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Interviewee: Ella Levenson Schlosburg (b. 1920, Bishopville, South Carolina)
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Begin Tape

DR: Ella, I wanted to ask you . . . to tell me where your grandparents and parents came from, what their names were, and anything you know about them from the Old Country.

ES: My father's parents came from Pusville in Lithuania. You have the dates there that you can add later, if you want to give them to me. My grandfather came first, and then he sent for his family. They settled in Baltimore, and then they came south. He tried to farm and was unsuccessful—he loved the outdoors. His family before him were dairy people, and they loved animals and outdoors, so he wanted a farm. So he came south; he peddled. They walked until they were affluent enough to have a horse and a wagon, and they came on south. They were in Virginia—in fact, my father was bar mitzvahed in Norfolk, Virginia, because that's where they were.

DR: Your father, I think you told me, was about eight when he came over?

ES: He was younger than that. My grandfather put him in one door of the schoolhouse, and he came out the other, so he went with my father—his father took him with him. I think he was

trying to tame him. [Laughs.] Anyway, they were in Norfolk when he was thirteen and he was bar mitzvahed there. He could read his Hebrew very well, although I don't know how long he spent in Hebrew school. I guess his father helped him also, because he could always read Hebrew *beautifully*, and had a magnificent—what they call nigun, you know, they could sing. He loved music, he could sing, and he could sing all the prayers. It was really a pleasure to listen to him. And what he didn't know, he faked. He was [laughing]—I don't remember what you call it. Anyway, they came from Pusville.

DR: What were the names of your grandparents?

ES: My grandfather was Isaiah ben Moshe. That was my grandfather.

DR: Isaiah, son of Moshe.

ES: That's right. My father was Ephraim Zev ben Isaiah—Leb Isaiah. My grandmother's named Leah—my father's mother—and I don't know what her last name was. She came after my father [grandfather] on the boat with three children, and the fourth one was born in this country.

DR: Now, your great-grandparents, that is, your father's grandparents, would you tell me their names?

ES: Moshe and Nechanah Abbalovitz. That's kind of self-explanatory by the—like I told you yesterday, abu in Arabic is father; abba in Hebrew is father. So, the father of so-and-so was how these names evolved, and then it's the *son of*. When they got into Eastern Europe and they had to have surnames, it was Abbalovitz, which is “the son of Abou.” That all went by the board when they got to this country, because my grandfather's brother, who came here first, took the name Levenson. Where he got it from, we don't know, but he took the name Levenson. It might have been a friend, or his sponsor. So, when my father followed him, he also took the name Levenson. When he got to Ellis Island, he [the officer] said, “What is the name?” and he says, [mumbling] “Isaiah,” and they said, “Oh, we'll put down Isaac Levenson.” So, in this country he became Isaac Levenson.

DR: Your grandfather?

ES: Yes, yes. In this country he became Isaac Levenson.

DR: I'm trying to get an approximate date on the immigration. Your father was born, you told me, in 1884.

ES: Yes.

DR: And he was—

ES: About three years old, either three or four years old. He was a little fellow, no more than five.

DR: So they immigrated before 1890?

ES: Yes, I would think so. I have the immigration papers here somewhere. I mean the citizen—well, that doesn't help—

DR: It might. They sometimes have that.

ES: —citizenship papers.

DR: Yes, they do [inaudible]—

ES: Did they issue citizenship papers when he arrived, or later?

DR: Later, but they usually say on the citizenship papers “immigrated in.”

ES: I'll look for it for you.

DR: And how would you spell Pusville?

ES: [Laughs.] Any way you want to.

DR: I mean, would you say there's a T in there? P-U-T-Z or P-U-S?

ES: No, I would say it's P-U—Puz—Pus—Pusville.

DR: P-U-Z?

ES: S. Pusville. I don't hear a Z sound.

DR: P-U-S—

ES: —V-I-double L-E. Pusville. The town has been flattened, so you probably couldn't find it on a map, or anything else showing where it is.

DR: We could find an old map.

ES: I'm not sure if this would be on it, because I have a feeling it was a hamlet. My mother came from the same town. Her brothers came first and brought their parents over.

DR: And what were all of their names?

ES: Their name was not Cahn. [Ed.: pronounced “can”.] My grandfather, her father, was—there were two boys in Europe. His parents had two boys, and in Europe she had—either my grandfather or my grandmother had a—their parents had a sister who didn’t have any children, so the sister raised one boy and the other sister raised my grandfather, because if you had two sons, one went in the army. So one sister raised one and one sister raised the other. One was Kaplan; they settled in Chicago, that end of the family, and they took the name Kaplan.

My uncle—this is a good story, how my uncle took the name Cahn when he came over. They decided to—it’s C-A-H-N, which is strictly Irish. They decided they would open a saloon, because that’s a good way to make money in Baltimore. If you’re going to open a saloon, you pick an Irish neighborhood; you don’t pick a Jewish neighborhood [laughing], you pick an *Irish* neighborhood. So, in order to do business they took the name Cahn, C-A-H-N, which is Irish. That’s how they got the name Cahn. Then they brought their family over. The two older boys came, and then *they* brought their family, instead of the father coming and bringing the children. That’s the reason Mother didn’t come to this country until she was about fifteen, I would say. Then she was married by the time she was nineteen, I think.

DR: So she came first to Chicago?

ES: No, they’re two different families; they separated. The other, my grandfather’s brother—they were completely separate families because they had to separate the boys on account of the army. *That* family went to Chicago and was the name Kaplan, and some of those went to Canada after those boys grew up. They had a lot of boys, I forget how many sons. I knew some of them *way* yonder, years ago. In fact, I use the taiglech recipe from one of their wives.

DR: Do you think the name in the Old Country had some relation to Kaplan and Cahn?

ES: I don’t think so. I’m trying to remember for you whether it was my grandmother’s maiden name [that] was Zeidel or it was my grandfather’s name. One of them was Zeidel, because we had some Zeidel relatives in this country who kept that name.

DR: So the Cahn part of the family—

ES: I told you, he took the Cahn because my uncle went to open a saloon in an Irish neighborhood.

DR: In—

ES: In Baltimore, yes. That’s how we got the name Cahn. It had no relationship whatsoever to the original name—none. That’s how they got [it]. That’s what my uncle told me. Mother’s brother told me that. So they came over; there were ten in the—my father’s family was three boys and a girl. My mother’s family was six girls and four boys, the two older boys being from a first wife, and the other eight from my grandmother, Musla, or Margaret, as they Anglicized it.

DR: They Anglicized Musla—

ES: —to Margaret, yes.

DR: I'm looking for the list . . . we had the ten children in the Cahn family: Ellis, Julius, Harry, Albert—

ES: The four boys. There was Leah, Elsie, Vita or Vinnie—however she wanted to call herself when the mood struck—Nettie, Irene, and Bessie. Did I leave any girls out?

DR: That's all that we—

ES: Yes, that's six girls.

DR: And they all lived to maturity?

ES: Oh, yes. They all had great longevity. . . . The first, oldest brother died in 1938, and that was a doctor's error, you know. The rest of them lived to—Mother's oldest sister lived until she was ninety-five or ninety-six. They all lived fairly good long lives. Of course, Mother was ninety-four—ninety-three, ninety-four—but my father's family is the one with the longevity. They *all* lived into their nineties.

DR: And the children in the Levenson family—would you name them?

ES: My family or—

DR: No, your father's family.

ES: There was Joseph. My father's brothers was Joseph, Edward—

DR: Edward was the young one.

ES: Edward is the young one. Bessie was the daughter. I was thinking of my grandfather's family, and that's the reason I got mixed-up. See, my grandfather's family was a Joseph also. There was a Joseph, a Getzel, Isaiah, and a Yitzhak. Yitzhak remained in Europe. His family—except for the daughter who went to Israel in the early '30s, the rest died in Europe. If she had any relatives, they all died in Europe during the Holocaust. But she was one of the pioneers, which they call chalutzim—are you familiar with that term?

DR: No.

ES: They were called chalutzim; they were the young pioneers. They formed these clubs in these little Eastern European towns. They were the socialists, they were gung ho, they were going to Palestine to build, and they went. They endured many, many hardships—many. I've had my cousin sit and tell me stories and it really—how they survived at all, I don't know.

DR: During the war, were you aware that the family was in jeopardy?

ES: In Europe?

DR: Yes.

ES: Well, like I told you early on, in 1938, we were well aware of what was going on, and it always amazed me that the whole world wasn't aware. As I told you before, our house was like the house beside the road—everybody came. Everybody came. We knew things were fermenting in Europe. I won't say we actually knew the *extent*, but when Mother's cousin stood in my grandmother's doorway—he came, bringing his daughter, earlier on, and left his boys for a better education in Europe; they were to come later—and when he came and stood in the door and said, “They took them off the ship” in Yiddish. In 1938, we knew the world was collapsing, because you don't take people off a ship to send them to Florida for a vacation. We had all these people, as I say, c—people aren't aware of how good the Jewish grapevine is. They just d—they don't believe it. And these things filter through. If people had only listened, they would hear. Sometimes people don't have the opportunity to hear.

We were in a unique situation. Every meshulach—that's a person who collects for yeshivas and hospitals and orphanages and old age homes—they all stayed in our house. They all came to our house, and they also came with wonderful stories. They were *great* storytellers. They could spin yarns of what's going on in the world. We knew what was going on then in Palestine, and we knew what was going on in the shtetls in Lithuania, and we knew what was going on in Russia, and we knew what was going on all over the world. And we were here in the middle of South Carolina, in the country. We listened. I guess people in other parts, where it was busier and had more to do, just didn't hear.

DR: I wonder also if *The Forward* was reporting?

ES: I don't remember, I can't tell you. I don't know what *The Forward* was reporting at that time, I really don't. They probably were. I think I read something about that, and I can't remember where I read it. I've read some of Isaac Bashevis Singer, and it's something on his life, and I think it was mentioned in that thing.

DR: Let me just clarify one thing—when your cousin said, “They took them off the ship,” who is the “they”?

ES: His wife and two sons.

DR: But I mean who took them off the ship?

ES: From wherever they were departing, whether Poland—you know, wherever the exit was. I don't know exactly where the exit was.

DR: In other words, they never left Europe.

ES: They never left Europe. They never left Europe.

DR: Because there were also instances of ships arriving in America and not being received.

ES: Oh, yes. The famous one, you know, there were nine hundred and ninety nine people and they didn't have room in this country for them, which they should hang their head in shame. It was an outrage. There was a hue and a cry, but nobody listened. Those people were sent back to Europe. They tried to get in at Cuba, they tried to—England wouldn't take them. United States wouldn't take them. Nobody would take them.

Jews came to this country, because the ones that came first swore to take care of those that came afterwards, and they did. That was the only reason they let as many come in as they did. You had to have a sponsor; somebody was responsible for you. And for years, there was no such thing as public assistance for Jews. They took care of themselves or took care of each other.

In New York, the stories are endless about, I don't care who you were, you came from the Old Country, you had a landsman; there were five in the apartment, you brought in four more, and they all stayed in the same apartment. There was always room. Now, nobody has room for anybody. [Laughing.]

DR: It's a very tightly-knit community.

ES: Yes. Well, it was self-preservation, don't you think? [Inaudible] to make it tightly-knit—kind of a self-preservation thing?

DR: And also an embattled enclave, if you want to say that—people who feel that there's a threat from outside, who band together. I think that strengthens the community bond.

ES: Yes, I think that does too.

DR: Tell me a little bit about how your family wound up in Bishopville.

ES: I don't know. My grandfather first peddled through here. By the time he got this far I think he had a horse and wagon already. He died between Bishopville and Camden. The wagon turned over on him, and before proper medication could be received, gangrene had set in and he died. He had broken up his leg and I don't know what else.

So my father stayed in the South. He acclimated himself well and people seemed to like him. Everybody liked him. There was no two ways—he was a very likeable person. He got along

with everybody. He was raised in a kosher home but if he went to your house and they served him ham, he ate the ham [laughing] and didn't say anything.

There was always the story—he first started taking Sam out on the truck with him, and they'd go to the farmers' houses *early* in the morning before the farmers went to the field. They were selling cows and horses and mules and they were trading and, *always*, when you went into a farmer's house: "Come to breakfast, come in and eat breakfast with us." So he went in and they were passing around big platters of grits and this, that, and the other, and Daddy's putting it on his plate, and put it on Sam's plate, and Sam got a mouthful of something and he said, "Daddy, Daddy, what's this?" He had a mouthful of fatback and he didn't know what it was. My daddy turned to him and said, "Chew it and swallow." [Laughing.]

DR: He had to be adaptable.

ES: He was very adaptable, he really was—well, he liked people, and people liked him. I don't know what it was, but he just got along with everybody. . . . When a Jew is invited to join the Ku Klux Klan, you know, you get along with everybody. [Laughing.]

DR: Tell me that story about how he got invited.

ES: I don't know, except that he got invited, which he declined. [He] said he didn't have time to go to meetings. He was in the store most of the time, he had a wife and so many children that he had to make a living for [laughing]—this great story. But—

DR: Do you know when it was?

ES: No. It was early on, *early* on. Daddy was so good with livestock, we could ride on the road and see a mule a half a mile or mile away and Daddy said, "That mule I sold that man in such-and-such a time; I know that mule." He could recognize animals like you recognize people—had just absolutely a knack for it. If it was on four feet, my daddy could recognize it. He couldn't remember your name. He didn't care what your na[laughs]— You know, he liked you fine—maybe he didn't quite—but he knew that mule out there in that field.

DR: It strikes me, hearing you talk, that at least two of your brothers have inherited that.

ES: Yes, the youngest and Sam. They both inherited that lo—well they all love animals. . . . Mother tells the story, when—she had two boys and a girl first. My youngest brother is six years younger. She'd have Leonard and Sam on harness and me in the carriage, and there was not a dog or a baby that my oldest brother didn't want to bring home. Every baby he saw, he thought we ought to take home with us, and every animal he saw. [Laughs.]

We had a goat and he wanted to bring him in to dinner, and Mother said he couldn't bring him in to dinner. "He doesn't wear shoes; you can't bring him in." So they took their clothes out and dressed the goat up in pants and shirt and shoes and brought him in. [Laughing.] Mother had

a fit. We had goats. We had everything. I can't tell you how many kinds of dogs and cows and lambs.

We took Sam up to Hopkins to Dr. Max, and he said he had to have this—he had a bad stomach—had to have goat milk. Came back, Daddy bought two nanny goats, and my mother milked the nanny goats. There are pictures of her milking the nanny goats.

DR: You have a picture?

ES: [Inaudible], let me tell you, when we put up the stone, my cousin came from Greensboro and she—I was busy; I don't know how many people were in this house; I was fixing tea and cookies, cake—and she put these pictures out on the kitchen [counter]. I said, "Leave them all out there; when I get through, I'll look." When I turned around, they were gone! I mean, they were cleaned up. Who took—everybody grabbed. Caroline had some, I think, with the cow and she was supposed to have somebody make copies, but that was the end of that. I don't know where those pictures went.

DR: Do you ever have family reunions? Would these people ever come back?

ES: For the—my family?

DR: Yes.

ES: Yes . . . we used to. It's not so much with this generation, but with *my* generation, every time there was a simcha, a bar mitzvah, anything, the *entire* family came. The second generation, "Well, I don't know cousin so-and-so, so I'm not going to invite them, because it's fifty dollars a plate." We're already at this crap about the big splash that I don't approve of. You can't invite everybody, you have to limit it, and all this other jazz, which I think is wrong. I'd rather go back. "Well, I don't know so-and-so, so I'm not going to invite them." But what we did, we invited *all* the cousins, and *all* their children, and *all* the aunts and uncles, and we'd all get together. Now they don't. And they're really missing something. "I don't like my cousin so-and-so." I said, "Who cares? She may not like you either, you know. [Laughing.] Invite her anyhow, it's family."

DR: What I was thinking is maybe there would be an opportunity to ask people to bring their pictures back, to look.

ES: [Laughs.] Yes, to look. Well, my aunt died in Georgetown. She was married to this Frank Danzig. His nephew, who inherited the whole kit and caboodle, packed up the pictures and sent it to my cousin—*her* pictures; she had a lot of old pictures—sent it to my cousin in Washington, and she put it in her attic. She is a judge, Judge Joan McAvoy. And Ms. Joan has not gone through the pictures or dispersed them in any manner. She's got them all stuck in the attic and I don't know what will happen to them. That's my aunt that had most of the *old* family pictures.

DR: You could use this project as an excuse, and say there's this researcher that's been bugging you about seeing old family pictures—and we're not taking them, we just want to look at them, and make copy photographs of a few of them

ES: I might see my cousin and see what I can do. . . .

. . . .

ES: These girls are much younger than me. It's my mother's youngest sister's children, and my brothers hardly know them. But I do have a cousin that can ask her, that she's close to. . . . It would be her cousin's son. He's a bachelor; he won't get married. He's a bachelor of forty-something now. He was an only child of an only child and—I don't know why you want to put this on tape—but his townhouse is phenomenal, phenomenal.

DR: Where does he live?

ES: In Washington. He's an architect.

DR: Tell me more about the establishment of the store in Bishopville.

ES: I wasn't as familiar as Sam was with that story about the banker. But Daddy bought that—eventually bought it from the bank. It was a store, and Daddy was a poor—and everybody liked him. I think a lot of them felt they were going to get him for a son-in-law. [Laughs.]

DR: He started the store in 1910?

ES: Yes, 1910.

DR: And he was not married?

ES: No, he was not married. In those days you did not marry until you established yourself. It was my father's idea—I don't know about anybody else's—but until you could support a wife and children, you didn't get a wife and children. He was a very down-to-earth person when it came to things like that.

He gave Chanukah gelt to all the grandchildren and my oldest brother was divorced. [Inaudible] and I said, "You need to give Elizabeth Chanukah gelt too." "Who sees her, who knows her?" I said, "You give it to her anyhow." "I don't know where to give it to her. I'll give it to you. When she grows up, if you feel like it, you can give it to her, but I can tell you right now," he tells me, "I'm wasting my time and your time. It's gone. Forget it and go on." That was his philosophy. I tried. I didn't succeed. I tried to give it to her and I didn't succeed.

DR: How did your father meet your mother?

ES: There was a family, of course, a Jewish family in Baltimore with six girls, four of which were eli—all but the youngest was eligible for marriage, and all the Jewish boys, like anywhere else in this world, they went where the girls were. He was friends with . . . one of the brothers and they visited the girls, so he knew Mother from there. Her two brothers moved to South Carolina and she came to visit, and that's—Mother always tells how Daddy used to bring her candy from the store when she was visiting her brothers.

DR: They moved to Bishopville also?

ES: Yes, she had two brothers that lived in Bishopville with their families.

DR: Even before she moved?

ES: Yes, even before she married Daddy. Although one of her brother's oldest daughter, the—I guess he got married before Daddy, because—I don't know whether one of them did or not, but his oldest child and I are the same age. Then the other brother, his oldest daughter and my oldest brother are about the same age, so I think they got married about the same time. Except I believe they were married first, because Mother came down to visit.

DR: Do you know anything about the details of the courtship or marriage?

ES: No.

DR: Where they were married?

ES: They were married in Baltimore. They went back to—she went home. His mother, of course, was still there, and his family. His uncles and aunts, and sister and brother, everybody was in Baltimore except him. So the wedding was in Baltimore, and then they moved south to the house that Mother—it was renovated and renovated; it was the same house she came [to] as a bride.

She came from the city, and she'd walk down the street and—Daddy had brought a bride—and everybody would say, "Good morning, Mrs. Levenson." She'd go—with her nose in the air. Daddy said, "Nachanah, it's not like Baltimore; you speak when people speak to you. You're in the South now. They all know you; they don't mean any harm." It didn't take her long; she caught on. But she was from the city. You just didn't talk to people unless you were properly introduced. You didn't know them, you didn't talk to them.

DR: Is the house still standing?

ES: Yes.

DR: Who lives in it now?

ES: We sold it after Mother died. . . . Mother kept saying—she had these sisters down in Georgetown, old-maid sister, and they were older than she was. She said, “They need to go in a nursing home. I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll go to the nursing home; maybe they’ll come with me.” I said, “Mama, they haven’t paid their dues; you have. You stay in your house; they can do whatever they want to.” “Yes, but if I go, maybe they’ll go with me.” I said, “Mama, you stay in your house. You’ve paid your dues; you’ve got four children; you don’t need to go to any nursing home.” So we kept the house until she died and then we sold it.

DR: Did she live alone until she died?

ES: Yes.

DR: She was able?

ES: No, the last three years we had around-the-clock help, nursing, and that was not a problem. The maid that worked for Carolyn for thirty years and raised her children had retired, but when Mrs. Nettie got sick she came to stay, [laughing] she came *back* to work. She stayed with Mother. She came every day from seven until three—we had three shifts—I guess from seven to three, because that was the most important time for her and Mama. Mother had macular deterioration and she got to where she couldn’t see. Louise can barely read and write, but she could read the Bible. She’d sit there and read the Bible and Mother would listen. Mother would turn on—thought Billy Graham was great. She did. She listened and learned from everybody. That’s what made her so intelligent. You can learn something from everybody. You don’t have to—just pick and choose. Everybody has something to teach you. I grew up with, “And what did *you* learn today?” [Laughing.] If you don’t think that won’t give you a guilty conscience [laughing]. “What did you do today? What did you accomplish today?”

DR: I think that’s another aspect that’s a real common denominator in these Jewish families, a kind of ambition, a drive to achieve.

ES: I think it’s a drive for knowledge, just pure and simple, that’s all. Just to learn for the sake of learning. I would find that’s very prevalent amongst Jewish, especially older ones. Just learn for the sake of learning.

DR: Would you describe the Sabbath ritual in your parents’ house?

ES: Yes. You saw me pull the sheets today—today is Thursday. The cleaning was done on Thursday, because Friday was cooking. [Laughing.] I just pull the sheets on Thursday—don’t ask me why, except for that. The cleaning was done, and my mother baked bread, my mother made the gefilte fish. Friday night we had her challah. As I said, my grandmother, Daddy’s mother, lived with her, and she was really a professional baker. Our bread was *beautiful*, just pictures to behold. We always had two challahs and small ones for the children so they could make their berachah. I used to sit through three kiddushes every Friday night—first Daddy, then he’d make

the boys get up and say kiddush. At my table, you had to sit through three, because they had to get practice, they had to say kiddush.

There was gefilte fish and the chicken soup and the chicken and the tzimmes and everything else that went with it. But as years went by, and people did just not eat that heavy, because they didn't work that hard, these things fell—you know, you had one. If you had fish, you had fish; if you had chicken, you had chicken. Daddy would say kiddush and, of course, Mother would always light the candles. We *always* lit candles on Friday night.

DR: You told me she routinely lit three?

ES: Three. She routinely lit three candles and I've never seen anybody else do it. That was something of hers. And she did not say just the blessing over the candles; she had a lot more to say, which she did not tell anybody. That was hers.

DR: Meaning it was silent prayer?

ES: No, it was kind of—you don't pray Hebrew silently. *That* you don't do; that must be aloud. But I could not hear what she was saying.

DR: The three candles were for what?

ES: I always thought they were for home and children: the father, the mother and the children. I don't know. She lit three candles. In the later years, she would light—we had a set of candelabras under the sideboard in the dining room, and it was six—she'd light all six of them, and say, "Carolyn, Carolyn, come here." [Laughing.] She wanted to be sure, because Carolyn didn't know the prayer, but she would take her through it.

DR: What about some of the other holidays? You've already described—

ES: We had our sukkah and Mother made challah, and Mother made bagels, and Mother made tzimmes, and Mother made all kinds of the European dishes. We had them all. I don't know if you've ever heard of them, but the miltz. Every part—the heart was cooked. Have you ever heard of euter? That's the bag of the cow. If it is deveined properly, it can be cooked, and my daddy thought that was a delicacy. This is all European.

Mother's father was a butcher and she knew how to kosher an animal. She could kosher even a hindquarter. She knew a good piece of meat when she saw one. For Sukkot we built a sukkah . . . we made hamantaschen for Purim. The mun was sent in from Baltimore because nobody around here ever heard of poppy seed. For, I forget which holidays, they would send bub; it's like a large lima bean. This is all Eastern Europe. When I was growing up, it was called nahit—that's the garbanzos, they called them. Everybody uses this now. Nobody heard of it when we were growing up but us, and that was sent in from Baltimore. Daddy would order herring; it would come in a great big keg.

Oh . . . Mother made her own wine. She had the kegs and she made her own wine. She could make wine out of almost anything, but Daddy wanted—she wanted cherry wine, so Daddy ordered the Italian wine cherries from New York and they would come in a wooden crate, like this. I was a very little girl; I could reach up on the counter and get my hand into those cherries. They were so rich, your hand would come out red. These were not fresh cherries, they were called wine cherries. I'd reach up and stick my hand in and bring it out red, but I had some cherries too. Mother would make wine from cherries; she made delicious sweet wine. She made peach brandy from peaches and from grapes. She would have two kegs going. [Laughing.] She had a little brewery in that closet. She had a dark closet and she had a little brewery in there. I can see it now. You take this spigot, and you tie cheesecloth around it so the gnats don't get to it. I I could see her now drawing off the keg.

DR: Were you kids allowed to taste the wine?

ES: Of course. Oh yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Of course we were. I took my first drink with my daddy. He said, "Have a drink." [Laughs.]

DR: Schnapps?

ES: Yes. I could turn up a glass [laughing] as good as the next man. [Laughs.]

DR: Tell me more about the decorations you make for the—

ES: For the sukkah? She would make them out of eggs. She would blow the—get the inside of the egg out. You stick a pin in one end and stick a pin in the other and you can blow the inside of an egg out, if you do this very carefully, without breaking up the shell. Then she would take the shell and make a hole in the back and in each side. In the back, she would take crepe paper—I just remember we had pink birds—make a fan shape out of the crepe paper and have that for the tail. Same for the wings. Then she'd take dough and make a head and a beak, and then she'd take string and put it around the wings and tie it to the top of the sukkah.

We'd have pomegranates in the sukkah; we had pomegranate trees and corn stalks, sugar cane. Then we'd decorate with the sugar cane. Uncle Harrison would bring us sugar cane when she wanted it. Instead of just corn, sugar cane was standing in the corners. [Laughing.] We kids liked that. That's delicious. You ever had any sugar cane?

DR: Oh yes, my kids love that.

ES: I can't remember what else it was decorated with. I guess apples, too. I can remember that very well. And then on Simchat Torah, we had quite a community in Bishopville, and everybody did things. I was in the Chanukah plays—we had it at the opera house. And for Simchat Torah, Daddy's cousin—reams of paper that you pulled off for the stores . . . they came in these round rolls and, inside the rolls, were these two—on each side was this wooden shaped thing that held it out. And this wooden shaped thing had a—it was cone-shaped, wide at one end, and it had a

hole where you put the metal thing through to put it on the rack so you could pull the paper out. He took those, cut off broom handles, and stuck in one end, then he'd put candles in the other and we had things to march around with [laughing]; the little children had things to march around with on Simchat Torah.

There wasn't a holiday that was not celebrated. Not a holiday went by. Mother would make the round challah with crowns for Rosh Hashanah. Long challahs with strips across it she was a ladder to get to heaven for Yom Kippur. Then, for Purim, was the birds on the challah. She had birds with nests—*not* for Purim, for Sukkot. For Purim, she made hentelach. She'd take the dough, cross it over—make a heavy roll and cross it over—and then she'd score out hands that are hands in prayer out of the challah.

DR: Which holiday was that?

ES: Purim.

DR: What's the symbolism?

ES: I don't remember. I think I'm right—that was Purim, because for Sukkot we had the bread with the birds on it, because it was joyous.

....

DR: On the High Holidays, where did you celebrate?

ES: We celebrated the High Holidays—the Masons of Bishopville let us use their hall, and they let us keep the ark up there, the ark with the Torah. We had the candelabra, and we had our books, and it was a big hall, a big room, a meeting hall so to speak, it was very big and had all the facilities, and it had an anteroom where all the men would go smoke [laughing]. It was upstairs.

DR: Upstairs from where?

ES: Upstairs over the stores. I'll show you when you get there. The thing of it is, the women sat on one side—this was voluntary; nobody told them it had to be—but the women sat on one side [laughing], and the men sat on the— The important ones sat down in the middle, because they were the *important* ones.

There was a window way over there towards the end of the room, and my father positioned himself [laughing] in the window—he had his own table; nobody took it—and he positioned himself way over there. He didn't want to be in the important—because he could catch a nap up there. [Laughing.] Every now and then we'd hear from him, and Mother would look over and say, "Frank!"

And then [laughs], I can remember so well, I can still feel her hand—I'd come up; always had a new dress; I don't care how hard times were, I had a new dress—but I can still feel my

mother's hand on my wrist making me keep still. I can still feel [laughs]—still! “Don't move, don't make any noise.” If you went down, you can go down once and come back, but the second time, you go down, you go home. No playing [laughs], no playing. As I got older, I was sent home before Nela on Yom Kippur so I could get the table set and food on, and the greatest temptation in the world is to eat before I went outside to look to see if there was a star.

DR: But you didn't?

ES: I didn't eat, *no!* I would go outside to see if there was a star because . . . if I saw the star, I didn't wait for the Havdalah or the [speaking Hebrew] which is said after the holiday, I didn't wait for any of that. I saw the star, so I went and got a nosh.

DR: So at these services—yesterday you drew up a list of some of the families—describe for me some of the other Jewish families and anything you [inaudible]—

ES: We had a shoemaker—that was Steinberg; it was he and his son. And then we had Louis Schlesinger, who had a general merchandise store, like cloth and women's dresses, that kind of store. We had Frank Sindler, who had a haberdashery. . . . And we had another Levinson family, who had that same type of store where you had the general merchandise.

My father's store was the only one that sold everything: a little fatback, harness, collars, plows, things for the farm, and groceries, more than anything else. Then it evolved into things to wear, but mostly it was food. I can remember the big rounds of cheese. It was the big round with a wooden cover, and it had a slicer that looked like a guillotine [laughing] or something—it came down and sliced it. That's the best cheese; you could never find it again. Oh, I loved that cheese.

They sold what they called johnny cakes and the johnny cakes was a huge cracker, kind of sweet, kind of like a vanilla wafer—maybe not quite as sweet—and, oh, about four inches around. It was not a little thing. And if you put cheese on one of those johnny crackers, you had a meal. It was *delicious*.

Daddy [laughing] would order a barrel of herring for our own use. Other Jews in town would say, “Frank, can we get some herring?” and some of the old folks, the black, white old ones would come in, “Mr. Frank, I got such a bad backache, I don't know what's wrong with my backache.” “Well, if you eat some of this stuff I got here, it'll get rid of your backache.” So Daddy would sell them a salty herring. He knew if they drank enough water, they'd get rid of their backache [laughing], especially if it was caused by a kidney.

DR: I'm going to interject here—because I want to get back to the families—but tell the story about his remedy for poison oak.

ES: Sweet cream and alum was his remedy for [that]. And in the store, there was a huge drum where they sold kerosene, and if Daddy got a cut, or anybody, Daddy would take them over there and pour the kerosene on it and they were all right. Don't ask me why it didn't kill them, but it cured them. Daddy was *very* good with animals and very rarely did he ever need a veterinarian to come over. He knew what to do, and he taught my brother. He knew what to do for animals.

DR: And apparently for some human animals.

ES: It's the same thing. I went to my brother one time and said, "Daddy said send him some medicine for the pony; something's wrong with the pony's eye." He had the pony for Joe, I think, at that time. I said, "God knows, my eyes got bloodshot coming up here." So he went up to his animal hospital and he sat there a minute and took out a thing and said, "Open your eye." He put some stuff in and it cleared up. He said, "Here, take the rest to the pony." We used the same stuff.

DR: You had said that his mother had a reputation for knowing cures?

ES: Yes, Daddy's mother. They would ask her to talk off a wart or a ringworm the kids would get. She took care of all these little problems.

DR: And she was living with you?

ES: Yes.

DR: I wonder if there was some—

ES: There could have been some con—my daddy was very good at taking care . . . birthing animals. He delivered the animals. If they had a problem in their delivery, he could turn the animal around and deliver it properly. He was good at it. His father, his grandfather—they all [inaudible] animals way back. They were supposed to have been dairy people but I guess, in a small shtetl, if you had two cows, you became a dairyman. But they all liked big animals and they had big animals. I don't visualize them being affluent dairy people [laughing], you know, you have to say "dairy people." Like Daddy had a driver for the truck; he did not have a chauffeur. [Laughing.]

DR: But it's interesting to me that your grandmother seems to have been something of a healer or—

ES: Yes, I think so. She was sort of mystic, a little bit.

DR: —a mystic. I was going to say sorcerer, but that's the wrong connotation.

ES: A mystic, because I think it comes from—she was from the country, so to speak. My father was from the shtetl. How big could that have been? She was on a farm, too. She came from a farm.

DR: And then your father, although maybe not as mystical—

ES: No.

DR: —was a healer—

ES: Yes, he had a good technique. He was good at things like that. But it was so funny—hurt your hand? Kerosene. [Laughing.]

DR: Tell me some more about the families because [inaudible]—

ES: Let me see, the Ginsbergs came—somebody came and opened a big department store, in quotations: “depar—” They sold fabrics, they sold ladies’ clothes, and Sam and Fannie Ginsberg came down to run it. The department store, I think, kind of went out—the guy went broke, and Sam and Fannie wanted to remain, so they opened a dress shop and they remained in Bishopville.

Uncle Julius and Uncle Ellis Cahn, they also had stables, where they sold horses and mules. Uncle Ellis was more adventuresome. He went into real estate up in Washington, D.C., and he traveled back and forth between Bishopville and Washington—it was ridiculous.

Louis Schlesinger, I told you, and Otto Schlesinger, they both had these stores where they sold fabric, and women’s and men’s clothes, and Morris Schlesinger was in the mule business. Meyer Schlesinger, in my time, was already an older man. He was married to my grandmother’s sister and he didn’t do anything but sit and read tehillim . . . with his Hebrew books and read.

DR: Tehillim?

ES: Tehillim. That’s psalms.

DR: Psalms.

ES: Yes. I don’t remember what the Bermans did. The Steinbergs, I said, were shoemakers. I don’t remember what the Cohens did. . . . Max Traub also farm equipment and mules and plows and stuff like that. Ben Levinson’s store, Frank Levenson’s store—Daddy did both. Krasnoffs [Sollie] also—they had a *very* nice store. My mother used to go up there and buy me Buster Brown shoes. I don’t remember what Oscar Levy did. Harry Robinson, he was a junk dealer. He was my father’s uncle.

DR: What was his name?

ES: Harry Robinson, my father’s uncle. Yoffee had a store. Copeland had a store, I don’t know what kind. Katz had a store. Katz’s store was something like my father’s, where they sold food and other things. Don’t remember what the Glazers did. Leo Krasnoff had a liquor store.

DR: How big a town was Bishopville?

ES: Three thousand.

DR: And they had enough clientele?

ES: They came from the country. These people farmed. There were a lot of people from out in the country, and they had enough that, when times were good, they were very good. They all made good livings and they all lived very well. But when the Depression hit, everything went to hell in a basket, as everybody knows. So these people decided they'd go back to the city. They all—most of them went back to the city. Everybody tried to get my father to go back, but he did not want—he left the city, he didn't want the city, didn't go back to the city. That's how we remained in Bishopville. He struggled through. He said, "This house we live in has been paid for three times." You know, he'd mortgage it and pay for it. [Laughs.]

DR: What cities did they go back to?

ES: The majority went back to Baltimore, because the majority came from Baltimore. It was still family following mishpachah following landsman. Now, my uncles stayed. The Schlesingers—Morris Schlesinger stayed; Louis Schlesinger went back to Baltimore. Otto Schlesinger died. A lot of them stayed. The Traubs stayed, but the Cohens, the Bermans, the Steinbergs, all of these people, [inaudible]. I'm not too familiar—they left, and that's the reason I'm not too familiar with them.

DR: So they may have stayed thirty years.

ES: If that. I doubt they stayed—I don't think they stayed thirty years, because that's too long a time. I would say they stayed ten to fifteen, and then they departed. But while they stayed, they would have relatives that would come. We had a big thriving Jewish community in Bishopville. It's amazing, absolutely amazing. When everybody dispersed, Mother gave the Torah and the candelabra—it was left with her—and the books, everything went to Columbia. I still found many books after she died and I took those to the synagogue in Myrtle Beach, because if you're not going to use them you should bury them, and usually the synagogue takes care of that.

DR: When you say the synagogue in Columbia you mean—

ES: Beth Shalom. I was a member for many years, and Carolyn's boys were bar mitzvahed there.

DR: Would you tell me again the story about your father's reaction to the bank closing?

ES: Oh, that's a wonderful story. He was in business at the time with his cousin, Morris Schlesinger. When Franklin Roosevelt declared the moratorium on the banks and they didn't reopen, his cousin came up to our store—and Daddy was sitting out front in a chair; he wanted to be sure he saw everybody that went by—came up wringing his hands. He was just *devastated*. The tears were coming down his eyes. He said, "Frank, Frank, what are we going to do?" Daddy

looked up at him, and looked down and he pulled out his pocket watch, and looked and said, “Ich gea hame Essen, I’m going to eat. It’s um tzwelf an zeiger, it is twelve o’clock, I’m going to eat.” I mean, this is philosophy. This is the philosophy we were raised on. You say you see I don’t like things—things aren’t important, they’re just not important. They come and they go. Daddy always said a dollar was round; it can roll in, it can roll out, nu?

DR: It also says life goes on.

ES: Life goes on. He was *always* one for life goes on. “This was a mistake, forget it, go on.” Whether it was my brother’s divorce, you know—“go, go on, just forget it; there’s nothing you can do about it now, go on.”

DR: It sounds to me like your father was a pragmatist.

ES: Yes. He could work hard, though. God, he was a hard worker. But he had the complete ability to sit down in that chair and go to sleep, completely relax, because it was done, it was over with. What are you going to do about it? Nothing. There’s no use to agitate, no need to agitate. I’ve never learned that. Mother said I was a lot like my father, but they forgot that ingredient.

DR: Say that again?

ES: I said, Mother said I was more like my father than I was like she is, but they left out the important ingredient. He did not agitate, and I agitate. He didn’t. “Done with. Make your decision and go, go with it.”

DR: What about your brothers?

ES: Leonard does not agitate, I don’t think. Sam, as you see, he doesn’t agitate [laughing], he’s laid back. *really*—they’re really laid back. [Laughing.] I think of all my bro—Leonard, he’s not really an agitator, he really isn’t. They’re all so good. I get angry at people, and they’ll say, “Well, you know, it’ll be all right.” They’re the kind that sit around in a house of mourning and tell jokes, too. [Laughs.]

DR: What do you remember about your schooling—teachers, friends, academic experiences?

ES: First, my mother was too busy to take me to school—she had a tiny baby—so she sent me with my brother, Sam. I walked into the school and they said—the first grade, of course, everybody knew everybody; it was a little town; they knew who I was—“What is your name?” “My name is Elke.” “That’s not a name.” “Yes, ma’am, it is.” “What is your name?” “My name is Elke Levenson.” “Go home and ask your mother [laughing] what your name is, because Elke is not a name.” Anyway, I came back the next day and told her my name was Ella—very upset young lady.

My school—a small school is a wonderful thing. They taught music; in the public schools we had music, but being a girl, my father wanted his daughter to be accomplished, so I had private music lessons, I had private dancing lessons, I had private art lessons. He wanted to make a lady out of his daughter in the worst kind of way, and see that she had all the accomplishments. So if you're in all these music things, you're always on the stage. They had operettas. I did the Charleston on the stage [laughing] . . . They always put you up on the stage if you were in the music department. One time—I guess I must have been all of fourteen or fifteen—my mother had for some reason, for a recital, had made me a red evening dress, and they decided that I must do a waltz with the *best*-looking man in high school. I was so thrilled I thought I couldn't *live*. This best-looking, much-older-than-me, young man in high school and I danced until three o'clock in the morning. We waltzed on the stage. I thought heaven had come. He was gorgeous. [Laughing.]

DR: You talked a lot about being in plays and—

ES: Oh yes, all kind of plays, little operettas; all the music department got that. Also, for instance, when I was a little girl, and my best friend across the street went to the Baptist church, and they needed an extra angel for Christmas, and I was the extra angel. . . . Mother said, "Sure." So I was the extra angel in the Baptist church. Also, in the music—we had these courses where you sang, and I hated that. We sang at the Presbyterian church. I can sing *He Arose* with the best of them. That's the way it was in a small town.

DR: Did it go in the other direction? Were Christians ever involved in your services or—

ES: No, no, they never became involved.

DR: I know in Florence, in contemporary times, they would sometimes invite—if they don't have enough voices in the choir, they invite—

ES: Oh yes, they invite—but we didn't have to worry about a choir, we had a cantor. You know, you don't worry about a choir if you've got a cantor, especially in a small town—you're lucky to get somebody who can pray.

I had a lot of Christian friends and at our house, if you wanted to take a drink, you could take a drink; it was open house. When the war was over, all my friends wanted to come to my house so they could have a drink, because they couldn't go home and have a drink. After that, after they all came to my house and had a drink, you had to go to church to be thank—so we all traipsed to the Methodist church and, on the way out, we stood about as far away from the minister as we could because we reeked of alcohol, I'm sure. [Laughter.]

DR: It was victory.

ES: It was victory, yes. We backed out of the church. We all went, though!

DR: What kind of a Jewish education did you have?

ES: My brothers had a good Jewish education. We had, as I told you, a rabbi who was a shochet and learned teacher and the cantor and everything else. All my brothers were bar mitzvahed, and they said their Haftorahs, and read from the Torah; they all read Hebrew.

Now, what I was taught was at my grandmother's knee—my morning prayers, Modah Ani l'fanechah; I can say them—at my grandmother's knee. She'd sit me on the floor. She was a big, heavy woman. I'd be on the floor in front of her, and she would teach me my prayers. That's all a girl had to know in those days—the prayer over the candles and the baruches over bread. Girls didn't have to know too much. They weren't bar mitzvahed, and they didn't have bat mitzvahs, so they didn't have to learn haftorah and Torah.

DR: In that regard, would you describe that prayer book that you want to put in the archive?

ES: Yes, it's the one that my mother—it came from Europe. In those days, they had a prayer book especially for women. I'm not too familiar with it, whether some parts are left out or some parts are put in extra for women—but one side is Yiddish and one side is Hebrew. I had read that somewhere—and Mother had told me—but also read somewhere where they did have those particular prayer books in Eastern Europe. I don't know where else. Mother had one that was very much used because Mother was an avid reader. She didn't read nonsense, as she would call my literature. [Laughing.] So this book, I thought it would be nice to keep, because I don't know how many copies are available today.

DR: I'm not sure I've ever seen one. It's interesting—the implication is that women were more likely to be able to read Yiddish than they would Hebrew.

ES: Same today, I guess. The children, they expect to read more English than they do Hebrew, I guess, I don't know. But it's right, women could understand the Yiddish better, and Mother was educated. She could—in Yiddish, she read and she wrote. She was educated, but she was a ter—Mother had so many accomplish—she was so smart, but she was not a good teacher, so she did not teach me to read and write Yiddish. Now, I'm a teacher. I can teach you to sing, and I can't sing a note. But some people can't teach. I don't know what it is.

DR: So you picked up Yiddish from hearing it, but you didn't learn it formally.

ES: I didn't learn it formally. I picked it up from hearing it. When I became an adult, I learned Hebrew and the prayers to read, but I should have learned this at home. Maybe she wasn't a good teacher, but she was better with her grandchildren; she helped them. We would take them to Columbia—

DR: This is—

ES: Terry and Joe.

DR: Carolyn's children?

ES: Yes. I said, "We can't bring them three times a week. You put stuff on tape. We're now in an advanced age; we have tape machines. You put it on tape, we take it home, and they'll go over it at home." And they used to go over to Mother's, and she'd help them with it. But I would not say Mother was the best teacher. She was a very smart woman, but to impart—I don't know what it was, whether she was too busy when I was growing up with the millions of relatives that lived with us, or what. Her brothers came to her house, our house, every night in the week for tea and cake after dinner.

DR: Your mother's brothers?

ES: My mother's brothers.

DR: There were two of them?

ES: Two of them. One, the other, or both, *every* night that the Lord sent down. Why? Their wives are busy coaching their children for school. They—their wives—had two and three children; Mama's got four. She had to sit and entertain them with cake and cookies, so she didn't have time.

DR: Did you or your brothers join any youth organizations?

ES: No. I don't know, Sam said something about, as we were teenagers, the only Jewish organization—but other kinds of organizations we didn't join. There was some kind—I don't know what they called it—where the Jewish kids from different towns got together for fun, for dancing and so forth, and picnicking and whatnot. I was about the youngest in the group in those years, and then it disbanded with the war, I guess. Everybody got busy, going to college, one thing and another.

DR: It wasn't an AZA or—

ES: No, not for us. We didn't have any. Now, we had a lot of [inaudible]—as I was coming up, my brothers they had a lot of Jewish friends amongst the kids. These people had a lot of children. Like the Katzes—there were four boys. They played ball with everybody, the kids growing up. There were always boys around, boys, boys, boys. The Schlesingers were three—two boys. The Sindlers were four boys. I don't know; we had an awful lot of boys. [Laughter.]

DR: [Inaudible.] Did you go to college with the rest of the crowd?

ES: No. I went to Baltimore. I wanted to go to business school because my father—he hadn't made it out of the Depression too well, and I didn't want to spend his money to go to college, so I

went to business school in Baltimore. I went to a business school, and then I wanted to go to work.

DR: Did you live with your Baltimore family?

ES: Yes, I lived with my old-maid aunt. My aunt was alone in her house, my grandmother's great big three-story house and a basement, one of these row houses in Baltimore. It had three floors. Her sister had gotten married—the last one who married; I told you she lived in Georgetown very late in life—and she was left alone, and they didn't want her to be alone, so the idea was for Ella to go to school in Baltimore and live with her. And that's what happened. I lived with her while I was in school in Baltimore. Then I came back and I tried to get a job. Jobs were not easy to come by, and I really didn't want what to do what I learned. Then the war came along and my brother, Leonard, went into the Marines. He had a liquor store and I ran that for him.

DR: In Bishopville?

ES: In Bishopville. Then I helped Daddy in the store. As I told you, I could sell a mule, too. When he [Leonard] came back from the service, he married a New York girl, and she didn't want to live in the South; she wanted to go back to New York, so I bought the liquor store from him. I ran that until I got married, and then I sold it to my brother, the next brother, Sam.

DR: How did you meet your husband?

ES: Oh! [Laughs.] How did I meet my husband. His mother picked me out to be his bride six weeks after I was born, I think. She came over to see Mother and the baby, and she asked Mother to keep me for her youngster. His cousin married a Bishopville girl and they had all kind of wedding festivities. All the family came from Baltimore, and my husband was directing the wedding, and they got a date for him [with] one of my cousins that came from Baltimore. *Everybody* came to the wedding. So they had this big wedding, and everybody was dancing and I had, I think, my first store-bought beautiful evening dress. It was time for me to go home—I was about sixteen—and he decided, he left my cousin standing on the floor and took me home, and kissed me on top of my head, and said he'd be back when I grew up. We dated off and on before the war and after the war, we were married. He wasn't getting married before the war. He's from the old school.

DR: Where was he in service?

ES: He went in at Charleston at the Coast Guard and first, he had the Coast Guard band. He was also a musician as his hobby, his avocation . . . he had his own orchestra, and then he went down there and he had the Coast Guard orchestra. They forgot to tell him that just because you're in the Coast Guard doesn't mean you're going to stay on the South Carolina coast. He did escort duty to Africa for the battleships on these LSTs, and then they sent him to the Pacific—that's to

transport marines like from New Caledonia into Guadalcanal, into Okinawa, into Iwo Jima. He was in both those battles. At Okinawa, I think it was . . . my brother was there. My brother was in the marines on the beach, and he was [laughs] on the ship on the ocean.

DR: Which brother?

ES: Leonard. Sam never saw any fighting. He was in New Caledonia; they didn't do any fighting in New Caledonia, but he was there three years. My brother Leonard went through Guadalcanal, Okinawa—and the funniest thing about those guys in those days— He got malaria. He'd been there quite long enough, a few battles, and they thought it was time to send him home. He didn't want to come home, didn't want to leave his buddies, but they sent him on home. He was yellow from taking Atabrin, which is for malaria.

DR: Atabrin?

ES: Atabrin. That's what they gave for malaria in those days. Jacob went overseas *after* the war was over. They were still being drafted. They drafted him out of the University of Pennsylvania. He went to Japan, I think.

DR: Your husband's name was—

ES: Elihu.

DR: Elihu Schlosburg. Tell me just briefly where his family had come from and where they settled.

ES: His father came from St. Petersburg. His family evidently went from Germany to Russia, but his father came from St. Petersburg. His mother was born in . . . Branchville, South Carolina. Then they moved up here. I don't know that much, but she was a Karesh, Anna Karesh, and the Kareshes all settled in Charleston, Summerville, all the Lowcountry. Branchville is considered Lowcountry; Charleston is considered Lowcountry. So they kind of dispersed out of there. The Pearlstines, the Solomons—I think they were all interchanged and all. When she married Harry Schlosburg, they came up here to open the business—or he was already up here with the business. He was a very successful businessman.

DR: What kind of business?

ES: Same kind, I think—the mercantile business. I think he played the stock market. He made an *awful* lot of money. In '29, he *lost* an awful lot of money, flat out lost it. But he was a very wealthy man at one time, proved by the house I showed you.

DR: You say he went from Germany to St. Petersburg, and then came here?

ES: Yes, I think that's probably where—because Schlosburg is definitely a German name; has to be. They had to come out of Germany. But the Schlosburgs, his family, was from Russia, from St. Petersburg. They heard from them up until World War II and they didn't hear from them again. What happened to them, I don't know. I think one of his sisters was a doctor. Women doctors were a dime a dozen in Russia.

DR: It's still a very common profession.

ES: Yes.

DR: The Kareshes, if I remember correctly, came from the Bialystok area of Poland. That's what the Charleston branch of the family told me.

ES: If they told you—they know; I don't.

DR: And very early—

ES: Oh, *very* early on.

DR: Mid-nineteenth century. Your mother-in-law was a much more Americanized—

ES: Oh, yes, she went to school here and everything else. Branchville—that wasn't as big as Bishopville. It did have a railroad. I have pictures somewhere; there were pictures of everybody at the railroad. I think one of the first railroads probably went through Branchville, or from Branchville to Charleston, or Branchville to the upcountry.

DR: In fact, Ruth Jacobs—the Jacobs were also Kareshes, actually; [inaudible] there were two brothers—described one marriage in her husband's family where they rented a train to carry the whole wedding party up to Branchville to the wedding.

ES: That must have been Anna's wedding.

DR: Do you think so?

ES: Because I have this Christian friend who lived in a small town nearby, and said my parents—oh, she's dead now, too; she was much older than I—"I can remember my daddy and those went to Ms. Anna's wedding in Branchville and said they'd never seen anything like it." They had *never* seen a Jewish wedding and all the food and all the—you know, you used to go to a wedding around here and they gave you punch and cookies. They had never seen a festivity like this. They said they saw a wedding like they've *never* seen before. So it had to be Ms. Anna's.

DR: Do you know about when they were were married? Because I'll see if I can find out what era we're talking about. It's your husband's parents—it would be a few years before your husband was born.

ES: My husband was the baby.

DR: He was the baby, okay.

ES: He was the way baby. The rest were much older. His sister was dating Daddy's youngest brother.

DR: So, really, almost a whole generation.

ES: It was a good bit. I don't know how many years, but he was the baby of the family. The others were much older.

DR: Do you know when the oldest child in your husband's family was born?

ES: No, I'd have to look on the tombstone. It was probably shortly after the marriage.

DR: That's what I was trying to think of. But we could put the marriage, maybe, back in the 1890s, or something like that. So you and Elihu got married—

ES: In Bishopville.

DR: —in Bishopville. At your mother's house?

ES: Yes.

DR: Who was the rabbi?

ES: We had Rabbi Karesh and Rabbi—oh, Sidney Ballon, Rabbi Ballon, from Columbia, who was the Reform rabbi, because he used to come over to Camden and hold services, and also he was a good friend of ours. He was a young man. We used to meet him in Columbia at dances and all that other stuff. So when I got married, I had thirty-five people and two rabbis.

DR: The Camden community was more Reform?

ES: It *was* Reform. Of course, I wouldn't think of getting married without Rabbi Karesh, because he was a very dear, dear friend of our family, and he just *adored* my family. Of course, if I was marrying a relative of his, it made it much nicer because Rabbi Karesh—Miss Anna was a Karesh.

DR: Oh! He was of that Karesh family.

ES: The whole—all of them brought each other.

DR: I didn't realize that.

ES: They're distant, very distant, but still the Karesh family.

DR: So Elihu's upbringing was more—

ES: Very secular. I think his father probably wanted to start out with a kosher home, because I found the—what you call it—you kill chickens with, I forgot what you call it . . .

DR: The knife?

ES: Yes, but it has a name. And the whetstone. I found all that in some of the stuff, so he must have known all that, because he was from Europe. He himself was an immigrant. He must have tried to keep a kosher home, but I imagine he was too busy and, I don't know, with men, some men, it doesn't—they don't impart it to their family, because my husband's family did nothing. His mother lit candles, because the candelabra, when I went to—it was loaded with wax. I had to clean it up pretty good.

DR: What kind of work did you and your husband go into as newlyweds?

ES: We were in the hotel business. Well, my husband was [in the] liquor business, and then with his brothers he was in the hotel business.

DR: All here in Camden?

ES: Here and Ocean Drive, Crescent Beach. At Crescent Beach, we had a hotel.

DR: That's near Myrtle Beach?

ES: Yes, that's north—above North Myrtle Beach. And then we went out of the hotel business and went strictly into the liquor business. We went into the liquor business, my husband did, after the Depression, because it was easy to get into. That's probably the reason he went into it. He also had a nightclub, the Sarsfield Club.

DR: In Camden?

ES: In Camden. Which was very, very swanky. You didn't go in without a coat, you didn't come without a date—no stags—and they had live music. Gorgeous place, absolutely *gorgeous* place. On Sunday afternoons they'd have these little concerts with—whoever they had playing

live music would give a concert Sunday afternoon, and I used to come over with another date just to be mean.

DR: He already had this business?

ES: Yes, what they did was take what was a country club house. The floors were absolutely gorgeous. New Year's Eve, you could dance on those floors all night long. In the morning you could run a mop on them and they shone like glass. The wood was absolutely gorgeous, English style, with the wood everywhere. The place was *absolutely* exquisite.

DR: Did your husband play—

ES: Piano, yes.

DR: —in the club as well?

ES: Sometimes, just for the hell of it. He had a fellow—the last fellow we had, we had an organ, man who played the organ, an organist. They would play duets together. Absolutely beautiful, one piano and one organ. He did that and then he ran the place, too. He loved music. He was a beautiful musician. He could hear a piece and could sit down and play it, whether it was classic or popular. If he'd hear it, he could play it.

DR: Did he have any bands? Was he in a band?

ES: Oh, yes.

DR: What were the names of the bands?

ES: I don't remember the names of any band. . . .

DR: Let me just sort of bring you up to the present. Really, there are only five minutes on the tape. So then you had a liquor business?

ES: Yes.

DR: Who were your distributors?

ES: You mean in Columbia?

DR: Yes. I'm asking because I happen to know there are a couple [laughing] of Jewish distributors.

ES: Oh, you're talking about Arnold?

DR: The Arnolds, the Pearlstines.

ES: Pearlstines, no.

DR: Well, they're in Charleston.

ES: Oh, they're in Charleston. Bob Berg was a Jewish fellow out of New York. He had Columbia Liquors. And then there was Mr. Smith, who was a liquor dealer. He was an old bootlegger. This was before I got married, when I had my own liquor business—I would go in there, the wholesale house, and the place would be crowded with men. He was really a rough character, really rough, but don't forget you're still in the South. And these men who were waiting to get in to see him—and they had glass partitions—he'd look out and see me and said, "Let's see the little lady first." This feminism—women who want to be like men—no, no, no, no! "Let's see the little lady first." "Mr. Smith, I need so-and-so." See, liquor was hard to get. I got it. I got it.

[Pause in tape]

ES: —retired. He loved to play golf, so we retired. We decided that if he was going to retire, we'd have to have several hobbies. He played the piano, and he used to be an awfully good card player. So we took up bridge and we went to tournaments and people would look—never saw a husband-and-wife team that didn't argue. We didn't argue because I allowed that if we argued, we argued at home. If he argues with me at the table, I'm going to turn the table over and walk out. He knew I meant it. So we played bridge, and we used to play bridge here two and three nights a week. . . . Then he got sick, and he wasn't sick too long, about six weeks—about six weeks—and he died in 1981.

DR: How long before that had you retired?

ES: We retired—it was about '75. And he allowed if he knew retirement was so good, he'd have never gone to work.

DR: So he lived about six years—

ES: Yes.

DR: —and died of—

ES: Multiple things, multiple things. Plain wore out. He was not—oh, just several things were wrong. He was tall. He didn't look it because he was so thin. Like me, I was five-four, but I look little because I'm— It's a good thing we didn't have children; you probably couldn't have seen them. [Laughter.]

DR: You're very petite.

ES: Yes. I had surgery once, and the doctor came out and said, "I felt like I was operating on a child, those insides were small."

DR: Yes, you are small.

ES: But I'm tall.

DR: We're the same height then. I'm five-four.

ES: I used to be—I'm probably five-three-and-a-half. But when I sit down, I get short. I have very long legs, very long legs. My legs are up to here. When I sit down, I get short.

DR: At what point did you join Beth Shalom?

ES: I think that by those minutes you'll see it's either '53 or '54. Because I wanted to be in a viable community. I was on the Hadassah board, I was on the Sisterhood board, I was on the regional UJA Women's Division board. I wanted to participate; I wanted to add something; I wanted to do something.

DR: Did you consider dual membership?

ES: No, I just didn't consider it, because they had nothing here at that time that was worth considering. A building is just a building; a synagogue is the people that's in it. You can put up any kind of edifice you want, and it is still mortar.

DR: Did Elihu go with you to House of Peace?

ES: To Beth Shalom? Yes. He went with me for the High Holidays and stuff like that—and, of course, we took the children over, Sam's children over to Beth Shalom for their Hebrew lessons and all of that several times a week. I went to every meeting, every Hadassah meeting, every Sisterhood meeting, every UJA meeting. I was just in the middle of it. In fact, someone said "Do you know, Ella, you remind me of the tail shaking the dog?" [Laughter.] Bernie Klein said, "Ella, you remind me of the tail shaking the dog." I was *very* active in the synagogue, and I miss it.

DR: You don't do it now?

ES: I miss it. Well, then Elihu got sick, and when he retired I had to—although, I worked with him. When I worked, I had time for everything. I worked with my husband and, then, when he retired, I didn't have time anymore because he needed to be entertained. This retirement, you

know, takes a lot of work. He had to be entertained, and then he got sick, and then my mother got sick, and I could not be going to Columbia, I was going to Bishopville two and three times a week, and you get weaned away. When Terry—when they moved to Conway and became members [of] that synagogue down there and we wanted to be together for the High Holidays, I belonged to that synagogue.

DR: Myrtle Beach?

ES: Myrtle Beach. I make Rosh Hashanah here and carry it down there. I make the kugel, I make the strudel, and I make the taiglech, and I make the soup, kreplach, we make the kreplach, and we make the cake, and we make everything else, and then “Ella, you bring a leg of lamb.” I make a leg of lamb one time, and then I make the brisket for the other night, and you carry *all* that to the beach.

DR: To be with the family?

ES: In the condominium we have the *whole* works, so the whole family can be there, and a couple of people Marianne wants to invite—you know, there might be two lost souls somewhere Marianne and Terry found at a friend’s; they invite them.

DR: What’s the name of the Myrtle Beach shul?

ES: Temple Emanu-El.

DR: And that’s a Conservative?

ES: Conservative. That’s Conservative. I don’t know the name of the other one. . . .

END OF TAPE