of fun. We had a lot of success. And the greatest fun was debating back and forth. Was it this? Was it that?

DS: You really shared that?

AW: Oh, yeah.

DS: That interest in local music. That's nice.

AW: Back in those days, doctors made house calls if you were sick or your kids were sick.

DS: Did you say you didn't have a telephone at first, or you always did in Waban?

AW: You couldn't get a phone during the war years unless there was a very ill person or an infant. And I had a brand-new infant and a three-year-old, so they gave us a telephone, but it was one phone that was on the first floor. If I was upstairs nursing the baby or downstairs in the basement –

DS: And the phone rang?

AW: I trained my daughter to say, “My mommy's busy now.” A couple of times she said, “My mommy's in the toilet.”I said, “No, just say I'm busy.” Our family life was so different from family life today. We all had breakfast together every morning. We all had dinner together every night once the children were beyond toddler age. We didn't have dinner until Herb came home from work, but that was a time of sharing. Sometimes a time of scolding.

DS: But it was still a time you were all together.

AW: Oh, yes. Oh yes. Sunday, Herb's family and my family came out for dinner. I was cooking three meals a day on Sunday. I was a little envious of some of my friends who were, by then, having brunch and then supper. We had no freezer, none of that stuff. We were the first in our families and among our friends to have a house.

DS: Really?

AW: And as we had little kids, they all had little kids, and they would come out to visit us on Sunday. No freezer meant no food stored up. We had a [inaudible] thing for Sunday night supper, and that was salmon salad. I used to buy salmon by the case. We didn't use tuna fish. Tuna fish was – we still thought of it as cat food. It was only after the war that we began to eat a lot of tuna, and salmon became more expensive.

DS: So, you didn't have a freezer, but you had some kind of icebox.

AW: I had a refrigerator.

DS: An ice box or an electric fridge?

AW: I had an ice box when we were at Nantasket the first couple of years we were married, but Waban, at the house, we had a refrigerator. My nephew, Robert, used to stand in front of it and salute, and I’d say, “What's that for?” He'd say, “I'm saluting

General Electric.” It was the earliest of the refrigerators with a round coil on the top.

DS: [laughter] General Electric.

AW: And of course, there was no freezer other than a little place for an ice cube tray. So, salmon salad was served to all the adults. Before we fed the adults, we fed the children. There would be anywhere from four – my niece and nephew, Robert and Joan, and my two – to maybe ten; those would be kids of our friends who lived in apartments at that time. We had a big yard. We had a lot of land, and it was safe. Sunday night, the kids ate first, and they always had pancakes. With the last of the batter, I would give each of them their name spelled out [inaudible].

DS: [laughter] Hang on one sec. We’re just out of this tape.

[Recording paused.]

AW: I was the oldest in my own family. My brother was younger. Because we had a house, all the family holidays were celebrated at our house. That was Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Passover, Shabbat, all that. I can remember other very significant things. In connection with Shabbat, did I tell you that Herb and I and the children did a Shabbat demo at Channel Four?

DS: No.

AW: Yeah, Rabbi Rothman had – we had invited the Rothmans shortly after they got here to a Shabbat evening, a dinner before services at Temple. We had developed our own little service at home. We sang a couple of songs, lit the candles, and said special prayers [inaudible]. The kids grew up with that. The kids would invite friends and families, especially non-Jewish families, and then we schlepped them to temple. It was hard because it was self-defeating. Instead of a restful Shabbat evening, it was hectic.

DS: I'll bet.

AW: There was one wonderful family that Jean invited. There were four boys, a mother and father, and he was a professor at Harvard. They were not Jewish, and I didn't know that six of them were coming. I thought that her classmate and his parents were coming. It was that day that she told me that they were all coming. It was wonderful, but it was burdensome.

DS: And you were responsible. The house, the table, the food.

AW: I was responsible, and we rushed off to Temple right after it. There was no dishwasher. I was there until the kids got older and [inaudible].

DS: What were you saying about Channel Four on television?

AW: We did a demonstration of a home family Shabbat service and dinner. I had to bring in the tablecloth and the wine and the [inaudible] cloth, and all the appointments. Did I say the candles? I had brass candlesticks that my grandmother had brought from Germany when she was eight years old. She came here in the early 1850s. My daughter has them now, and my daughter has my chanukiah, too. Did I tell you that the temple has an old-fashioned chanukiah? I was president of the Sisterhood the second year. When I left office, they wanted to give me a gift, and I said, "No, the temple needs [inaudible]." There is an old-fashioned brass Hanukkah chanukiah, and it's inscribed – my name and the year and that sort of stuff. But they have more modern ones there now. This one's dragged out, I think, but I don't think it's in use [inaudible]. The death of FDR [Franklin D. Roosevelt] was very significant. Did I talk to you about that?

DS: You didn't. No.

AW: That was the father of our country, next to George Washington. FDR was either adored – and by most people he was – or reviled, abhorred by staunch Yankee

Republicans. He was known by the ones that hated him as “That man in the White House.” Then we started Temple Shalom, and it was called Temple Shalom of Newton because there was a Temple Shalom [inaudible]. I might have told you that.

DS: Can you say a little bit about how you started it, or why you started it?

AW: There was no Reform congregation in Newton, and people – we had belonged to Temple Israel, and a lot of our friends had. A lot of people were not interested in a temple affiliation until their children came of school age.

DS: It's not any different now.

AW: Except more and more people are involved in adult activities at temple over and above socializing. It became a great social bond for those of us that started it. I think today, too, fills a social need, except there are many diversions. People have vacation houses. They belong to golf clubs, things like that, country clubs. But in those years, life was not totally devoid, but most people were back from the service, struggling to establish a homestead of some kind, and establishing a temple meant a lot of personal, financial, and time and energy sacrifice. What we did was we made calls of people that sounded Jewish.

DS: Just from a phone book?

AW: From a phone book. Among the people that we knew, we asked for them to put down lists or to make the calls themselves. When we found a substantial number of people interested, we had the first meeting, and that was in Bob Segal’s house. He became the first president. We had additional meetings. On, I think, the third or fourth meeting, we had a naming committee appointed of three people. My husband was one of them, and they chose the name Temple Shalom of Newton because I told you there was one in [inaudible]. When I think back of some of the names that they toyed around with – because they met in our house, in the library, and I couldn't help but listen in. We had

meetings at Andover Newton, as more and more people expressed interest. We had very little help from the union, a little help, but not an awful lot. But a lot of our members had had affiliations either with Ohabei Shalom – other Reform congregations. Then people were seeking a reform congregation who belonged to either Conservative or Orthodox, or their families had. They didn't belong, but they had been reared in that, and it didn't satisfy their needs. Gradually, we got it together. I think I told you we met at the Totem Pole Ballroom in Norumbega. Then we got started. We had no building. I told you we met in the churches. Friday night, we schlepped all the stuff for [inaudible] Shabbat. And Saturday morning, we carpooled when the kids were in religious school, and the kids went to religious school Saturday and Sunday because we couldn't fit them all into one place at the same time. Now I think they just go on Sunday, and they have two sessions on Sunday. The assassination of JFK [John F. Kennedy], RFK [Robert F. Kennedy, Sr.], Martin Luther King – it was such a mind-blowing thing when Jack Kennedy was assassinated. By then, we had a television set, and we saw everything that was going on. Unfortunately, you become inured to some of these things. The horror is always there. But you say, “Oh, another assassination.” It isn't, “Oh, my God, an assassination.” Because all I had ever known about the assassination of presidents was Lincoln, and that was so removed, except that I remembered that my grandfather had fought in the Civil War, and I related that to Lincoln. It was way, way, way back, and it didn't touch my world in the same way. Parenting. David was extraordinarily bright. We pleaded with the Newton system not to have him skip a grade. There was no program for gifted kids, so he had to skip. He did fine academically. He did fine, physically. Socially, it was very hard for him because he was a year younger. It wasn't until he got into college. Even through high school, it was hard. David had taught himself to read. We didn't know. He didn't speak until he was three, and we thought we had a child who was going to be a slow learner. And David and I, during his growing up, we were not the good friends that Jean and I were. Once David got into the higher high school years, we became much – we got along. Then I realized that he was breaking away and trying to grow up on his own. With

Jean, we were great friends until she got into high school, and then, wow, she was the first of the hippies about eight or ten years before hippiedom took over.

DS: What was important to you to teach or guide your kids about when you were raising them through their whole childhood? Were there guiding principles?

AW: One of the most important principles was honesty, and they knew that if they had done something wrong, there would be appropriate punishment and a feeling of disappointment on our part, but at least we would know that they were truthful. Proper behavior, which meant being moral, not doing things that were considered shameful, and things – when I think of what were considered shameful then. My daughter went to her first bar mitzvah – boy across the street from us – a month before her own bat mitzvah, and she wanted to wear nylon stockings. I said, “No way. You're going to be thirteen years old. No way.” One of my very – and she was so unhappy. I should have learned to say yes on some of the less important things. It wasn't until later that I realized I better learn to sift out and establish priorities about behavior. One of my friends convinced me. She said she's not going to be raped because she's wearing nylon stockings, and so she went in nylons. She was just a delightful kid. She'd come bursting home, bursting in the house, “Mom, guess what happened today?” And we'd have a long chat. I really enjoyed so much of her growing up. David would come in the house and say, “Hello,” and he’d go upstairs to hurry into his room because he didn't want to share. He shared a lot with my husband, and we shared a lot at the table, but on the one-on-one, he was breaking away from me. We were a lot alike. We both had high expectations of ourselves and everybody else. I had to learn through him, by teaching him that the world doesn't play according to all the rules. I had to learn that for myself. They both were really super achievers. They both took all advanced classes in high school. David had eight hundred in the college boards, the aptitudes. He had extraordinary marks. He was very gifted, but he had a behavioral problem. He was rebelling within a very square pattern because he was more traditional. Jeanie just flew with the wind. I had a lot of interesting activities as an adult. I

think I told you that I was very athletic growing up.

DS: And you loved the outdoors, which was unusual.

AW: Loved the outdoors. We did a lot of camping. I told you about that. I went to Girls' Latin School, and we're the only class in the history of Girls' Latin that has had a reunion every year since the fiftieth. I can remember that now because I dug out some pictures. We used to go to the beach. I loved the beach, and we used to rent a cottage the first couple of years after we had kids, before we had – when we had no children, we stayed with Herb's folks at the beach. Afterwards, when the kids went off to camp, my great joy was going off to the beach for the day. I would still be doing it with my little lunch if I were not on a special, wonderful heart medication that has made me so photo-sensitive. It's very, very dangerous for me to be in the sun. We used to go to the vineyard in the summer for two weeks with Bob and Jane Segel, and we became very close to Bob and Jane. All our closest friends were from Temple Shalom.

DS: So that was a very, very important part of your family life and your social life.

AW: Absolutely, absolutely. Sunday morning, when the kids were in school, in our own school, Sunday morning, after we had purchased the place, and we just had the old building in those years. Jeanie became a bat mitzvah in the old building. David became a bar mitzvah in the new building. But Sunday mornings, we used to invite people to come for broiled kipper brunch while the kids were in Sunday school. The house stank of that smoked fish, but we had a wonderful time. We did that for a number of years. It was great. We'd have four or five couples in, so there'd be ten or twelve of us. It was great. I always loved music. Herb and I went to Tanglewood. I think I told you I played high school basketball, and went to the Y to do swimming, and I played golf and tennis until my legs got real bad. Did I tell you about my interest in art?

DS: I don't think so.

AW: Because I've done most of this stuff.

DS: That painting is yours? That still life?

AW: Yeah, and this one and this one.

DS: Beautiful.

AW: [inaudible] right-hand corner.

DS: Too bad whoever is listening to this won’t be able to see you’re an amazingly talented artist.

AW: Well, anyway, I loved it. It was good your suggesting that I dig out pictures –

DS: Oh, good.

AW: – because it reminded me of all these things. Jane is going to be ninety in January. When she was forty, we started a birthday club. It was a group of people from Temple – just women – and we'd meet for lunch.

DS: On whoever's birthday?

AW: On whoever's birthday it was, and we’d buy the birthday “girl” – girl in quotation marks – a present for a dollar. You could do it then. And then it got to do two dollars. Then we decided you really couldn't get anything for two dollars with inflation. Besides, there wasn't anything that we could give the birthday person that we could afford to give that she needed or really wanted. So, we would just have a little cake with a candle, and we met either in each other's houses and then in restaurants. We still do it. Unfortunately, it has dwindled.

DS: Because of deaths?

AW: Yes.

DS: And fifty years after the founding of the synagogue, not everyone began as young as you were then.

AW: I was one of the youngest.

DS: Youngest, right.

AW: One of the youngest. I told you I started a Hadassah study group.

DS: You had mentioned you were involved in one.

AW: Yeah, I became a leader.

DS: That was for what? What was the content?

AW: Jewish history. It was just a marvelous experience. I learned so much, and that went on for a number of years. We met at night because I couldn't get out during the day, nor could they.

DS: Right. And were you self-taught? Or did you have the rabbi?

AW: No, no, no. We had no rabbi. I was self-taught. I had had some history in Sunday school, but I got hold of Abram Sachar's book, which was one of the best of the layman's Jewish history books. Gradually, I assembled quite a Judaica, which I gave to Temple Shalom library and to Brandeis. Abram Sachar had been the first president of Brandeis. I told you about – did I tell you about our Great Decisions study group?

DS: No, that you didn't mention.

AW: Oh, that is fabulous. That is just marvelous. We started that around 1958, maybe a year earlier, and that's based on the texts put out by the American Foreign Policy

Association. There are eight. Can you shut that off, and I'll just get one, so I can. [Recording paused.] A wonderful organization. It's the American Foreign Policy Association, and it puts out a text each year. The first year, I think we paid a dollar for the books. Now they're 12.50 or 12.95. Because I'm in a small apartment now, I can't save everything. These now go back to 1985, but we've used them every year. There are eight topics each year, and they vary. It's amazing how current everything is, even though the text has to be prepared months before the season starts. You can see how varied these –

DS: So, there'd be eight topics, just so the listener can [inaudible] in a book, and you would meet one time to discuss that topic.

AW: Well, what we decided was, since there were eight things and there used to be a concurrent discussion on channel two, starting in March, so for March and April, there would be weekly discussions. We didn't want to meet weekly, and so we met every two weeks, twice a month. We would start in March and go March and April. Then in May or June, we would get together with our spouses, and most of us had spouses in those years, and we'd have a soiree in [inaudible], and we did that in one another's homes. We all had good-sized houses. We decided we liked being together so much that we filled in all the other months with special things. I arranged for the group to have somebody guide us through the Young Israel building in Brookline. Have you seen it? It's a marvel of architecture, not on the outside.

DS: I haven't been inside, but I've seen the outside.

AW: The outside is nothing but Graham Gunn, who designed the west wing of the museum, designed this. He went to Israel for a year and studied Judaism. It's an incredible thing. So, we either go to a museum, do something of special interest, or have some kind of adventure. We've gone out to some of the historic restorations – Fruitlands, which is when they had the experiment.

DS: Utopia society experiment?

AW: Yeah. The transcendental.

DS: Right? Transcendent. Was this related to the synagogue at all, or this was separate, this Great Decisions?

AW: Almost every member of the synagogue is a member of Temple Shalom.

DS: You mean of Great Decision of the temple?

AW: This is not Great Decisions of the temple. This is a Great Decisions group separate, but it was started by temple members, and we have some people in the group that are not temple members. They either belong to other temples. We have one girl who isn't Jewish, and she's not around all that much now because she's a sculptress, and she has a studio in Italy. When Dorothy is here, she's with us. The format puts a tremendous responsibility on every member. You're honor-bound not to attend a meeting unless you've read the material. Each one of us takes a turn, rotating being the facilitator, doing extra research, and presenting a paper or topics for discussion on the general subject. Then we send in a tally of our opinions to the State Department. In all the years we've been meeting, we decided the State Department is not listening to us, but it has helped us to read and hear and see news with much more intelligence. We work ahead. I did the first thing on Bosnia-Herzegovina some years back, and I spent many, many hours at the library researching history, and there wasn't that much current except for the news. So, that has been a very enriching experience for me.

DS: So, learning and studying, both Jewishly and in general, whether it be music, world events, Jewish history – very important to you.

AW: Right. My husband and I became interested in elder hostels, and we went to one, which was marvelous at Princeton. Then we applied to a number of them after that. Each

time he was too ill to go. We had to cancel. But I couldn't not apply because it would have been very discouraging for him. Then, after he died, I've been on a number of elder hostels. I went to Israel for three weeks. He and I had been to Israel twenty-four years earlier. I just came back from the elder hostel last week, which was fascinating. It was connected with the Shelburne Museum outside of Burlington in Vermont. It was based on the collection at the museum, which is forty-seven acres with about thirty-seven buildings. The collection is based on the history, social, political, the literature, the music of the 19th century of New England. I thought I had read a lot of Walt Whitman. It was absolutely fascinating. We had classes in the morning. The first class was devoted to the literature of the period. The second class we had professors from the University of Vermont. The second class was devoted to the social and political history. And then in the afternoon, we went to the museum and saw the related artifacts and buildings.

DS: That sounds great.

AW: It was marvelous. I really learned a lot. Last year, I had been – I was interested in the Arcadian culture.

DS: I’m not familiar.

AW: Did I tell you about that?

DS: No, you didn’t.

AW: Did you ever read Longfellow's poem, Evangeline?

DS: I must have. I can't say I recall.

AW: “This is the forest primeval.” Well, this is the story of what happened to the Arcadians when they were expelled from Arcadia, and it's quite a story. It was a form of genocide, but of course, nothing on the scale of the genocide of the Native American by

the Caucasian that came. You saw this. I told you about studying Hebrew, and that was a great satisfaction. I learned when my kids went off to college that they came home only as visitors afterwards. I loved having them come, and I loved seeing them leave. One of my friends said, “You are the most unnatural mother. How can you love seeing your kids leave?” And I said, “Wait.” This was [inaudible]. Many years later, she said, “Chicken …” You know that I have a nickname, Chicken.

DS: No, I didn't know that.

AW: I got that when I was in camp. She said, “Chicken, you are the only honest woman.” Because by then, Herb and I had established a lifestyle so that when the kids came, it was a wonderful intrusion. But still, it was an intrusion. It was a different experience than our pattern of living. We were so lucky because we were married almost fifty-two years. I have pictures of him with the grandchildren. He loved being with all of his grandchildren. I told you my daughter was a maverick and hippie, and she and Philip went from – she had graduated from Sarah Lawrence. Did I go into any of this? Then got a master's at Harvard in music education. Philip had left Dartmouth because Jeanie and Philip were in all the Washington peace marches, and he was on an ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] scholarship. He felt fraudulent, having the Navy pay for his education, and he was so anti-war and anti-defense. He went to the Navy and said, “I want out. I'll work and pay you for what you paid so far for my two years of college.” And they said, “Doesn't work that way, buddy. You're court martialed, or else you can serve as an ordinary seaman.” So, he did. Jeanie left school in her senior year on a vacation to go to Scotland to visit him. We were mortified. We couldn't believe that she was going halfway around the world to see somebody that she wasn't engaged to or married to. Later, I realized she had a lot of courage because she came home to tell us that she was doing this. We weren't giving her any money. She used to play the piano at Columbia Teachers College for the advanced classes. She had arranged her classes at Sarah Lawrence so she could take the train in. She slept in one of the dorms on the floor overnight, and she earned money

that way. I remember saying to her, “I wish I could say to you, ‘If you do this, you can't ever come home,’ but I can't say this. You'll always be my daughter.” She called me from the airport, and she was just leaving. She said, “Mother, I'm calling to say goodbye.” I said, “If that's what you're calling to say, I don't want to hear it.” And I hung up. I have been so ashamed ever since. We discussed it many times, and she said, “Mother, don't you realize I had to go to see if this was real?” Well, many years later, I can understand it. It went against everything that I had been brought up to believe was right, honorable, appropriate, acceptable. I was so ashamed of what she had done.

DS: Because they weren't engaged or married, and she was visiting him?

AW: That’s right. Yes. I realize now that I was going on very Victorian values, but that was all I knew. And this was very hard for me.

[END OF INTERVIEW]