

**JEWISH HERITAGE COLLECTION
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
MSS. 1035-225**

Interviewee: Judy Kurtz Goldman (b. Oct. 20, 1941 in Rock Hill, SC)

Place of Interview: Audubon Room, Special Collections
Robert Scott Library, College of Charleston
Charleston, South Carolina

Date of Interview: October 22 and 23, 1999

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Transcriber: Elizabeth Moses

Date of Transcription: April 5, 2008

Editors: Eve Cassat/Alyssa Neely

Dates of Editing: May 20, 2008/December 8, 2011

Proofreaders: Judith Kurtz Goldman / Eve Cassat/Alyssa Neely

Dates of Proofing: June 12, 2008 / June 20, 2008/December 9, 2011

Begin Tape

DR: Let me start, Judy, just by asking you to tell me your full name and when and where you were born.

JG: Okay, my maiden name was Judith Harriet Kurtz and is now Judy Goldman. I was born in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

DR: On what date?

JG: October 20th, 1941.

DR: Oh! You just had a birthday [laughing].

JG: Just had a birthday this week, yes.

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DR: What can you tell me, Judy, about your family of origin—both your mother's side and your father's side?

JG: Ten years ago I would have been able to tell you a lot more. My mother was born in Bath Beach, New York, which is part of Brooklyn, but her family moved to Denmark early on. I don't know the year that they moved there. So she actually grew up in Denmark, South Carolina. Her family moved around a lot and you have some of this information from her sister, Emma Lavisky Bukatman. Her father was a retailer. At one point he owned Bogen's Department Store in Denmark, South Carolina. She was one of four children. There were three daughters and a son in her family. . . .

My father was born in Opelika, Alabama, and grew up in LaGrange, Georgia. He was one of six children. He was actually a twin, and he and his twin were the youngest in the family. His father, I believe he was a retailer, but the story was that he was a, quote, scholar, unquote. You know how those names were given to people in that generation? But I believe he was a retailer. Thought of as a scholar—maybe that'd be accurate.

DR: Meaning a Hebrew scholar, a Jewish scholar, or—

JG: I think so, because I think if that generation was a scholar, it means a Hebrew scholar, don't you think?

DR: I think so.

JG: Yes.

DR: Just to go back to your mother's family, just a few more details—their names. Also, if you know, where they came from in the Old Country?

JG: See, this is what is so bad. I mean, my brother used to call me the little historian, because I could remember everything, and in the last five years I am not remembering as well as I could. So I'll just give you what I know. In my mother's family, it was Emma, the oldest, then Eddie, then my mother, Margaret, and the youngest was Katie. And did I say that their last name was Bogen?

DR: Bogen. B-O—

JG: G-E-N. And originally the name was Katzenellenbogen. And the story goes that my grandfather, my mother's father, could not fit the name Katzenellenbogen on the sign outside the store, so he shortened it to Bogen. That's the family story about that. My Aunt Emma says that when she was in school as a little girl, something about Katzenellenbogen was said in her classroom and they said that it meant "cat's elbow," and everybody laughed and she felt very sensitive about that. Maybe she told you that story.

DR: I've heard, believe it or not, from another family besides your family, some early history of the Katzenellenbogens in—Poland, was it? Did they come from Poland?

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JG: Oh, and you asked me where did they come from. This is what I started to say. They came from Eastern Europe, and what happened is in my book I changed it back and forth between Russia and Eastern Europe for plot reasons. Then I realized that made me unsure; now, where did they come from? You know, because I changed it back and forth so much, I became fuzzy on what was fiction and what was non-fiction. Bialystok—but that's Russia, right?

DR: Bialystok is in Poland, but Russia took over parts of Poland off and on so that—

JG: Which is the problem of where Jews come from—

DR: Right.

JG: —because of shifting borders. So, Russia, slash, Poland—

DR: Do you know a story, Judy, about *King for a Day*? Does that mean anything to you?

JG: Yes.

DR: Tell me your version of that story and then I'll tell you from whom else I know this story.

JG: Okay. Well, Emma—my Aunt Emma's the one who tells this story that a Bogen—Katzenellenbogen at that point—was treasurer, I believe . . . of Poland or of the province. I'm not sure. . . . The king was ill or something and so they called on Katzenellenbogen to step in and be king for a day. So therefore, I grew up hearing that my family was royalty in the Old Country. But I always had a feeling that *every* Jewish family thought that their family was royalty [laughing] in the Old Country. You know, sort of like people who channel other lives; they always descended from royalty, they never descended from slaves. It's sort of that genealogy snobbery thing. How do you know it?

DR: We have very close family friends, the Michelson's. Horace Michelson's family, his mother's family were the Rubinstein family of Helena Rubinstein, and they were Katzenellenbogens and they have the same exact story. I may even have it. I have to look after the interview. . . .

JG: That gives me goose bumps.

DR: I just interviewed Horace and G. G. in New York. They don't live in South Carolina; they live in New York. They were telling me this story and it was ringing bells, and I said, "I've heard this from Emma Bogen."

JG: *That is amazing*, because I never really gave it much credence. It just sounded to me like what I said. That's so interesting.

DR: Well, let me say, it still could be apocryphal—

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JG: Right.

DR: —but the point is that you're probably related to my friends, because it's obvious you have the same family myth [laughs], even if it's not true.

JG: Exactly, right. That's very interesting.

DR: Yes. But apart from this very sort of romantic story, is there anything else you know about the family? For example, what kinds of activities they did in Europe, why they came to America, when they came?

JG: I don't know that. I know that my grandparents, Joseph and Bella Bogen, my mother's parents, both came to this country at the same time. They were first cousins. They didn't know each other, though, before they came, but they ended up staying with the same aunt in New York. They met in this boarding house and fell in love and wanted to get married. The family did not want them to get married since they were first cousins, but they did get married.

So they came to this country, I believe, in their early twenties, and that's when they met and fell in love and then moved south to Denmark, South Carolina, because my grandfather's cousin Sam Bogen, I believe, was already in the South. He said that he would help set him up in business. Sam said that he would help Joseph, set Joseph up in business. Sam did not speak English though, that's what's interesting. Of course, I'm telling you all of Aunt Emma's stories—that's how I know them. So you probably have a lot of those kinds of stories from her.

DR: Some, but not all.

JG: Okay.

DR: You'd be surprised how quickly ninety minutes goes, and she had a long life [laughing].

JG: Exactly. There were ninety-two years to talk about.

DR: Right, we had a lot to cover. Was Sam Bogen also in South Carolina?

JG: Yes, and the story about Sam Bogen is that he couldn't speak English. So he would travel on his bicycle with his goods in the basket, and he would pedal up to whomever he was meeting with, and all he knew in English was, "Look in the basket." Those are the only words he knew. Then they would just rummage through the basket, take what they wanted, and pay him what they thought they should pay him.

DR: Did he eventually learn English?

JG: I assume so. He married a non-Jewish wife, because in one of my grandmother's letters it says Sam Bogen was at my mother's wedding with his shiksa wife. So that's how I know that little tidbit.

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DR: I see.

JG: And you have copies of my grandmother's letters, the transliteration.

DR: I do.

JG: Okay, good

DR: And they're really quite remarkable.

JG: Aren't they wonderful? She was adorable, wasn't she? I love her personality. I sort of fell in love with her through those letters.

DR: Yes. They have tremendous character. So, this is all on your mother's side of the family—

JG: Yes.

DR: And the family stayed in Denmark for how long?

JG: Now see, that's fuzzy for me, Dale, because my grandfather gambled, and he was also not a very good businessman. History paints him as not a very favorable character. So that family was constantly moving. They lived in Denmark; they lived in Bamberg; they lived in High Point—Columbia, I believe. They were constantly moving because, as Aunt Emma says, the grass was always greener to my grandfather. He always thought, "Oh, over there they're making money. We're going to move there." I remember my mother saying that she remembers moving in the middle of the night once. Probably a gambling problem or some sort of debt that he wasn't going to pay.

In fact, my grandfather's character played a tremendous role in how my sister, my brother, and I ended up growing up, in that because my mother had such an unstable background, moving so much. They had money, and then they didn't have money, and it could change between Monday and Tuesday. They could buy clothes on Monday, and Tuesday they didn't have enough to eat. It was such an unstable background that my mother vowed that when she got married, she and her family would live in *one* town and be very much a part of that town. That resulted in *my* family living in Rock Hill.

I don't think I realized how unusual my family situation was in Rock Hill until recently, as a result of the book and my traveling around and talking to a lot of Jewish groups in the South and hearing their stories. I realized the book I should have written. I think that's probably every writer's regret. Should I keep going with this?

DR: Sure.

JG: I don't know whether you want to leave that grandparents' generation yet.

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DR: No, I have sort of an endless appetite for the early stories. Let me interject one thing here.

JG: Yes, you help guide me.

DR: This is something I wanted to ask you anyway. I took a photograph in Aunt Emma's house, which—actually, I loaned the slide to Jenna Joselit for her slide show Sunday morning and I hope she uses it; I don't know if she will. It's a picture of Bella in a hammock—I'm sure you've seen this—with three children.

JG: I have that photograph.

DR: Okay. On the back it says, "Mama with Katie in her belly."

JG: Oh, I forgot that.

DR: And it says something like, "in New York," and I have in my notes, no doubt from Emma, bracketed, "Catskills."

JG: Now that's interesting.

DR: You don't know—I was going to say [laughter], did they go back to New York for summers or holidays, or what was happening?

JG: "With Katie in her belly"—I'm picturing the photograph. No, I'll bet that's right before they moved to Denmark.

DR: Emma's in the picture and she's a little girl, very little.

JG: If Katie's in her belly, that means Bella had three children at that point. Yes, and they're all in the picture, aren't they? I'm trying to remember.

DR: That's right, there are three kids in the picture.

JG This is a problem [laughing]—the difference between fiction and non-fiction and what I did in my book and what is true.

DR: I should say for the tape that the book that Judy keeps referring to is this wonderful novel that she's just published this summer called—

JG: September 1.

DR: September 1—*The Slow Way Back*.

JG: Right.

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DR: It's a William Morrow publication.

JG: Yes, and I used these facts, but had to twist them to fit the story I invented, and that's what has happened to my brain [laughing] is that fiction and non-fiction are now blurring.

DR: So what you hear here may be fact or may be fiction.

JG: Exactly.

DR: I thought you might know.

JG: There's a lot of truth in novels though, and a lot of lies in memoirs, so it's probably all okay [laughing]. So, did they go back to the Catskills? I never heard a story about my mother's family going back to the Catskills. Maybe they moved to Denmark right after that point. I have them moving to Denmark much earlier. It's entirely possible that my grandparents met in New York, lived in New York, had three children, and then moved south.

DR: This town that you mentioned, it's called Bath?

JG: Bath Beach, which is actually part of Brooklyn, yes.

DR: So the Catskills would have been a summer—

JG: That's where my mother was born. Yes, when they lived in New York, it's certainly possible they went to the Catskills. They wouldn't have been in a striped hammock in New York, in Brooklyn. Although, actually, Bath Beach is near that beach area; it could have just been right there.

DR: Except on the back of the picture—I had this in my notes—the picture itself says something like, “in the mountains” or “in the mountains of New York,” or something. Then I have a bracket, which means that I either asked Emma or intuited it was the Catskills.

So your grandfather, because of gambling debts or whatever, was moving quite a lot while your mother was small. Do you have any sense of what their Jewish life was like? Whether they were observant—

JG: They were very observant, yes. They tried to keep kosher. In fact, they did keep kosher for a while in Denmark, South Carolina. They ordered their meat from Charleston. But because they didn't have very good refrigeration then, it often arrived spoiled. Finally, at some point—and Aunt Emma tells this story—Grandpa Bogen, I'll call him, Joseph Bogen said, “That's the end of kosher.”

But yes, they were very observant. They traveled to Columbia for the holidays. In my grandmother's letters she talks about preparing the house for Passover, and how people in Denmark don't know about Passover; all they know is Easter. I think they were very observant, and all of their children ended up being observant. My mother and her two sisters and brother, all were observant. My mother's sister Katie, the baby of the family, actually went to an Orthodox

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shul for a good while, and sat upstairs with the women and that sort of thing. She was probably the most observant of all of them, although Aunt Emma was quite observant too.

DR: Where was Katie at that point, when she belonged to the Orthodox shul?

JG: I didn't want you to ask me that question.

DR: Not here in South Carolina?

JG: Maybe in Columbia. I'm sure that was in Columbia after she—that was probably either when she went to the University of South Carolina as a student in Columbia, or early married years in Columbia, which is where she lived with her husband.

DR: So that would have been Beth Shalom.

JG: Is that the Orthodox shul?

DR: It *was* Orthodox up until a certain point. It's now—where Emma, I'm sure, was a member until her death—it's—

JG: Conservative, okay. Conservative slash—

DR: Or they call them Conservadox now, I think, or whatever. Most of the Orthodox shuls had to find a little middle ground to keep—

JG: To survive.

DR: To survive. The only one that I'm aware of that is what I would say is truly Orthodox now is Brith Sholom Beth Israel, here in Charleston.

JG: I remember Aunt Emma telling a story that all of her friends said to Emma, "Oh, I saw your sister Katie up in the balcony, sitting with all the women in the Orthodox shul, and she had her shoes off. Golly, she's so religious—no shoes, no hard-soled shoes." Aunt Emma asked Katie, "When did you get *that* religious, where you didn't even wear *shoes* to shul?" and Katie said, "I had my shoes. My feet hurt. I just took them off [laughter] for a few minutes." So that's Aunt Emma's story.

DR: That's funny.

JG: Aunt Emma's smiling right now because I'm telling all her cute stories.

DR: She was a doll, she really was.

JG: [Inaudible] tears, to think about her.

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DR: Yes, I just have such a—

JG: Wasn't she so special?

DR: This is sort of jumping ahead, Judy, but I just have to tell you this because your tears make me remember—I mean, she brought me to tears that day. She was showing us her photo albums and reliving her romances with these handsome young men, and she said when she met Joe Lavisky—

JG: Mike Lavisky.

DR: *Mike* Lavisky, sorry. Mike Lavisky that—

JG: For the record.

DR: Right [laughter], for the record—who she then married. She was seeing somebody else, somebody of a German-Jewish background. Anyway, she met Mike, and she said, “I can remember when he put his arm around me, the hair on my arms stood up.” [Laughter.] And she was like, quivering! This ninety-two year old lady was having this extremely—

JD: Dale, let me tell you, I was with her two days before she died in the nursing home. She could barely breathe at that point—her oxygen was some low, low percentage—and a young man came in to check on her, a nurse's aide. All of a sudden I look over and she's touching his face and she's like a little flower, you know, I mean she just sort of bloomed for a few minutes there. So I started saying to her, “You know, Aunt Emma, the book you and I should have written together is *How to Flirt*, and you could have given me all these tips and we could have made a lot of money on that book. So then she starts telling me how to flirt. She's teaching me, at age ninety-two—two days before she dies—how to flirt. That's Aunt Emma. Yes, I mean she—anyway, that's a whole story [laughing], that part of her.

DR: Right. Well, let's just catch up a little bit with your father's family.

JG: Okay. I said he was born in Opelika. He grew up in LaGrange, Georgia. They lived in Atlanta for a while, also. There were six children who all settled in North and South Carolina. My father was a twin. His twin's name was Sarah Segal. She married Morris Segal from Atlanta, but they lived in Rock Hill.

DR: And your dad's name?

JG: Benjamin Frank Kurtz.

DR: And just for the tape, Kurtz is spelled—

JG: K-U-R-T-Z. German for short.

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DR: And also, again, for the transcriptionist, Sarah is with an H? His sister?

JG: Yes, with an H.

DR: Segal is—

JG: S-E-G-A-L.

....

DR: Do you know where the family came from in the Old Country?

JG: I think Germany, but I don't know anything. My father's mother died when I was young. The only memory I have of her is when she would come to our house when I was young. She must have been diabetic, because I remember little glass bottles with rubber caps that she gave me to play with. I think that must have been her insulin. That's my memory of her. My father's father died before I was born. My mother's mother died at age fifty-six, before I was born. My mother's father died when I was nine years old. So, I really didn't know my grandparents very well. Two died before I was born, two when I was very young.

DR: Do you know what the line of business was here in this country?

JG: With my father's father?

DR: Mm-hmm.

JG: My guess is retail. That's my guess.

DR: But there aren't any old store pictures or any clues?

JG: Nothing, no. I have very few photos of my father's family when they were young.

DR: I wanted to get just a couple of dates if we can. For example, when was your father born?

JG: 1908—no, 1909, and my mother was born in 1910.

DR: That kind of gives you a fulcrum. You can figure out a little bit about when people came where and when.

JG: Right.

DR: And the parents of your father's family?

JG: My father's mother's name was Dora Spiegelman, and I'm assuming that's S-P-I-E-G-E-L-M-A-N. I think that's right. His name was Charles Kurtz.

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DR: Were they the immigrant generation? They came from—

JG: Yes. I think they came from Germany.

DR: Would it be a reasonable guess, say, around the turn of the century? You think they might have been here ten years before your father was born?

JG: I know my grandmother spoke with an accent. That's all I can say accurately. Anything else would be a guess.

DR: Well, if your father were here, where would he say he grew up? Did he spend most of his time in Atlanta or—

JG: No, I think he would say he spent most of his time in LaGrange. My father ended up going to college at age sixteen. He had *just* turned sixteen when he went to college; he skipped so many grades. Then he ended up going to Newberry College, Auburn, and Emory, because it depended on the finances of the family, where he ended up going to school and was able to go. But he would say he grew up in LaGrange. Yes. My parents, whenever they traveled, the joke was that they always ran into people from LaGrange [laughing]. My mother said, "How big could LaGrange be, and why do we run into people from LaGrange [laughter] everywhere we go?" So, yes, that would be his childhood.

DR: Do you know anything about their early Jewish life, whether they were observant or not?

JG: My parents?

DR: Well, your father and his family in LaGrange.

JG: My father and his family. Yes, I think that they were observant. I know that the black woman who lived with *my* family in Rock Hill all while I was growing up talks about how my father's mother taught her how to cook Jewish. That would be Mattie's story.

DR: That's the black woman?

JG: Yes.

DR: M-A-T-T-I-E?

JG: Yes. Grandma Kurtz taught her how to cook Jewish. So yes, my feeling is that they were observant.

DR: I ask that, Judy, because often the German-Jewish families I've interviewed have much more of a Reform background. I mean that's just a historical fact.

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JG: My feeling of my grandmother, when I think of just the general tone of her when she came to visit, [is that she] was a very observant, sure-of-her-Jewishness woman. Because I know that my father intellectually questioned a lot of beliefs when he was in college. He talked about that with me, how he went through a period of—when he began to study philosophy and religion in college, he questioned a lot, which was his personality, sort of a skeptical, questioning, intellectual personality. I think that that was similar to his father's personality, and that's part of why they called him the scholar. This is just all pieced together from bits of memories of mine.

DR: Was your father bar mitzvahed?

JG: I don't know. I would assume so, but I don't have any definite memories; I don't remember his talking about it.

DR: What about your uncle Eddie?

JG: I don't know that either.

DR: But surely he must have been.

JG: I would assume so. When I read my grandmother's letters, it was a very observant family. It permeates the letters, their Jewishness. Yes, I would think so. I would also guess so, just seeing my father and his siblings and how they lived.

DR: See, we know, because we know where Denmark is in relation to Columbia, that at least theoretically, that's what they would have done for a bar mitzvah. They would have gone to Rabbi Karesh—

JG: Right, Rabbi Karesh [inaudible].

DR: —Beth Shalom, right. But I wonder, in LaGrange, what—

JG: Where they went. I don't know.

DR: Are there any artifacts from these earlier generations? Are there any things that either you have or your siblings have, for example, candlesticks or something that was brought from the Old Country, a samovar?

JG: No, nothing, nothing.

DR: And there are no stories that come down about the trip over or the—

JG: Nothing, nothing. *That*, I think, is interesting. I mean, it's fascinating to me how little I know about that.

DR: Do you know if they came through Ellis Island?

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JG: I have no idea. I can't say anything accurately about that. I don't know of a single story about that.

DR: Do you know how your parents met and their courtship?

JG: Yes, I do.

DR: Okay, well let's pick it up—

JG: It involves Rabbi Karesh [laughter] who also married them. My mother was queen of the dance, whatever dance it was. My father came to the dance with a group of buddies. My father never drank, but the story is that he was drunk that night—which is funny to me because I never even saw him drink at all—and he asked my mother to dance. He said to her, “You know, you're just the type of girl I don't like. You're just the type of girl I hate—everybody's sweetheart, Miss Queen of the Dance.” She said, “Well, you're just the type of guy I don't like. You know, a bottle under the table, hanging around with a group of buddies, all drunk.” So they sort of agreed to dislike each other that night and that was it. Then, months later, they were both visiting the Kareshes in Columbia—met again, fell in love, got married on January 3rd, and the next day, all the banks closed. Now that's the story. I hope I have it right. [Laughing.]

DR: January 3rd—

JG: January 3rd is when they got married.

DR: What year?

JG: 1932. Either the banks closed the day before they got married, January 2nd, or they closed January 4th. They went to Atlanta on their honeymoon, a very short honeymoon—short, inexpensive honeymoon. I have my mother's wedding dress, which was actually royal blue silk, like a street dress, trimmed in dark brown fur with a matching cloche hat and matching, pointed, tiny shoes [laughing].

....

DR: Where did they settle and where did they begin their married life?

JG: They started out in Newberry, South Carolina, because there was a family there named the Vigotskys. Mr. Vigotsky put my father up—maybe he hired my father, that's probably what it is. I think maybe my father went to work for Mr. Vigotsky in his store. But then my father heard of an opportunity, or maybe he just found out about Rock Hill, and so they moved to Rock Hill very early in their marriage. I'm not exactly sure what year they moved there. But I was born in Rock Hill in 1941, and they were already living there. I think they moved there in the late '30s.

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DR: Do you know what the oppor—

JG: They moved there either in '38, '39, or '40, because my sister was born in '38, and she was born in Columbia. I think that's when they were living in Newberry. Maybe they went to Columbia for the birth, or maybe they lived for a short time in Columbia, I'm not sure. But my memory is Newberry, Rock Hill.

They moved to Rock Hill—again, this was my mother compensating for her unstable growing up. They lived in one house, another house, and then a third house, which is the house I came home to when I was born in 1941. They lived in that house the rest of my life in Rock Hill. Again, that was my mother seeking stability.

DR: What was your dad doing, both in Newberry and then in Rock Hill?

JG: Retail. He worked for Mr. Vigotsky in his store in Newberry and then when he moved to Rock Hill, he opened a women's clothing store called The Smart Shop on Main Street. Then he also opened a men's store not long after that called King's Men's Shop, and he put one of his brothers in that store, Albert Kurtz. I do know one piece of dialogue [laughs], one just smidgen of conversation from my grandfather Kurtz to my father, Ben Kurtz. That is that my grandfather told my father, "Take care of your brothers and sisters." Because my father was, quote, the smart one. So he did take care of his brothers and sisters. . . . He opened a store for his brother Al to run, and Al ran King's Men's Shop his whole life.

DR: What were these stores like, Judy, in your memory?

JG: The Smart Shop had everything. It had hats—a woman named Miss Treacle ran the hat department. [Laughing.] Isn't that a wonderful name? T-R-E-A-K-L-E, Miss Treacle. That's just a great name for a milliner, isn't it? [Laughing.] It had a hat department, it had lingerie . . . it had a shoe department, and it had ladies' dresses and coats. It had everything. It was like a little department store, but it was a ladies' clothing store. . . . The same women worked there forever, Miss Smith and Miss Cauthen, and I could never tell Miss Smith and Miss Cauthen [laughing] apart because they were both really large women who wore black, and they just sort of were plain, stout women. To me they always looked—they were interchangeable. There was a seamstress in the back, with her area, with one of those wooden platforms that you stepped up on to have your clothes fit. Her name was Mrs. Ashe and she was there forever.

There was a black—there was a maid for the store, and her name was Thelma. And what I think is interesting is that my father's was the first store I know in Rock Hill to actually have a black person selling clothes. He just sort of promoted Thelma up from maid to saleswoman. I remember there was a lot of controversy in the store among the employees that Thelma was a saleslady like they were, and there was some to-do over Thelma using the bathroom. I remember my father really being stern with them, that "This is the bathroom for the store and we're all going to use this bathroom, and Thelma works here just like you do." He was very liberal, and I just remember that being sort of a dark, shadowy time—the whole thing over Thelma and the bathroom and the women in the store.

DR: This would have been the early 1950s?

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JG: *Early '50s*, yes. I would say '51, '52, '53, maybe.

DR: Yes. What's your earliest memory, Judy? Do you have any really early childhood memories?

JG: I have a lot of memories from age five in kindergarten. I have memories from age four in nursery school. That's probably as far back as it goes—nursery school.

DR: What do you remember?

JG: Well, our school situation was sort of interesting in that we went to a school called Winthrop Training School, which was the laboratory school for Winthrop College. So that was the school where young women were trained to become teachers. It was the state teachers' college at that time, and the Winthrop girls wore navy and white. I can remember, very early on, on a Sunday morning, we would drive up to Oakland Avenue and watch the blue line, which was all the Winthrop girls walking to church, from the college [laughs] to Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist churches on Oakland Avenue. That was something to do on a Sunday morning, was watch the blue line. They had to wear navy and white. They could wear a red scarf, a kerchief, that kind of thing.

But the school we went to started in nursery school. The nursery school was on the campus of Winthrop College. Then in kindergarten we went over to Winthrop Training School, which was a castle-like building where everyone went to school. It was just three stories, and that housed kindergarten through twelfth grade. So my class was the largest class ever to graduate from Winthrop Training School, and we had forty-three people. We had to separate into two classrooms our senior year, which was an outrage. Nobody, no other class had ever had to separate into two homerooms. So it was a very close-knit group because you were with the same children from age four to age seventeen.

DR: But I imagine the teachers changed a lot.

JG: Not much. A lot of the teachers stayed the same. I remember running into my second-grade teacher recently. She has died just in recent years, but I ran into her. She taught until the school closed, and she taught me in second grade, so—

DR: So the teachers of the school were regular teachers, but the students, the Winthrop students—

JG: Oh, I see what you mean, the—

DR: —the trainees.

JG: —student teachers changed, yes. Every grade had a regular teacher and those teachers stayed the same, but the student teachers changed each semester, yes. So you had good ones and you had bad ones. [Laughter.] But almost everybody went to Winthrop Training School. It was a

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private school in that it was connected to Winthrop College. So it was ninety-nine percent college-bound students.

DR: In terms of the composition of those classes, how many Jewish kids might there be?

JG: There were twelve Jewish families in Rock Hill. We had a synagogue. There was one other Jewish child in my class, Freddie Rosoff. This is one of those things you wonder; do you say this on a tape? I mean, I spent my lifetime making sure that everybody knew that Freddie was not my cousin. Just because we were both Jewish did *not* mean that we were related. That probably should not go in the archives of anything. [Laughter.]

What I think is interesting, and I've thought a lot about this, with my parents and how they managed their Judaism in Rock Hill. I think they were very different from a lot of other Jewish folks who settled in these small towns in that my parents were observant. They were probably the backbone, or one of the backbones, of the Jewish community in Rock Hill. I think that my father made sure that we had a synagogue there. He was very active in B'nai Brith. He established—what was the name of this award that he established? It was some sort of B'nai Brith humanitarian award and non-Jewish people received the awards. I remember my seventh-grade teacher, Bernice Yeager, receiving that award. But it was his way of letting the community see the good that Jewish people do. He was the backbone of the Jewish community, or one of them, and he also was a liaison between the two communities.

My mother and Miriam Leader, together, probably collected more money for Hadassah every year than large Jewish communities in big cities, and they collected from their non-Jewish neighbors. I remember one year, distinctly, I remember the telephone call from Dr. MacDonald, the ophthalmologist in Rock Hill, who practiced in his house. I remember Dr. MacDonald calling Mother and saying, "Have I missed my chance to give to Israel?" [Laughing.] You know, because she was late collecting that year. But that's how they collected so much, Mother and Miriam. So they were very, very strong in the Jewish community there, and everyone in Rock Hill knew they were Jewish. That was important, we were Jews. But this is what sets them apart from other Jewish families: they were so much a part of the non-Jewish community.

My sister and I were debutantes in Rock Hill. I think it's funny, number one, that there are debutantes in Rock Hill. [Laughing.] That's another whole subject. [Laughing.] What does that mean, that you are a debutante in Rock Hill? I think that whole thing is—well, that's another story. But I think it's sort of a symbol of the way my parents lived their life in Rock Hill. My father was one of the founders of the country club in Rock Hill. He was on the board of Guardian Fidelity, one of the financial institutions. My mother had been Miss Denmark and runner-up for Miss South Carolina. What I'm saying is that my family felt very accepted in Rock Hill. And I think that was—

[Tape paused.]

DR: All right. Sorry, Judy, but picking up where we left off.

JG: That was my mother's dream. Friends of my sister's remember coming to our house to light Chanukah candles so that my sister's grade could see a Jewish family lighting Chanukah candles. But Dale, in the next room there was a Christmas tree that went all the way up to the

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ceiling. So, we decorated for Christmas, my house was on the tour of homes one Christmas, and we lit Chanukah candles. I think part of that was another aspect of my mother's personality, which was, celebrate every good thing there is to celebrate [laughs]. You know, there are too many things that cause sadness. But I think it was also being a part of the town. *But* we never decorated outside of the house for Christmas. I think that's interesting. Somehow that was my mother's border; that was her way of coming to terms with how far she would go to assimilate, I believe. We never had anything on our front door, but when you walked through the front door, mistletoe hung from the light fixture in the front hall. [Laughter.] And there it is, you know?

DR: Well, I think it may be that that's the more typical experience in South Carolina.

JG: The part that was not typical—I know this from talking, number one, from the other Jewish families in Rock Hill. I don't know how to describe how much a part of the fabric of the town my family was. It's hard for me to describe it, but it was very different from the other Jewish families. I think it's because either, in the South, a Jewish family assimilated to such a degree that they were no longer Jewish, they hid their Jewishness in order to be part of the town, *or* they were so much a part of the Jewish community, they thought of gentiles as other, that it was us and them.

But my parents were different. They were very clearly Jewish and they wanted people to know that they were Jewish. That was very important to them. My mother's feeling was that one by one you show people that Jewish people are just people. You know, we don't have horns. Here I am, I'm a Jewish person; you see how much we have in common. But that was the difference; that's what I've come to realize was the difference [between] my family and other families, is that that they were observant, their Judaism meant a lot to them, they wanted everybody to know that they were Jewish, and they were totally assimilated in the community. That seems different to me. It was interesting; my husband was asking me, "Is there anything you think you couldn't do as a Jew?" This morning we were talking about it, and I said, "No, I don't think there's anything I couldn't do, because that's the way I grew up." If I get to know people and if they get to know me, I'll be accepted. That was the way I grew up.

DR: Judy, what did he have in mind? What was he thinking?

JG: He was thinking particularly of Charlotte Country Club. I said, "No, I think if I wanted to—I don't have any interest in being a member of Charlotte Country Club—but if I wanted to be a member, I believe that I could be."

DR: In other words, he's thinking of social barriers that Jews could not cross.

JG: Barriers, yes, exactly. I think that's what my background gave me, is that feeling. I think it gave my sister and my brother the same feeling.

DR: Who's the oldest?

JG: Brother, oldest; then sister; then me. I'm the youngest.

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DR: What are their names?

JG: Donald Kurtz is the oldest. He lives in Charlotte now. He lived in New York for years. Married and divorced with one child, Sasha, who lives in New York.

DR: Born when?

JG: Sasha was born in 1972.

DR: And Donald?

JG: Donald was born—he's eight years older than I am, so—and I was born in '41.

DR: '33.

JG: '33. My older sister Brenda was born in 1938.

DR: You had mentioned that in Columbia.

JG: Yes, and she's married and has four sons. She's married to a Blumenthal, which is another whole family in North Carolina.

DR: The I. D. Blumenthals?

JG: Yes.

DR: Oh! I have to talk to you about them. Very interesting.

JG: He would be interesting to talk to, I think, or *any* of the Blumenthals would be interesting to talk to.

DR: Is it one of I. D.'s—

JG: Nephews. My sister's husband's name is Charles Meltsner, called Chuck, and his mother was Henrietta Blumenthal, I. D.'s sister.

DR: One thing that I was really interested in in this recent visit I made to Rock Hill—that's the first time I've ever been . . . I was being hosted by members of the Friedheim [pronounced Freedom] family or Friedheim [pronounced Freed-hime] family. The story—which it seems to be agreed upon; it's in the family history and everyone said the same thing, pretty much—is that quite soon after that family arrived in Rock Hill, they started attending the Presbyterian church. Although, they weren't giving up their Judaism, they just started going to church at the Presbyterian church, is what the story is.

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JG: That's interesting, because I never—I mean, there was a glimmer of a knowledge that Albert Friedheim [pronounced Freedom] had been Jewish, was Jewish. He looked very Jewish; the name Friedheim, the way it was spelled, you knew that he was Jewish at some point. But they were Presbyterian. I know which church they belonged to.

DR: Albert was Sophia's father, is that right? Sophia Beers' father? I'm trying to remember which generation—

JG: Her father? I guess.

DR: I mean, was he—

JG: I used to know that so well, I'm sorry.

DR: I'm talking about the first generation. I think Albert was the son of the first generation. I hope I'm remembering correctly.

JG: Nobody would have named them as a Jewish family in Rock Hill, nobody would have.

DR: By *your* generation, by the 1940s.

JG: By Albert Friedheim's generation, by Sophie's generation, Sophie Albright. But she has another last name now.

DR: Beers.

JG: Yes, nobody would have thought that Sophie Albright was Jewish, nobody. Or any of the Marshalls, Sister Goode—nobody would have thought. Sister's younger sister Betsy was a very good friend of mine, and Betsy used to say, "My little finger is Jewish." [Laughter.] But you know, nobody would have thought of them as Jewish at all.

DR: Do you think they would have described themselves as people of Jewish descent?

JG: Maybe, I don't know. I don't know how they would have described themselves. I never heard Jewish from any of them. You just suspected that Albert Friedheim was Jewish at one time, but it wasn't ever talked about or said. And see, that's another way of being Jewish in the South, where you become Presbyterian and then you *are*, as far as everybody knows.

DR: What it made me think—I'm always looking for the generalization that you could draw from these individual cases—was that the particular German immigration that their family represented, this mid-19th century German group, were already quite Reform when they got to America. Therefore, in a sense, had somewhat tenuous ties to their Judaism. They were ready to let it go if circumstances—

JG: If it made life easier, mm-hmm.

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DR: Right. Because I think I remember—I could be wrong—that by the second, by the next generation, first of all, there were not many offspring. Several of the children of those first brothers didn't marry, or if they did marry, didn't have children. But those that did, married out of the religion. If I remember correctly, that first generation, they had Jewish wives, or at least one of them did, but they just simply attended the Presbyterian church. [Laughter.]

JG: That's so interesting.

DR: That's sort of the way that it was told to me. And had a very close relationship with the Presbyterian minister, who used to come for Sunday dinner.

. . . .

JG: In my growing up—I just drove over to the temple in Rock Hill a couple of weeks ago. Someone was interviewing me for the Rock Hill paper, and I had mentioned the temple then and she said, "Well, what street is it on?" I said, "I didn't drive there." I mean, I have to drive over there to see what—I know how to get there, but I can't tell you the street. When I left the interview, she said, "Call me later and tell me, because I want to make it very accurate about the Jewish synagogue in Rock Hill." So for the first time since I was really young, I drove over to the synagogue. This was just a few weeks ago. I got out of my car and walked around, looked at it. There's a big *For Sale* sign out front. The Jewish community had sold it to the Mormon Church and now it's for sale again.

It was a very unappealing building. To me, growing up then, and now seeing it as an adult, it looks like something out of Grimm's fairy tales. It looks like a place where bad things could happen to children. I mean, it's *really* unappealing. You walk in the lower part, it was iron gates where you walk through this hallway—damp, dark, cold. It was not an appealing place.

All this is to get to: *my* feeling growing up was that one day I will wake up and find that I'm Presbyterian. So I took that thing and turned that tiny little fantasy into my book, really, where she really does wake up and find out that she's not Jewish—or that she had a father who wasn't Jewish. So it's interesting, I think, how the funneling down of all this—I'm looking at it in a very egocentric way—but the funneling down into me, and what came from all of this.

My feeling growing up was that I was very well accepted. I was a cheerleader, I was in the in-crowd, all of that. So to look at me from the outside, I certainly belonged. And yet, Easter morning, I got dressed up, so that when my friends came home from church I would be dressed up like them. That was my way of not being different. I played basketball for the Episcopal church—until everybody else grew too tall and I was no longer valuable on the team.

[Laughing.]

I liked that world better than I liked the Jewish world. Then in the writing of this novel—the writing of this novel was my spiritual journey, and by the time I finished writing the novel, I had sort of come back home again, and come back into my skin, into my Jewish skin. I don't know when it happened, how it happened. It's not what I expected, but then I became comfortable with my Jewishness through writing the novel. So that's sort of *my* evolution, descending from Margaret and Benny and Bella and Joseph and Charles and Dora.

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DR: But this is very recent.

JG: Very recent, very recent.

DR: So you feel that in some ways, your whole adulthood, you've had a somewhat uncomfortable sense of your Jewish identity?

JG: It's so hard for me to put that into words—what my feeling has been. I felt more Presbyterian than Jewish. I felt more aligned with the gentile community than I did with the Jewish community. It was much more appealing. I was so much a part of *both* communities and this felt more comfortable to me than this one. That would be the way I would describe it.

DR: Well, Judy, I love this conversation and I really want to pick it up tomorrow when we resume, but let me pause the tape.

[Tape paused.]

DR: This is now October 23rd, 1999, the second part of an interview with Judy Goldman in Charleston, South Carolina. We were talking yesterday about growing up Jewish in Rock Hill and I've just asked Judy to elaborate a little more on that and especially on her relationships with her siblings.

JG: There were three of us. I don't remember whether I said this yesterday, but I'll go ahead.

DR: Go ahead, it doesn't matter.

JG: Okay, Donald, Brenda, and me. Donald is eight years older than I am and Brenda is three years older than I. I grew up in a family that put a lot of emphasis on sisters being close. My mother told us millions of stories about how she and her two sisters Emma and Katie were so close. I never heard one thing about her brother Eddie. It was as though he didn't exist. It was all about sisters in my family. I also heard about how my mother's mother and *her* sister were so close. So here we're going three generations: grandmother, sister; mother, sisters; me and my sister. And that's who the message was for, my sister and me. I think that anytime you put that much emphasis on a relationship, you turn it into a pressure cooker.

About the time when both of my parents were dying, which—well, the last parent, my mother, died right before my 40th birthday, so that was eighteen years ago. But both of my parents were going through the process of dying at the same time. They were in their early seventies. None of my friends, none of my sister's friends, had lost parents at that point, so we had no road map for this new territory that we were in. What happened is both my sister and I were so stricken with grief that we turned on each other. I think that I wanted her to make me feel better, she wanted me to make her feel better, and neither one of us could do that, and so we turned on each other. So we were barely speaking during that period of time when both of our parents were dying.

Where's the brother? The brother is living in New York at this time, far away. My sister and I are living in Charlotte, parents living in Rock Hill. Mother now in a nursing home in

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Charlotte with Alzheimer's disease, father with cancer that has recurred, living back and forth sometimes with my sister, sometimes with me. My sister had four little boys. She had four boys in six years. I had two young children, daughter and son.

It was a nightmare, that period of time. I mean it felt to me as though I were losing my entire family in one sweep. What has happened with my sister and me is that we had to figure out our own version of closeness. We couldn't do my mother's version, and we couldn't do our grandmother's version. But we have really figured out a way to be very, very close. October 20th is my birthday, which was just this past Wednesday, and we spent the day together. We went to lunch, we went shopping. I bought bras, she bought nightgowns. [Laughter.] I mean it was just a beautiful, warm, darling day, even though it was pouring down rain, and cold and gray outside. So that's the story of my sister and me. I believe that sisters matter deeply. That is such a primary relationship for my sister and for me.

DR: So how much of the characters in your book are based on your actual personalities and relationship?

JG: The emotions that relationship elicits are very true. The actual scenes are not. The dialogue is made up. The sister is athletic; my sister is not athletic. She considered that a real compliment. She *loved* that she was athletic in my book. [Laughter.] However, it's based on that little seed of truth. My sister is five-eight; I'm five-three. She always was very big and strong to me, so it was a natural leap for me to make with that character based on her; for her to be an athlete. I was very, very dependent on my older sister for a lot of years. It took me a while to grow up and be my own person, and that's true of the main character in my book. She struggles with that dependency on her sister.

DR: How did your brother and your sister come to term with their Jewish identities, maybe in contrast to you or similar to you?

JG: My sister has many of the feelings I have. She always describes Christmas as a party that she's not invited to. But she has somehow fit in very seamlessly with the Jewish community in Charlotte. That is home to her. So she lives a very different life from the life I live in Charlotte. Most of my friends are not Jewish. I have a few Jewish friends. My best friend is Jewish. But I have a group of friends with whom I eat breakfast every Wednesday morning. We call ourselves "The Breakfast Group." We have been together for ten years, meeting once a week for breakfast. Those are all non-Jewish women, and I'm very close with them. So, my life is different from hers. She's *very* much a part of the Jewish community. She was active in Hadassah at one time—she went that route.

My brother is Jewish in the jokes he tells. He's a wonderful storyteller. He should have been the writer in the family. I cannot get him to write. But he's not observant at all—zero. My sister's the most observant. I'm coming back to where I was. I experimented with being observant when I was in college and I'm coming around to that again. My brother is nowhere, where his Jewish roots are concerned. My brother was not bar mitzvahed. He was supposed to be bar mitzvahed and got sick and it was cancelled and never rescheduled.

DR: Very interesting.

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JG: That's all I know about that.

DR: When he was preparing to be bar mitzvahed, was that in Rock Hill?

JG: I assume so. I have no recollection of that. All I remember is exactly what I just told you [laughter]. Interesting, huh? It was probably all we were supposed to remember.

DR: Judy, when your parents died, did you observe the various Jewish rites of mourning or—

JG: They were buried in the Hebrew cemetery in Columbia which is—no, I'm sorry. They were buried in the Hebrew cemetery in Charlotte. They were supposed to be buried in Columbia and my mother decided—of course, while she was still alive—she thought it was more convenient for *us* if they would be buried close to us. So they were buried in the Hebrew cemetery in Charlotte. We had a rabbi—yes, it was a Jewish funeral. We sat shiva—yes, we sat shiva for the number of days that you sit shiva.

DR: I think it's seven.

JG: Yes, we did, because they would have wanted it that way. We did it the way they would have wanted. And it was at my house, interestingly.

DR: The shiva.

JG: Yes.

DR: But this is a point when you and your sister are barely—

JG: Right.

DR: —getting along.

JG: Exactly. Very tough.

DR: Talk just a little bit about Brenda and Donald's education and their occupational routes and then I was going to ask you about yours.

JG: Okay. My brother went to the University of North Carolina. He was the one who did not—what is that term?—achieve up to his potential. Wasn't that the term that was always written on report cards then? [Laughter.] He was sent away to Darlington Prep School for one year in high school to learn how to study, with the promise that if he learned how to study he could come back to Rock Hill for his senior year. He did not learn how to study, but he came back to Rock Hill.

Then he lived all over the world for a while. He lived in Turkey for a while. He was in the army in Vietnam before we knew about Vietnam. He then moved to New York and lived

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there most of his adult life. He had his own advertising agency there—very successful. Sold the agency and went into the wine business, which was a hobby of his, so he turned his avocation into a vocation. Then about six or seven years ago, he moved to Charlotte and that where he lives now, and he's still in the wine business.

My sister went to the University of Georgia because she was so artistic and they had a really good art school. She was afraid to go to the schools my mother wanted her to go to, like Vassar or Sarah Lawrence or better schools. She was too shy to venture so far from home. She went to the University of Georgia for one year, met her husband on a blind date, got married, went to school—he was at Chapel Hill. She went for a few more months, got pregnant, started having children, and never completed her education.

She's very bright, very artistic and has just created her own business, over and over and over—each one, very successful. One was painting miniatures. She ended up selling them at Bendel's, Saks, all over the country—it was amazing—when she had these four little children. Just recently she has had a gift basket company started in the basement of her house; [it] expanded into a huge catalog business—just sold that. So she's an interesting person.

I went to the University of Georgia because my sister went there. It was *totally* the wrong school for me. I was the student in the family. My mother really wanted me to go to a better school and Georgia felt like home because my sister was there. There's that dependency. The four years that I was at Georgia, I was on every committee there was to try to improve the academic standards of Georgia. I was going to turn it into the school I wanted it to be, singlehandedly. [Laughs.] I didn't know that you could change schools; that didn't occur to me. And there, that's part of my mother's stability-instability thing. You go someplace and you stay there. You see the message that I got? So I stayed there.

Graduated, taught English and journalism at a high school in Atlanta. It was a *very* exciting year, 1963, to teach in Georgia, because the high school I taught in was the first school in the state of Georgia to integrate. That was my first year of teaching, so it was really an interesting time to be teaching. I loved that opportunity. I stayed there for two years, and then moved to New York to grow up. I worked in film and then advertising in New York. Came home in between jobs, to Rock Hill, met my husband Henry, who had just moved to Charlotte. He was born in New York, grew up in Miami Beach. He had just move to Charlotte to practice optometry. We were fixed up on a blind date. We had three dates and decided to get married. Only impulsive thing he and I have ever done our whole lives. [Laughter.] If my kids did that I would die, but my parents trusted me so whatever I did was okay. Like you said yesterday, Dale, I could make no wrong decision in their eyes. If I wanted to marry him, it must be right.

DR: So how quickly did you get married?

JG: We got engaged in June and were married in August. I had been engaged before. I was engaged when I was twenty-one. I told you that I experimented with being Jewish in college. That was my Jewish period. I went to the University of Georgia because—one of the reasons my sister went there is because it had a large Jewish community *and* a good art school. Okay, so I go there. You have to pledge a Jewish sorority; no choice there. That felt like I was just sort of—what is the word I'm looking for?

DR: Funneling?

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JG: Yes, I guess, just funneled into this line. I think in my book I talk about that and I say it was as if all the Jewish students had to go through one door and pledge either one of two Jewish sororities or one of three Jewish fraternities, and everybody else went through the other door and pledged all these very interesting sororities and fraternities. That's the way it appeared to me, because I had never been in this world before, this Jewish world, like this, to this extent.

I went to services. I remember fasting for the first time on Yom Kippur. I met and became engaged to a Jewish boy, planned a big Jewish wedding. Three weeks before the wedding, I called it off; it was wrong. That's when I moved to Atlanta, taught school, and then New York. I think my ambivalence about who I was and where I fit in the world is what created that engagement and the breaking off of the engagement.

DR: Sort of as if you were going to try to go the whole way in that direction.

JG: Exactly.

.....

DR: I wonder—because the early '60s were also a very formative time in my life—how much of the tumult that was going on politically and socially in this country played into your day-to-day life and your decisions?

JG: The only way that it played into my life was . . . the two years that I taught school, and I felt as though I was sort of in the eye of the storm. The school was a very violent place to be. We had policemen stationed on every floor during that first year. There were fights constantly between the black and white students. Most of the teachers there, I felt, were very prejudiced and did not want the blacks in their school.

That was my only brush with what was going on in the '60s, because by the time the Vietnam War was heating up and our country was going through what it was going through with that, I was married and into my career, living in Charlotte, trying to figure out where I fit in Charlotte, trying out the Jewish community there for a couple of years, not feeling totally at home yet. So, I had my own drama going on. Sad to say, what was going on around me was not affecting me in the late '60s other than my reading about it, knowing about it, worrying about it. But I wasn't involved.

DR: What school was it that you were working at in Atlanta?

JG: Roosevelt High School. It was in southeast Atlanta. It was in the poorest area in Atlanta. Naturally, *that* was the school that was the first to integrate in the state, in the poorest area.

DR: What had your experience been in Rock Hill, in your parents' lives, say, in their store and their lives, with black-white relationships?

JG: A black woman lived with my family from the time I was three, maybe until the time I was in junior high. Then my father bought her a house and she lived in her own house—Mattie.

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Like other people in the South, Mattie was a second mother to me. I really had the treasured spot in my family. I think everybody should try to be the third child in the family, if you can manage that. [Laughter.] Because by the time I came along, my parents were more relaxed, so there were very few rules for me, and I had two wonderful mothers. So I was really very lucky in the acceptance that I felt from both of my mothers.

Rock Hill was very segregated, of course, with water fountains. . . . I remember Mattie taking me to the doctor once, in a taxi. My parents were out of town. I sat and waited in the white waiting room and she sat and waited in the black waiting room, and I wanted to be in that black waiting room with her. Race was not a part of my experience right then; feeling secure was what I wanted. I was frightened because I had had an accident and I wanted to be held by Mattie right then, and yet we had to be separated in two different waiting rooms. So there were incidents like that.

I remember Mattie and I took a bus trip to Columbia to see relatives and we sat in different parts of the bus. We got on the bus together and all of a sudden—I was really young—before I knew it, we were sitting in different places. So the separation was agonizing. I felt it personally and I felt her humiliation. That was the hardest part of all, I think. I think she was embarrassed by it.

DR: What about in the merchant community in Rock Hill?

JG: I told you about the black saleslady yesterday.

DR: Right.

JG: That's my strongest memory of that.

DR: Were there any black customers who came into the store?

JG: I think that probably around the time when Thelma began waiting on customers we were having black customers then. In the early years—I don't think we had black customers in the '40s. Probably beginning in the early '50s, we did. Not many, but some. Rock Hill's Main Street was divided. There was Main Street, and then perpendicular to Main Street was Trade Street. Trade Street was where lower income people shopped, and upper income people shopped along Main Street.

DR: And that fell out, more or less, along racial lines?

JG: Yes. But everyone had maids. My family usually had two black women working for us. Mattie was always there and then we usually had someone else working there too. Mattie was the *crème de la crème* and then the other person assisted Mattie. But I can remember in the laundry room—which was also a bedroom that Mattie and I shared for a few years—all the black maids on the street would congregate late in the afternoon. I can remember one line from one maid when she walked into the room and said to Mattie, “You're just the nigger I been wantin' to see,” and I was just riveted by the fact that she used that word. That's interesting because I was really young at that point. I bet I was four if I was still sharing a room with Mattie—five.

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DR: And it wasn't a word that you heard in your normal—

JG: No, *no*. Nobody I knew used that word and here it was being spoken in my house—it was a shock—by a black person.

DR: Judy, when do you think things started to change?

JG: In which area?

DR: In the area of race relations in the South.

JG: Well, sometimes I think they haven't changed at all. I look back on the year that I was teaching; that was certainly the beginning of change. I mean the halls of the school were not filled with all white children. That was certainly the beginning. That was also the year, by the way, that Kennedy was shot, and the white students in my school really loathed him. They thought that *he* was responsible for these black children coming to their school. I remember the applause when the announcement was made over the loudspeaker that he was shot. When did things begin to change? That's a very difficult question. It's complex. Inch by inch.

DR: That was also the period when Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney were murdered.

JG: Right. I remember—I'll tell you my earliest memory of integration. I remember when Autherine Lucy went to the University of Alabama. She was the first. I remember listening to my radio in my bedroom, hearing about what that was like and crying. I remember I was so hysterical I could not go to sleep. I remember Mother having to come in and talk with me. I don't know what she said to soothe me, but I could just see Autherine Lucy and what was going on around her and how scary that must have been for her.

DR: Why do you think you identified so strongly with—

JG: Oh, I know exactly why. [Laughter.] M-A-T-T-I-E, Mattie. She was just my heart—still is. She's eighty-one now and she's wonderful. She is my son's godmother and she really is both of my children's grandmother now. She was walked down the aisle at both of their weddings as the grandmother. So yes—she says to me, “Judy, you're my heart,” but she's *my* heart. I identified *so* with her. I talked like her.

When I saw Hotel Rellim on one of your sheets I said, “Oh that brings back memories.” My parents, every year for as long as I can remember, spent three weeks in February at the Hotel Rellim in Pass-a-Grille, Florida. It was a Jewish resort and they were there with New York Jews and they loved it. Oh, what was I saying?

DR: How you talked like Mattie.

JG: Oh, thank you. [Laughter.] I mentioned this to you yesterday, informally that I remember a couple my parents had met at the Rellim. My parents had already come back home and this

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couple was driving north back to New York from the Rellim and stopped off in Rock Hill and spent the night. Every time I opened my mouth, I saw one say to the other, "I don't understand a word she's saying." They did *not* know what I was saying. It was as though I was speaking a foreign language and it was because I talked just like Mattie [laughter], and that was normal to me.

DR: Do you remember that Freedom Summer, with all the northern students coming down and—

JG: I remember reading about Goodman and—what was his name? Sch—

DR: Schwerner, and Chaney was the black guy.

JG: Who was the woman? Remember the woman involved? . . . So many white people thought that she was a—and this is the word they would have used—slut. That's the word they would have used—that she was getting involved in all that stuff. In college one of my friends—no, this was right after college when I was teaching in Atlanta. One of my roommates was from Selma, Alabama. I went home with her one weekend and it felt like I was in another land, because it was happening there and that's all her parents and her parents' friends were talking about. It felt like a very ugly place to be, to me, because of what I was hearing.

DR: Did you have any feelings of either strangeness or affinity because two of these guys were Jewish?

JG: I was vaguely aware that they were Jewish, but I felt more affinity with them because of their beliefs than because of their religion.

DR: This is a little bit of a jump, Judy. I don't want to lose the opportunity to ask you a few analytic questions. First of all, do you think there are distinctive characteristics about southern Jews or Jewish southerners, whichever of those two terms means more to you?

JG: As opposed to northern Jewish?

DR: Yes. Or other, you know, northern, western, whatever.

JG: In my case, I feel more southern than I do Jewish. Now I feel the equation changing. I'm going to talk about that today at the temple in fact. I alluded to that earlier in the tape—the gift I got, writing this book. It feels as though the scale has been lopsided for a long time in that I am Jewish and that's the heft. I mean, I'm sorry—I am southern and that's the heft and the Jewishness was very light. Now it feels as though the scale is sort of evening up where my Jewishness is coming into play.

But is there a difference about southern Jews. I don't think that I can generalize like that, because I'm thinking of the southern Jews in Rock Hill and even among those twelve families there were tremendous differences in all of us. So I think it's awfully hard to generalize. Now,

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my type of southern Jew is a particular type of southern Jew who feels more southern than Jewish.

DR: Maybe just spend a little bit of time describing what you mean by there was a lot of difference among those twelve Jewish families in Rock Hill, because that might help us get a picture of the diversity.

JG: Well, a lot of it is what I talked about earlier, and that is that my parents, my family, were so much a part of the town in Rock Hill. My parents had Jewish friends and they had a *lot* of non-Jewish friends as well, whereas many of the other Jewish families in Rock Hill just stayed to themselves. That was their social life. That was their milieu, just the Jewish community there, both among the women and among couples.

In school growing up, the image I have when I begin that sentence is of four of us: my sister, me, and two other girls. My sister would have been in one grade; the two girls I picture were in the next grade down; and then I would have been in the next grade down, so there are three grades I'm talking about in school. The four of us all had a lot of friends in school. Three of us were cheerleaders. All of us were very active in school. [Tape paused.] But the other Jewish kids, unless I'm forgetting someone, did not have friends in school. They did not fit in.

DR: What was the difference?

JG: I think the difference was difference. It was that they probably felt very, very different from every—

END OF TAPE