

Jane Krieger Schapiro Transcript

MARCIE COHEN FERRIS: My name is Marcie Cohen Ferris and I'm conducting an oral history interview with Jane Krieger Schapiro for the "Weaving Women's Words" project of the Jewish Women's Archive. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. Today's date is Wednesday, April 11th, 2001. And we're beginning at 10:40 a.m. [inaudible]

MCF: I'll stop it.

JANE KRIEGER SCHAPIRO: Okay.

MCF: Yes, absolutely. It's picking up great.

JKS: Okay.

MCF: Okay, let's just start first of all with the basics. The year you were born, and where you were born?

JKS: I was born Jane Krieger in Baltimore in December of 1922.

MCF: What day?

JKS: December 23rd.

MCF: 1922?

JKS: Right. I am 78. I'll be 79 come December.

MCF: Where did you grow up?

JKS: I grew up – well, I had a very moving family.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: We'd rather move than pay the rent, I guess. But anyway.

MCF: Okay, walk me through that.

JKS: My parents lived on Reisterstown Road when I was born for just a few months.

Then they moved to Morris Avenue, which is now Holmes Avenue, or something, where my sister was born. We then moved to Forest Park to Barrington Road where I walked to Grammar School. We lived there until they built a Junior High across the street from us.

Then, because it was so convenient, we moved away. [laughter]

MCF: Right.

JKS: We moved out of Park Heights Avenue to upper Park Heights as it was called then and lived there for about five years. Then my father had this love of the country. So, he bought this estate farm, and what-have-you, almost when the War broke out. It turned out to be very inconvenient because it was 10 miles past Towson and there was a gas shortage. [laughter] We did a lot of trolley car riding. We had to drive into Towson to get and do anything. It was at that time I was going to Goucher. I wanted to go to the University of Wisconsin, but my father wouldn't allow it because it was pink. [laughter] I was already pink. [laughter] So, I went to Goucher. I lost a bet with one of my dorm friends, and I had to go to the Naval Academy to a tea dance with her and her brother, and that's where I met Lee Cohen – LeRoy Cohen.

MCF: Right. Let me go backward, just for a second, because you ran through your life really quickly.

JKS: [laughter]

MCF: I wanted you to talk about other things, and you didn't.

JKS: Okay, my parents were both born in Baltimore.

MCF: But tell me about the pink first.

JKS: The pink?

MCF: What's that mean, so that we –?

JKS: Liberal.

MCF: Right.

JKS: [laughter] Okay.

MCF: Did you have other friends who went to the University of Wisconsin?

JKS: No, but I had read about it, and I knew it was liberal, and I just desperately wanted to go.

MCF: Okay. All right. So, let's go back to your parents. Where were they from? Where were they born?

JKS: They were born in Baltimore.

MCF: So, what generation were they?

JKS: My mother was – what do you want?

MCF: You are, which generation?

JKS: I'm fourth.

MCF: Fourth.

JKS: That's true. On my mother's side. Third on my father's side.

MCF: So, who came over from where first? Any memories?

JKS: My mother's family came over from Frankfurt.

MCF: Family?

JKS: Family names were Greenhood and Sommerfeld.

MCF: Greenhood? Like it sounds?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: And Somerville?

JKS: Sommerfeld. S-O-M-M-E-R-F-E-L-D.

MCF: That's your mother's side?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: What's your mother's name?

JKS: My mother's name was Ruth Sommerfeld Krieger.

MCF: Do you know when she was born?

JKS: On McCullough Street.

MCF: Do you know what year?

JKS: Oh, what year? Uh, yes. 1896.

MCF: Don't have to be exact. Just general is Okay. Your father's name?

JKS: He was born in 1894.

MCF: What's his name?

JKS: Abraham.

MCF: Krieger?

JKS: Right.

MCF: Both German countries of origin?

JKS: Well, my father's country of origin is unknown. It was Austro-Hungary, they called it.

MCF: So, probably their grandparents were the first generation, is that right?

JKS: Right.

MCF: Their parents.

JKS: My parents were the first generation born here on my father's side.

MCF: Your parents?

JKS: My fraternal grandparents came here, so that makes them first. My grandparents were second. My parents were third, same thing.

MCF: Okay. And you are fourth? Is that what we would say?

JKS: I think that's true.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: I don't know how far back my mother's family goes here because my grandfather, who would now be about 140 [laughter], probably more than that. Anyway, he was born in Littlestown, Pennsylvania. So, it is hard to go back beyond that. I do have some family tree stuff on that.

MCF: That's okay.

JKS: But I don't remember.

MCF: Do you have any sense from family history or stories about why the initial people came to Baltimore?

JKS: No. No.

MCF: What their tie to Baltimore was, or the Mid-Atlantic was?

JKS: Well, they came to Baltimore because that's where the ship came. Baltimore was a big immigration port, and that's how they landed in Baltimore. I laugh at my father's family. It landed in Baltimore at the Harbor, and he lived in South Baltimore, at the Harbor – near the Harbor, and then their business was there. It's funny.

MCF: Tell me about the family businesses on maybe both sides again, if you know information about that. What were their livelihoods?

JKS: My mother's father – I don't know what they were before they came here. He was of modest means and had a liquor store, and then my father's father started a wholesale whiskey business in South Baltimore.

MCF: That is wonderful. Describe that to us on the tape.

JKS: This is in the days when people brushed people's coats off. [laughter]

MCF: Right.

JKS: It's a brush. A clothing brush. I can't see it.

MCF: Do you want me to read what it says?

JKS: Yes. Do you want to read what it says on it?

MCF: Yes. It's a clothing brush that says "H. Krieger, Wholesale Liquor Merchant.
Leon Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland. We Brush Aside All Competition."

JKS: [laughter]

MCF: Great saying. It's about six or seven inches long, and it was a clothing brush.

JKS: I guess. Maybe it was a scrub brush.

MCF: Yes.

JKS: [laughter] I've lost a few little things. So, that was my grandfather's business.
And my father –

MCF: H. Krieger?

JKS: He was Herman Krieger. His wife was Bettie. B-E-T-T-I-E., after whom my sister
was named.

MCF: All right.

JKS: I was unfortunate not to have a grandmother. My father's mother died right after I
was born. My mother's mother died just before I was born. I don't know if you want this.
I felt very denied. I used to say to my mother – get fat and grey. [laughter] And you can
be my grandmother. But be that as it may, my mother's father lived until he was almost
ninety, and he was an influence on all of our lives because he was a very dear, dear
person. He actually taught my son, as a little boy, how to paint fences, how to grow

melons, and how to feed chickens because my parents, again, were in the country, and Grandpa would come down and visit us.

MCF: So, as a household – your childhood household – what other relatives lived with you?

JKS: What was that?

MCF: As a child, in your childhood home, what other relatives lived there?

JKS: No one.

MCF: So, the household included?

JKS: My mother, father, and sister. I had a brother who died when he was 6 months old, so I can hardly say that he lived there.

MCF: Your sister is named Bettie?

JKS: Her name is Bettie. She's passed on.

MCF: Younger? Older?

JKS: She was younger. She died when she was fifty-four. I was going to tell you something. Oh, that's not exactly true. We had my mother's youngest sister, who was 19 years younger than my mother and obviously born fairly late in life – not late in life today, but it was later in life than when she was born to my grandmother. She lived with us after her mother died until she was married. So, she was like an older sister.

MCF: Yes. What was her name?

JKS: Her name was Miriam Sommerfeld.

MCF: All right. So it was like having –

JKS: It was like having a sister – eight or nine years older at the time.

MCF: So, once the family had made these different moves –

JKS: [laughter]

MCF: Was that typical of what you saw happening in the Baltimore community?

JKS: Heck, no. [laughter]

MCF: What were – ?

JKS: My father had this yearning for the country. Why? I don't know. I guess it's kind of an in-bred thing – when your forefathers lived in a shtetl, I suppose. My mother liked it, and she is the one who actually lived a more country life. She learned to do things that she'd never done in her life. She learned to churn butter and make cottage cheese. He just sat under the apple tree when he came home from work [laughter] and surveyed the domain. But we had horses. We all rode all the time. So that was one of the reasons that he wanted to move. So, anyway, in about 1941, I met Lee, whose name is LeRoy.

L-E -Capital R-O-Y, who was from Denver, and we fell in love. After he graduated from the 90-Day-Wonder School of Annapolis, because he had already finished college at that time, the Navy offered him a permanent job in San Diego for the duration of the War. Did you ever hear of a promise like that? I must have – we must have dreamed it. All I know is I flew to Los Angeles, where I was met by part of his family. I already knew his family, and they were wonderful, wonderful people. I never would have done it if they hadn't been such nice people.

MCF: How did you meet him again?

JKS: On a lost bet. The person at the dorm who got the shortest matchstick had to go down with Betty to the Tea Dances at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. So, when he got that Notice, we decided we were going to get married. That was after my father had said "No," formally.

MCF: Why?

JKS: Because I was barely nineteen, and I wasn't finished college.

MCF: You were at Goucher?

JKS: These were two really important things to him.

MCF: Finish college.

JKS: In fact, I think he thought they still had Indians in Colorado.

MCF: Right. So, Lee was stationed at Annapolis?

JKS: Well, he was schooling in Annapolis at the Naval Academy.

MCF: Schooling in Annapolis.

JKS: Then, I went to Denver.

MCF: What did you like about this boy?

JKS: How do you know how you fall in love when you're 19?

MCF: Tell me a little bit about your courtship. What happened?

JKS: I went down to the Academy every weekend that it was possible. I could do it without my parents knowing too much about it because, well, by that time, we lived in another place in the country [laughter], and I would live a lot of time in the dorm. So, I

was a pretty free agent. Then, the same friend who took me to her brother's tea dance invited me to Denver for the summer, and I spent about 6 weeks in Denver, and Lee was there then.

MCF: Did your folks know that?

JKS: That he was there?

MCF: Yes.

JKS: Yes. They knew, but they didn't think about it too seriously. After that, it was very serious.

MCF: So, you dated for how long?

JKS: Almost a year. I mean, if you date from 1800 miles away. But we had known each other for a year.

MCF: What was his family like?

JKS: They were wonderful.

MCF: Talk about that.

JKS: I don't know about their forbearers.

MCF: That's okay.

JKS: But they were a wonderfully warm, close family. Very Jewishly oriented. In fact, my mother-in-law kept a kosher house because her mother lived with her. I just knew that Lee had to be good if he had such a good family. [laughter] So, I wasn't afraid.

Actually, my mother came to the airport when I eloped [laughter], and she handed me a cookbook.

MCF: His mother?

JKS: My mother. They found me. I was hidden on the Hopkins Campus. It was a funny story. I don't know whether you want it or not.

MCF: Yes. You've got to explain this. Go backward a little.

JKS: I had a ring, which I wore around my neck on a chain. I had, in those days, Jewish girls in Baltimore had [inaudible], and being slightly pink, it was not for me. We argued, my parents and I. Finally, they brought in a very dear friend who came to see me. She said, "Jane, it's such a little thing to do for your parents." I said, "I won't go on the block. I will not do it." [laughter] Well, finally, I did it and wearing Lee's diamond ring [laughter] around my neck. That was in December.

MCF: What year did you debut?

JKS: We were married in April of '42, and I was 19 in December, which was debut time. So, my father was justified. There isn't any question about it, and I was lucky – because he was a wonderful, wonderful person, and his family was wonderful.

MCF: How did you get up the courage to elope?

JKS: Same way, I had the courage to eat lunch in the Men's Dining Room at the Center Club. [laughter] I guess.

MCF: Okay, we'll talk about that one, too. Don't let me forget.

JKS: I don't know – I just wanted to do it. I knew how much they loved me, and I didn't know my father would take it as hard as he did.

MCF: So, what happened?

JKS: What happened was my mother – my friends would come out for weekends to the country, you know, to ride horses and just to have a good time. They started coming out with empty suitcases [laughter] and going back with full suitcases. One Monday morning or something, my mother goes and puts some underwear in my drawer – where are her clothes?

MCF: Wow.

JKS: It happened that it was the day that I was going. So, I got the word via some kind of a grapevine that they were looking for me to stop me. Of course, the girls in the dorm thought this was really exciting. [Laughter] It's a big deal. Let's hide her. So, one of the girls had a friend who was in a fraternity on the Hopkins campus – they're almost all non-Jewish but only one was Jewish. They hid me in this fraternity house. All day until the plane was to leave. Meantime, I had gone downtown to Hutzlers. I had had a permanent. I bought a little aqua suit to wear to the wedding [laughter] and charged it all, of course. [laughter] I was really awful when I really think about it, it's no wonder the grandchildren love to hear it. [laughter] So, they found me. Aunt Miriam's husband found me. [laughter]

MCF: Oh.

JKS: By that time, my father wouldn't talk to me. But my mother came to the airport. It was a night flight. She kissed me goodbye, wished me well and gave me the cookbook, and said that if she didn't have a run in her stocking she'd come with me. [laughter] But she couldn't because it would have wrecked her marriage. So my father tore up all my pictures.

MCF: What cookbook did she give you?

JKS: Oh, what's –

MCF: The Settlement Cookbook?

JKS: Yes. "The Way to a Man's Heart." [laughter]

JKS: He tore up all the pictures. He disowned me. He tore up my trust. He did a lot of things. About three weeks after we were in – no, a month after we were in San Diego, where I took in boarders – because the first place we lived, that we could afford – Lee was only an Ensign and I guess he was making \$105 a month or something.

MCF: Tell me about your marriage.

JKS: Okay. I flew to Los Angeles, where I was met by his older cousin, who drove me to Yuma, Arizona, where Lee was with his mother, father, and sister. His brother couldn't come because he was at The Academy. He was a real midshipman. We were married by a Justice of the Peace because we thought the police were after me. I sat on the airplane, all covered up. [laughter] I'd never been on a commercial flight before. Anyway, then we went to the Justice of the Peace.

MCF: Why were you in Arizona?

JKS: Because Yuma was a good place for marriage.

MCF: Wow, and the family all came?

JKS: His family?

MCF: Yes. That's so neat.

JKS: It was neat. It was delightful. We were married that morning at a Justice of the Peace, and then we drove to Los Angeles, and this cousin of Lee's planned a little wedding ceremony with a Rabbi and a coconut wedding cake, and I detest coconut cake. [laughter] We were married by Rabbi Trattner, and I assume of blessed memory.

MCF: In Los Angeles?

JKS: In Los Angeles. We returned to San Diego, where he was stationed, and we rented this tiny little house, and it had ants. It had hundreds of thousands of ants, and I said, "I can't handle this." I did everything. I lit the candle. I got all the stuff. In the meantime, I hung this picture of my father on the bureau over in our bedroom, and I wrote to him almost every day. The story was that he put them in his pocket and carried them around. But he didn't answer them. When I couldn't stand the ants any longer, we found a lovely apartment, but we couldn't afford it. So, Lee had two friends who were in the Marine Corps there, and they were dying to get out of the barracks, so we rented them a room, and I, who knew nothing about cooking, cooked for them. [laughter] It was a fun experience.

MCF: Tell me a couple of things. Why would your mother give you the cookbook? What did that mean?

JKS: She thought that was a very important part of a marriage. She loved Lee... In fact, my father liked Lee very much until he found out that we were serious. Colorado was just too far away, and I was too young.

MCF: Right.

JKS: Justified.

MCF: But that cookbook, I think, was a sign of –

JKS: Of her approval. [laughter] Sure.

MCF: Yes. Given you a tool to officially begin a marriage.

JKS: Right. I mean, she wouldn't tell me about sex. [laughter] No way she'd do that.

MCF: Lee's parents' names?

JKS: Ida and Bill Cohen.

MCF: Did either of them talk to you both? Sit you down about –

JKS: Do you know what you're doing?

MCF: Right. Because they knew of this tension with your own parents.

JKS: I don't think so.

MCF: They showed approval through their actions.

JKS: Right.

MCF: Right. Was his family's background religiously Reform? Or Conservative? No, they kept kosher.

JKS: Well, they kept kosher, but they didn't do much else. I mean, they observed the high holidays and changed the dishes for Passover because his grandmother lived there.

MCF: Right. And your family's?

JKS: My mother kept kosher for – I guess, about ten years after she married my father. She was raised – there was a Reform Rabbi in her history in Germany. [laughter] So, she was not raised really with much Jewish content to her life at all.

MCF: Let's step back for a minute and just talk briefly because we kind of missed this part – the Jewish elements of your childhood, and what that practice or experience was about?

JKS: I went to Beth Tfiloh Sunday School. I graduated when I was twelve. I received Honors for not knowing the least of all the kids in the class, and that was the truth. I had a Hebrew teacher who came to the house to teach my sister and me Hebrew. We taunted him and pestered him. [laughter] We hid his rubbers. [laughter] All those things, in order not to have to do the lesson. I'm sorry, Mr. Belsky. [laughter]

MCF: What was his name?

JKS: Sam – I think it was Sam – Mr. Belsky. B-E-L-S-K-Y,

MCF: So you went to Sunday school.

JKS: Then he came to the house.

MCF: He came to the house. Did you go to any other services? Friday night or Saturday morning?

JKS: Occasionally, I went on Saturday mornings with an aunt. My father didn't go. My mother didn't go.

MCF: I'm going to show my ignorance here. Is Beth Tfiloh – what? Conservative or –

JKS: It was Orthodox.

MCF: Orthodox.

JKS: [laughter] And then, well, I actually went to an Orthodox Synagogue.

MCF: Okay. We're up and going again. All right, why don't we start? I didn't ask you about antisemitism in Baltimore and any experiences that you'd had with that. You mentioned an experience with a house that you bought.

JKS: Yes.

MCF: Or tried to buy.

JKS: Yes.

MCF: I thought that might be a way to talk about it a little bit.

JKS: Actually, I didn't have many Barry Levinson experiences. When I was little, we grew up in a mixed neighborhood.

MCF: Can you hold on one second?

JKS: My mother made a winter garden at Xmas/Chanukah time with little houses, little trains, lakes, and snow.

MCF: Amazing.

JKS: Yes, really [laughter] a dichotomy.

MCF: But a garden?

JKS: Yes. Well, you know, it's like train sets in there, and I took it out to the living room. [laughter]

MCF: Amazing. Amazing. So, you celebrated Christmas?

JKS: No. We didn't celebrate it. [laughter]

MCF: So, it just stood there?

JKS: But that was it. On Christmas Eve, we always went to my mother's brother's house and trimmed his tree because he was married to a Christian lady.

MCF: OK.

JKS: So, it was a mixed bag.

MCF: What about other Holidays? Did you do anything?

JKS: Oh, we had a big Passover and –

MCF: What was that like?

JKS: It was great. It was fun. We had family and –

MCF: At your family's house?

JKS: My parents, right. It was a big deal. We had crabs in the basement. [laughter] I shouldn't say that. [laughter]

MCF: Just for Passover?

JKS: No. Oh, no, no, not for Passover. Oh, my heavens, no.

MCF: Oh.

JKS: No. But the family joke was that when my father met my mother and went over there for Passover, they had ham on matzoh, [laughter] but I don't believe it.

MCF: But, when the family would have crabs?

JKS: They had them in the basement.

MCF: Now, why?

JKS: Because they didn't want to mess up the kosher upstairs. [laughter]

MCF: That is ingenious.

JKS: Isn't it? [laughter]

MCF: See, it's –

JKS: I don't think it's unusual.

MCF: So, you had a treif basement.

JKS: Right. [laughter]

MCF: That is so interesting. So, did you know of other families that had –

JKS: You know, we didn't have anybody living with us. None of his parents were living.

MCF: So, how often would you all have crabs?

JKS: I don't know. I don't even remember. I didn't eat them, I was kosher. [laughter]

MCF: Oh really?

JKS: I was kosher. Everybody thought I was going to marry a rabbi. [laughter] I was kosher until I was about 12. [laughter] Then I had lunch with my mother downtown one day, and I ordered a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich.

MCF: Why?

JKS: I just did it, and she said, "That's it." I said, "What do you mean, that's it?" She said, "I'm not keeping kosher any longer. I was just doing it for you." [laughter] That's OK with me. That was the end of the Kosher in our household.

MCF: Why were you keeping kosher as a little girl? Do you remember?

JKS: Well, because my mother did keep kosher. But she ate –

MCF: Outside the house?

JKS: Outside the house. My father never ate pork. But he would eat seafood.

MCF: I think that's a good rule for the mid-Atlantic. Who cares about pork? There's all these incredible shellfish! Let's change the rules a little bit!

JKS: Yes. [laughter]

JKS: Exactly. [laughter] Right, we're going to change them. So, I was raised in this kind of funny mixture.

MCF: Was it not dissimilar, though, from other families?

JKS: I don't think it was very dissimilar. I think there were a lot of families who were just on the edge of secularizing it – a pushover.

MCF: What about your social community? Did your friends –

JKS: Most of my friends were Jewish after I was ten or twelve years old, most of my friends were Jewish. I belonged to a Jewish sorority.

MCF: What was the name of that sorority? Do you remember?

JKS: Oh, it was funny. We had two Jewish sororities in Baltimore. We had a German-Jewish sorority which was, I forgot – I can't remember. We had a mixed-Jewish sorority which was Sigma Theta Pi, I think. When it came time to be invited, I was actually invited to both of them, and I couldn't make up my mind. I talked to my father about it very seriously. He said, "Well, you can't ride the fence." He said, "You have to decide where you want to be." I said, "Well, the truth is, I would rather be with a mixed group." So I did.

MCF: A mixed group?

JKS: And after I pledged, I never went to a meeting.

MCF: Tell me what a mixed group meant in those terms.

JKS: Russian. [laughter] Whatever else there was at that point...the other people. But I was mixed anyway. So, I just didn't want to get categorized.

MCF: What was it about your personality? Or, what made you develop those feelings so strongly about not wanting to be categorized? Being independent? Having more liberal feelings? Where do you think you got those influences from?

JKS: I don't know.

MCF: Were you modeling after anybody in your family?

JKS: No.

MCF: Your mother? Did your mother serve as a role model to you in different ways?

JKS: Only as a mother and grandmother and as a fun person to meet. She drove before any of the other kids' mothers drove. And she'd pick us up at school and take us to lacrosse games and that sort of thing.

MCF: Well, who did you admire as a little girl? Any particular figures?

JKS: Little Women.

MCF: Any particular sister?

JKS: Oh, Joe, of course. [laughter] I'm sure I read it twenty times.

MCF: Wow.

JKS: Now my grandchildren don't even – my great-grandchildren don't read it. [laughter]
Well, they can't read yet. They probably won't.

MCF: Little Women was published when? Do you remember?

JKS: Well, it takes place at the time of the Civil War.

MCF: Yes.

JKS: Because Daddy goes to the Army, you know?

MCF: So, you were reading it in what years?

JKS: When I was about eight. I was a very early reader. [laughter]

MCF: And I think it was – Little Women is –

JKS: It's considered well –

MCF: Really popular in the '30s?

JKS: Oh, it was unbelievable. We read it and we read it and cried over it and lived it. To this day, when somebody's having a party, and you go on time, and there's no one there – I think about Amy's birthday party. When nobody showed up. [laughter]

MCF: Yes.

JKS: It's funny. Did you read it? Too young to have read it.

MCF: Absolutely. Loved it too.

JKS: So, I guess that's as close to a role model as I can think of.

MCF: What kind of plans did your father and your mother have for you? Were those different?

JKS: Well, I was going to be something special. [laughter] Mostly, probably a writer.

MCF: Was this your mother's – or your father's?

JKS: My father's. My mother really didn't have the kind of background that made her think that. She thought education was important. But how do you say it? A not too deep a level. You went to college because it was time to go to college, and she hadn't gone to college. My father had. She would have loved me as much no matter what I'd done. But I needed my father's respect because he was a very strong person. And I was the only son he had. [laughter] I was the one he took to baseball games, you know, and down to the office and that sort of thing. It was a big wrench for me to tear myself from him. But there was a war, and there are all those sentiments that grow up in war, you can't possibly wait for a year or two years, or whatever it might be. I finally finished.

MCF: But he was a really powerful figure in your – and he saw you go into Goucher? Going on for a career. Did he envision marriage, family, all those things?

JKS: I don't think he ever thought about that. [laughter]

MCF: He wanted you to be somebody or something.

JKS: Yes. [laughter]

MCF: That's really unusual for the time.

JKS: Well, he didn't have a son. So –

MCF: Was he in the brush business?

JKS: Brush business. [laughter] The whiskey business, until it got closed. Until Prohibition, which was 1919.

MCF: So am I right, did the brush business evolve into whiskey and – or am I combining two families? Am I mixing up?

JKS: Well, the brush was an advertising tool – the H. Krieger Sons, I believe, ceased to exist after Prohibition began. At that time, it was 1919. I wasn't born until 1922. But when my mother was pregnant with me, my father was going to law school because he had to have a career. He passed the bar, but he never practiced law because in 1931 or two, he and some other people had bought the Gunther Brewing Company.

MCF: How do you spell Gunther?

JKS: G-U-N-T-H-E-R. Which at that time, was only allowed to make ice [laughter] and near beer. That was his business. I don't know if he ever wanted me to go into the business or ever thought seriously about it, I don't know. But he wanted me to do something that was ambitious and enlightened.

MCF: Did you write as a young woman?

JKS: I did great in school. I mean, I didn't do great in school. I didn't do great in school at all. I was lazy. But I wrote well. All my teachers said, "She's going to be a great writer someday." Even when I went back to Goucher with my children, [laughter] the Dean said to me – I've now forgotten, it was Dean Greene – and I can't remember what particular woman writer of the time. She said, "You know, you could be another ..." whoever she was. [laughter] But, I never did it. I only wrote for pleasure. Because my first child was born before we were married, about a year and nine months.

MCF: Right. I interrupted you when you were back in that –

JKS: Oh, I was back in San Diego.

MCF: San Diego. You had put up the picture of your father.

JKS: [laughter]

MCF: He knew that you were writing letters.

JKS: He never answered my letters.

MCF: So, what did it take?

JKS: So, then this job of War duration time came to an end, of course, very rapidly. In six weeks. He got orders to the East Coast. At that time, my mother and sister were visiting me. And I sent a wire to my father saying, "Lee transferred to the East Coast. Going to New York. Shall we stop in Baltimore en route?" He sent me a wire back saying, "Do as you please." So, I know I got into a funk and said, "The hell with that." Fortunately, Lee was a very special man. He said, "It's your father. And he's only doing this because he loves you so much that he's upset and hurt. And I think we should go and stop in Baltimore." There I had to stop without my mother being there because she was in California [laughter], and I did. We did. We had a nice reunion. Emotional but not complete.

MCF: How so? What was missing?

JKS: There was just – there wasn't full understanding by my father of what I'd done. Why I did it.

MCF: Did he ask you?

JKS: No. So, Lee was stationed in New York but he was actually stationed out of New York, and he was shipping out of New York. I said I was going to live in New York, and

my father said, "Live in New York alone? At nineteen, you're going to live in New York by yourself?" [laughter] I said, "Yes. I'm going to go to NYU." I'll say that one thing that I wanted him to know was that I was not getting out of finishing college. That was as important to me as it was to him. So, I went up to look for an apartment, and he insisted on going with me. I said, "We can afford about eighty dollars a month for an efficiency apartment down near NYU," and he said, "I'm coming with you to look for it." He started – "You have to have a doorman." [laughter] "You can't live alone in those brownstones converted, that's full of whores" [laughter] and so forth. So, we finally found one, but it was ninety-five dollars a month, and he said, "Well, I'll pay the difference." So, I got this teeny, little apartment, and then they sent the little toy bulldog to protect me. [laughter] This big. I lived in New York for almost a full school year, and I took Journalism.

MCF: What was Lee doing?

JKS: He was going back and forth on Liberty Ships. The Navy put gunnery people on the Liberty Ships, which were cargo ships to go to Europe, North Africa, and Russia. He was one of those people who had come home, and he'd draw up a diagram of the convoy to me and say, "This is where we went, and that one, this is mine. That one went. That one went. That one ..." That was weird. But that only lasted for a year, and then they decided [laughter] the "Powers that Be" in the Navy – to send him to submarine tracer training school or something – submarine chaser training school in Florida. By that time, I was pregnant. So, we went to Florida, and I came home two months before the baby was due.

MCF: You came to?

JKS: Baltimore, I was home to my parents. He got orders for overseas, and I wanted to have the baby before he left. So, I did all the things. I jumped off the sofa. [laughter] Took rough rides. Drank castor oil. [laughter] Nothing would happen. Finally, Dr. Guttmacher was my doctor. He kind of pushed it along, and the baby was born. JoAnn

was born on December the 4th, and he got a twenty-four-hour extension.

MCF: December the 24th?

JKS: December the 4th.

MCF: The 4th, what year?

JKS: 1943.

MCF: And how do you spell JoAnn?

JKS: J-O-capital A-N-N.

MCF: And that was your first child. Tell me a little bit about that year at NYU.

JKS: Oh, it was fun. I had one very good friend from Goucher who had transferred. She lived out on Long Island with her parents.

JKS: So, there was a home for me. My brother-in-law, who had then graduated from the Academy – I guess he was going to school someplace, and he would come in with half his friends to my one-room apartment. [laughter] It was kind of fun. I belonged to the American Women's' Voluntary Service. I sold stamps and bonds at nice places. [laughter] It was okay. It wasn't a bad deal. Then I got pregnant, as I said.

MCF: You were really on your own?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: In that year?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: That was really your first year of being alone?

JKS: True. Because I hadn't gone away to college.

MCF: So, it was exciting being in the city?

JKS: They gave him a twenty-four-hour extension, and they brought JoAnn into the room and brought him a cap, a mask, and a gown – and left him with her all night, and I slept. But he had – because he didn't see her again for nineteen months.

MCF: Oh.

JKS: At which time, she said, "Daddy".

MCF: Unbelievable.

JKS: Because I had given her a little Pavlov conditioning. [laughter] I had a large picture of him, and I'd hold a piece of chocolate over it. [laughter] When she said Daddy, she got the chocolate. The day he came home, I stood behind him with chocolate, and she said, "Daddy." He was the most excited human being. All these people were around that day. We were in the country, and there were always people. My cousin was in the Navy, also. He was a doctor, and he had doctor friends there. They thought – did you see that child? [laughter]

MCF: That's a great story. So, he came back?

JKS: He came back after 19 months in the Pacific, and they dropped the Atom Bomb while he was back on leave. Then he went back to the Pacific. By the end of November, he was released because he'd been in since '41. Then we decided to move to Denver. After all, it was home for him, and there was a place for him to work, and we left. My mother got very ill. She had asthma. She kind of had it, appropriately, and we moved back to Baltimore. Oh, my father called Lee in Denver was on – I think it was JoAnn's second birthday, and said, "How would you like to work at the Brewery?"

MCF: What kind of work was he doing?

JKS: He was just out of the Navy. Wasn't doing anything.

MCF: Right.

JKS: He was trying to decide what we were going to do. Where we were going to live. So we came back to Baltimore during the party and talked to my father, and he then became my father's son. I ceased to be his son. [laughter] I gave him a real one, and they became so close. I said it's just hard to believe all the harsh words that were said. [laughter]

MCF: What did it take your father to ask Lee to join the business? He had come –

JKS: It took JoAnn.

MCF: Yes.

JKS: It took getting that baby back, whom he already adored. Because he had her. That's what it took. So, that makes me an adult. Although I must admit my worst birthday was my 30th – which we were in Denver for – we were always in Denver over Christmas vacation. I refused to go out. I refused to go to the table and Lee said, "What is bothering you? You're only thirty." I said, "It's not that I'm only thirty; it's when you're thirty, you're a responsible adult. And you can no longer be excused because of your youth." This is a big step. [laughter] I still feel that way – although I guess thirty is now the wrong age. But it was awful. [laughter] I was so mean to my in-laws. Anyway, that takes us up to after the War, and back to Baltimore, and Lee went to work at the brewery. I started the first Child Study group.

MCF: But the brewery was making –

JKS: Real beer by now.

MCF: And then, you started a –

JKS: A Child Study. That was my first venture into –

MCF: Tell me about that. What was that about?

JKS: Well, it became a national organization, I believe. It was a group of young people who needed guidance in raising their children, and they might laugh at us today.

[laughter] But, we had to find the books to read. Dr. Spock and all that sort of thing. And Dr. – what was her name? Ginsberg. Hmm. I have a little trouble remembering certain things.

MCF: That's okay.

JKS: Anyway, we had a child psychologist in Baltimore, whose name was Dr. Ginsberg. A woman, and her first name began with an "R". [laughter] As I recall, she kind of advised us. So that was my –

MCF: And what year did you begin that?

JKS: Well, I guess – these are all guesses. But it was '44-'45.

MCF: Did you see that as a group formed for volunteers – for your own purposes and for those of women that you knew?

JKS: No, it was an information group. It was "How to Raise Your Children." We asked each other questions.

MCF: Then, so who paid?

JKS: Have experts come to speak to us.

MCF: Who was your audience that participated?

JKS: Oh, anybody who wanted to come, I guess. [laughter] I don't even remember. That was a long time ago.

MCF: Did you hire a staff? Did it become a real organization, or – ?

JKS: After I was finished with it.

MCF: Wow.

JKS: Yes, it became a real organization. Then, when I was pregnant with Howard. He was born in January of '47. So this was in '46. There was a group of us who spent a lot of Saturday nights together. In one another's homes. We were sitting around one night, and we were talking. We were talking about our kids, and I said, "I don't know anything about Judaism. How the hell are we going to raise these kids?" We thought about it, and somebody said, well, we could meet once a month and do something. I said, "Well, who are we going to meet with?" No answer. So, I went home, and I said to my father – oh, I didn't go home – I didn't live with him. But, I went to my father, and I said, "We've got this group," and I named the people in it, "who all were raised Jewish, and none knew very much about it." I mean, some of them were kosher and didn't know. So, I said, we need somebody to guide us. So he thought for a minute, and he said, "Well, there's only one person in town." He said, "That's a red-headed Communist – Lou Kaplan." [laughter] Did you ever hear of Dr. Kaplan?

MCF: I think I have. Tell me about it.

JKS: Dr. Kaplan was an educator. He came to Baltimore during the Depression and headed our Baltimore Hebrew College. Or I guess maybe it was a Board of Jewish Education then and later, became everything to everybody. So I went to Lou, who was Dr. Kaplan to me then and talked to him. He thought it was a great idea. So we started

this group that met once a month.

MCF: What was it called?

JKS: For about 20 years.

MCF: What was it called?

JKS: We didn't have a name.

MCF: Just a –

JKS: We didn't have a name. We didn't even have an Agenda. Sometimes he'd say next week we'll, or next month we'll talk about this. Now and then, we would talk about what was on our minds.

MCF: But it was a Jewish study group.

JKS: That's right.

MCF: That meant once a month – for 20 years?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: What did that do for you?

JKS: It was stimulating. Dr. Kaplan was an inspired human being. He was not demanding of us – he did not necessarily try to convert us to Orthodox Judaism or anything of the sort. But he just opened fields that were totally unknown to us. I mean, studying the Talmud as you, of course, now, we didn't know anything about it in the '40s. Only “yeshiva bochers” studied the Talmud. So, it was a wonderful experience. It did not make us perfect Jewish parents. But it made us better than we would have been, I think. I hope. [laughter] So that was my first experience with Jewish things. Naturally,

when you became a part of Dr. Kaplan, you also became a part of the Hebrew College because go along and take this course from him, and I'm going to take that course from him. And they had wonderful extension courses – or what do you call them?

MCF: Continuing Ed?

JKS: Continuing Ed Courses. So, some of us did that. Then it was 1948. Howard was born in 1947. 1948 came, and one early spring night, I got a phone call from a friend who said, “Will you come down to the Harbor and load a ship?” I said, “Is it legal?” And he said, “No.” And I said, “No.” And the decision I have rued all the rest of my life – they were loading the Exodus.

MCF: Amazing.

JKS: I think that after I refused that, I felt such an unbelievable responsibility to the State of Israel for not having done that, that I spent the next – let's see, that was '48 – the next 40 years going back and forth to Israel, three and four times a year.

MCF: OK. Now it's gone. So say that sentence again.

JKS: I never went to Israel. In fact, I'd never been to Europe until I was forty, which is unheard of today. [laughter] As I watch my great-grandchild flying across an ocean three times, four times a year. So, I went about my business. I started doing things for the Federation. Doing things for the Council of Jewish Women, you know, and all the things that you do. I did a stint with The United Way. Then I got involved, and oh, Sisterhood – I forgot that one. That is where I was President of the Sisterhood. I was the first woman to sit on the Board there. It took maneuvering. [laughter]

MCF: Tell me about that.

JKS: Well, I didn't really – I just thought it let people know that I thought it was ridiculous for someone who was heading Sisterhood not to have a voice on the Board. Then it didn't really make any difference between the men who were all there anyway, and it happened.

MCF: So, it was generally in the '40s that you became so actively involved in Jewish organizations?

JKS: I would say it was the '50s.

MCF: The '50s?

JKS: It was in the '40s that we started with Dr. Kaplan.

MCF: Right.

JKS: I was doing educational things. But I was doing child study, and I got involved in Sisterhood, as I said, and became President of the Sisterhood.

MCF: What did you think of Sisterhood? Tell me about early Sisterhood. What was that like? How did you participate?

JKS: Two of my best friends and I ran the gift shop at Sisterhood, which was as involved as we could get. Why I became President of the Sisterhood, I will never know. Because I wasn't that kind of a role model. But I could read Hebrew. I guess it was just the next thing to do. [laughter] Funny when I think back on it.

MCF: Do you know what year that was?

JKS: I was pretty good at raising money for them. We had street fairs in those days.

MCF: Yes.

JKS: And we went down and scored six pairs of socks from somebody and a dozen shirts – that sort of stuff.

MCF: What year did you become Sisterhood President? Around?

JKS: Around '60.

MCF: 1960-ish?

JKS: Maybe a little – oh, that's about right.

MCF: What did you want to do when you were President?

JKS: Oh, President before then.

MCF: Once this office was on you –

JKS: Show them how important Sisterhood was to the Synagogue. At that point, we started having Sisterhood Sabbath, where the Sisterhood President gave the sermon. So I did that twice. I'm trying to get my years straightened out. It's not so easy. I didn't go to Israel until 1963 or 4, it was the first mission from our Federation. And Lee and I went. It was a profound experience for me. We had a wonderful guide who was very intellectual, and he had proof of everything he told us. [laughter] I think about right now – I was pretty unsophisticated. I mean, I really got a thrill out of seeing where Abraham was born or where Rebecca's well was. Now, I say to myself, that's probably not even where it all happened, but it didn't matter then. Because it was the Holy Land, and it was where these things, by mouth, by voice, took place.

MCF: Why did you go that year? Why was that –?

JKS: Because the Federation had a source mission.

MCF: Source? What did that do for you? That first trip?

JKS: It made me Israeli. That's what it did. So, we came back. That was in the fall of '64. The next year in the spring of '66 – a year and a half later – we took JoAnn, who was then married to Jack, and Howard, to Israel. Lee died – Ayelet Hachashar – you know, the Kibbutz?

MCF: Yes.

JKS: Well, I was lucky the kids were with me. I'm not sure they were so lucky. I was fortunate to have them.

MCF: What happened?

JKS: He had a heart attack. We were just walking up the hill to go to the movie. So, I thought, well, I guess I'll never come back here.

MCF: How old were you?

JKS: I was forty-three. No, he was forty-three. I guess I was forty. No, I was forty-three. He was forty-seven. (1966) About a year and a half later – I don't know whether it was the synagogue or the Sisterhood – had a trip to Israel, and I decided to go. I had, in the meantime, made some friends there who were wonderful to me when – Lee and I had made friends with them. I went back, and I felt so comfortable. I couldn't wait to go back again. The next time I went back, which was, I think, August '67, another year later, I went alone. I stayed in a hotel alone, and I visited friends, and I had a wonderful, wonderful experience. Then, Baltimore became part of Project Renewal, and since I was the most [laughter] transitional person they had, I became chairperson, which gave me a real reason to go and something to do, which you do need.

MCF: Step back for two seconds. Tell me, first of all, how did you handle that time after leaving Israel? Lee's death? Coming back and re-adjusting to life?

JKS: I guess they say I handled it well. I never thought of remarrying. It never entered my mind. For the first year or two, a year and a half or so – oh, a matchmaker called me one week after he died. I screamed at that man. It was just impossible what he did.

MCF: A man? A Jewish Matchmaker?

JKS: He had several men he thought would be interested. At that point, I guess they considered me a wealthy widow. [laughter] But, anyway. Jo and Jack, who were married, lived in California, and he was getting his master's at Berkeley, which gave me a reason to go there. They had a baby. It was my first grandchild, and that gave me more reason to do things. Then, as I said, Project Renewal came along. I had people to go with.

When Golda Meir came into office – it's so funny, the things that you remember – not necessarily in context. I remember getting a letter from my son-in-law, Jack, and I was walking down King David Street reading my letter, and it says, "Dear Mom, I just heard on the radio that a Jewish grandmother is going to be Prime Minister of Israel. I assume it's you." [laughter]

MCF: That's wonderful.

JKS: That was cute.

MCF: Tell me why you felt so comfortable in Israel. What do you think made you feel that way? What was that about?

JKS: There were two sides to my life in Israel. Oh, I'll come to that – became an olim. He still had a voting card. There were two sides to it. There was the – I hate to say the Jewry side.

MCF: Philanthropy?

JKS: There was the partnership. There was this group of people who had been there for ten years, fifteen years, twenty years – who were no further advanced than they had been in their old country practically. They were in desperate need of help, and they'd been through hell. So who else was there to help them? Then, I had a social side. I had very dear friends, the Vinitskys.

MCF: Can you spell that name?

JKS: V-I-N-I-T-S-K-Y. Chaim was a Director General of the Jewish Agency, and his job, in essence, not in fact – maybe not in the job description – was to keep the gifts people happy. He solved all their problems [laughter], and we became very friendly with Chaim and his wife Penina. They had children, and their children became like our other grandchildren. They still are. Chaim died about two years ago. So they introduced me to their Bridge group and to their friends who had been there for generations. Penina was an 8th-generation Palestinian, actually. So I got two sides of Israel, and one was as important as the other. Because what I was trying to prove to people here was that there were our peers in Israel. Everybody was not sleeping seven in a room, and some people had little villas. Some people had nice apartments, and some people went to the movies and they had theater, and they had opera. There was a part of Israel that you had to strive to get these other people into. So, it became a very important mission in my life, and it came at a time when I needed it. But, by then, that's not true. Now, I can't remember whether Marvin and I were married. I'm going to jump but not far.

MCF: OK. Tell me how you met Marvin and how that relationship –

JKS: Marvin and his wife and son were our next-door neighbors for about –

MCF: Schapiro?

JKS: Yes. We weren't very friendly. However, we were polite and that sort of thing. But he had business in Japan. I could hear him screaming over the telephone in the middle

of the night, which was fine because I realized somebody else was awake. [laughter] Because I was an insomniac. We moved away to another house. I never lived in any place long. The longest I've lived in a place is here. So, we moved further out of the country. They moved and, to tell you the truth, I don't remember who died first – his wife Dorothy or Lee. We still didn't see them. Actually, I remembered Marvin and Dorothy sent a wedding present for JoAnn's wedding. I never saw them again until I went to a party with my father [laughter] and he was there. And he said, "Can I call you sometime?" I said, "Sure." By that time, I wasn't dating at all because it was awful. [laughter] It was much better to stay home with a book or go out with your friends. I had wonderful friends who never made me feel like a fifth wheel.

MCF: The dating was just –

JKS: Oh, it's crud. [laughter] So, I guess you could – if you don't have a lot of friends and family, you do it out of desperation. But I wasn't desperate for that. So then, I took care of Liana, the first grandchild, for six weeks when she was eighteen months old while her parents went to Russia because Jack was studying Russia, getting his Ph.D. at SAIS (The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies). I woke her up when she was eighteen months old to see the landing on the Moon. [laughter] I propped her in a chair and "You're not going to remember this, but I'm going to keep reminding you that you saw this." It was just after the kids got home that the phone rang one day, and it was Marvin, would I like to go to dinner? I said, "Who is it? Who is it? Who is it?" "Do you know? This is Marvin Schapiro." "Oh, go with him, go with him." "I don't think so." Go with him, just go once." So, I did. We had fun. We have a wonderful relationship – we have melded two families until we don't know who is step and who is real. I keep thinking about my obituary, and this is crazy, but I don't want it to say "step-grandchildren" – they're not my step-grandchildren. They're my grandchildren, and they don't know any other grandmother on that side.

MCF: So, he had how many children?

JKS: He had one son.

MCF: Name?

JKS: Mark, who was married and had a little baby boy, J.M. JoAnn was married and had a little girl, a little bit older than J.M. My son was married and had a little baby girl. The three little babies were at our wedding. We just amalgamated a family in such a way that I just thank God every night – whether He's listening to me or not.

MCF: What year were you married?

JKS: We were married in '70.

MCF: What did Marvin do for work?

JKS: Marvin was in the real estate business, and he had never been to Israel. He said the plane stopped once when he was on his way someplace – to Africa or something. He'd never seen it. So we went, and he fell in love with it. In fact, he followed me there. That's right. One time I went on a trip, and I stayed, and he – oh, I know. I had a party with some friends, and he came to it, and he said to me, "Would you go around the world with me?" And I said, "No." I just wasn't born in that era. [laughter] I said, "No, I won't go around the world with you. I'm going to Israel." He said, "Well, I'm going around the world. I'll see you when you get back." [laughter] He started off – I went directly to Israel. He started off in London and then Amsterdam, and I got mail. Then, one day, I walked – Chaim calls me, and he says, "There's a man here, and he wants to know where Mrs. Cohen is." [laughter] Chaim kept track of me every day. There he was.

MCF: Wow.

JKS: Fortunately, he fell in love with Israel also. He became very important in the Economic Development Program, which – trying to make jobs for people, and we're still doing it. So, it was a very wonderful marriage. It is a wonderful marriage, I should say. We have five great-grandchildren.

MCF: Give me their names.

JKS: Oh, of course. [laughter] I've got two on the way.

MCF: Okay. Let's start with your grandchildren from –

JKS: Whose?

MCF: Okay.

JKS: [laughter]

MCF: However you want to do it.

JKS: Well, Mark is the oldest child of the three. Mark has three children, and between them, at this moment, have three grandchildren.

MCF: Wow.

JKS: So, I have three great-grandchildren, and they are twins. My daughter JoAnn has three daughters, one of whom is living in Paris because she went junior year abroad and fell in love. Met him in Egypt.

MCF: Wow.

JKS: He's French, and he's halachically Jewish. His mother's family were Greek Jews. Okay. She lives in Paris. She has a daughter who is my first great-grandchild. She was my first. Clara Jane. She said to me – oh, she said, "Mom-Mom, Clara Jane." Our

names are the same. [laughter] She speaks English to me. She speaks French to her father, and she's a whirlwind. And Liana is now pregnant.

MCF: Wow.

JKS: My son lives in Baltimore. But his daughter lives in Providence. She has a little boy, Dara, who is another one of our grandchildren who live in California. She has a little boy and is pregnant. So we have five rewards, or I call them my rewards – grandchildren are your dividends. Great grandchildren are your rewards, for what? I don't know.

MCF: So, it sounds like you enjoy the experience of being a grandparent?

JKS: I adore them. I adore the grandchildren. I still do. But, you know, they're very grown up and I love the little babies.

MCF: Tell me – are you okay time-wise?

JKS: Am I what?

MCF: Are you all right time-wise?

JKS: Oh yes.

MCF: Do you need a break?

JKS: No. But don't you want some lunch?

MCF: Well, we can take a break in a minute.

JKS: That's it – do you want to?

MCF: Yes.

JKS: Okay.

MCF: Sure.

JKS: Well, I don't know what we have.

MCF: Let me ask you one more question.

JKS: Go ahead.

MCF: Then, we'll take a break. I didn't expect you to feed me, but I'll eat lox or anything. We kind of skipped over motherhood. I wanted just to talk to you a little bit about that.

JKS: That's funny because grandmotherhood overtook motherhood.

MCF: It sounds like it.

JKS: Isn't that interesting?

MCF: Yes. Well, it is so much a part of your life now, you know? But, I wanted just to hear, what was early motherhood like for you? Whatever you want to say about it. How did you experience it?

JKS: Well, of course, JoAnn had the experience of not knowing her father until she was nineteen months old. She was mine, and I didn't have him either, so she was my entire life for that period of time. She was a very happy little girl.

MCF: Who did she look like?

JKS: Temper like her mother. But she was a very happy young child. Howard was a pudgy little baby [laughter] who my parents adored. See, I inherited my love of grandparenting. My mother was a superb grandmother, and my father was a very good grandfather. He preferred watching and talking to them. My mother would do anything with them.

MCF: So there was a lot of time with family?

JKS: Tremendous.

MCF: With grandparents?

JKS: Yes. The kids went to camp. Howard went to camp unhappily. I can't believe that I insisted that he go. We changed every year.

MCF: Where did he go to camp?

JKS: He went to Androscoggin. He went to Wigwam. He went to – I can't remember.

MCF: Did JoAnn go to camp?

JKS: She went to camp and loved it.

MCF: Where did she go?

JKS: She went to Fernwood. But all that's passed. I mean those kids – I guess they still exist, some of them.

MCF: Were those in Maine?

JKS: It's all very different today.

MCF: It sounded like you were splitting your time between full-time motherhood and all your organizational work, is that correct?

JKS: Oh, I went back to Goucher.

MCF: You went back to Goucher.

JKS: When Howard was about two years old. [laughter] My neighbor said – she put him on the porch. Locked the porch and went off to school. Neighbors. [laughter] They all came to my graduation – my mother and father, and Howard and Jo. It was cute. He must have been about three by then.

MCF: Did you continue to study Journalism at Goucher?

JKS: Yes. English Lit.

MCF: Yes.

JKS: So we had fun when the children were little. We took them to Denver frequently. On trains early and then on planes. We took them to California. We took wonderful summer trips. We'd pick them up at camp with a canoe on top of the car and go off to the Gaspé Peninsula or something like that – fun things.

MCF: Did you have a fairly traditional division of responsibilities in your marriage?

JKS: We never talked about it, we just lived.

MCF: What did that – ?

JKS: Oh, how did it turn out?

MCF: Yes.

JKS: It turned out that we shared everything. I don't even know that one of us was more disciplinarian than the other. I don't think so. But I did live in the age of bopping a kid. [laughter] And I did, on occasion.

MCF: What about household responsibilities like paying bills, shopping, and cleaning?

JKS: We did that jointly. We went to the market at night. Took the kids. Or we went in the daytime. But I had time. We had reasonable help. We could leave the kids. My mother was always available. If we had to go on a trip to a convention or a conference, she just would move in.

MCF: Did you have live-in help?

JKS: They did not live in until the kids were, I guess, about twelve. Yes. A little younger than that – we lived on Longmeadow Road. I guess when the kids were about 7 We had a Morgan College student who became so attached to the family that I had to make her – after she graduated from college – I said to her, “You can’t go on doing this. You went to college with great sacrifice, and you have to use it.” I said, “You can sleep here if you want to, but you can no longer work for us.”

MCF: Did you cook? Did someone cook?

JKS: I cooked. Occasionally, we had a maid to cook. But I love to cook.

MCF: Do you?

JKS: Yes. I don’t cook at all anymore – all this help floating around. [laughter]

MCF: Did you celebrate Jewish Holidays in your family? In your married family?

JKS: Most of it was my parents.

MCF: Still?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: And –

JKS: It wasn't until my mother was very ill that I actually took over the Shabbat dinners. Our grandchildren remember Shabbat dinners with such joy. Well, we had a little system. Every week a different grandchild would select the menu with me. So that kept everybody kind of hyped up, you know? Oh, it's her turn time. What do you think she ordered? [laughter] Then, we had a house in Annapolis on the Bay with a pool. Before that, we had a little shack up in Charnita, a little A-frame thing, with two twin bedrooms downstairs, and a loft upstairs.

MCF: Is that Charnita?

JKS: Yes, it's an old place. It's Carroll Valley, either in Maryland or Pennsylvania. [laughter] I don't know. We had six built-in bunk beds, and my children, when they were little, used to come – oh, was it six? No, we had eight built-in bunk beds in Charnita. Then, we'd have Shabbat dinner in Baltimore, and then we'd pack up all the kids and take them up for the weekend. We'd take them to Gettysburg and to the horse farm, and to the egg farm, and to the – who-knows-what? They used to go out, and we had under the deck we had two carousel horses. The two older grandchildren took them, they were theirs. The other children couldn't touch them. In Israel, they would take mimiyeot, but I guess no longer, but children used to carry these colorful plastic bottles on a strap on their shoulders for water.

MCF: Right.

JKS: So I brought back all of these mimiyeot – I guess is plural – and they would put their mimiyeot full of apple juice and their little bag of cookies or something and go on these long rides under the porch. They would go pick wildflowers because they knew I loved them. We took the grandchildren to Amish country. We took them to Philadelphia. We took them to Disney World about 7 times because first, we took the two older ones, and the next two, and then, we took all four [laughter]

MCF: Tell me about the Jewish cooking that you did.

JKS: I only do certain Jewish cooking.

MCF: What do you do?

JKS: I make matzo balls, gefilte fish, chicken soup, and chopped liver. [laughter]

MCF: How did you learn to make those things?

JKS: My mother made great gefilte fish and matzo balls.

MCF: Did she show you how?

JKS: No.

MCF: No?

JKS: [laughter] I saw her.

MCF: You watched?

JKS: Yes. When she was dying, one of my friends said to me, "You've got your mother's gefilte fish recipe?" I said, "No." I said, "And I can't ask her for it now." She said, "Well, can I ask her for it?" I said, "You can say that you are having a party, and you want to make it, sure." So she did, and she gave it to me the first year after my mother died. I made it, and it was so bad we threw it away. [laughter] he must have forgotten something. Or I forgot something. But, after that, I got better.

MCF: So, those were your standards in your Jewish repertoire of cooking?

JKS: I cooked on the first of Rosh Hashanah. I cooked a meal before for fasting, which was always kind of a chicken stew with everything in it. Chicken soup with noodles and

kneidlach, and what are those other things called? The little hard things?

MCF: The kreplach...

JKS: Yes. [laughter]

MCF: Okay.

JKS: Which I bought.

MCF: Yes. What were the challenges of motherhood versus – or maybe the difficulties versus the pleasures?

JKS: I didn't have any conflicts. That's a terrible thing to say, I guess I should have. But I was always home when the kids got home from school. I was available all weekend when they were home. I didn't feel any real conflict except for the days that I left Howard on the porch when I went to Goucher. But I figured that was a sacrifice that he had to make for me. [laughter] I don't know.

MCF: In what ways would you say that you mothered differently than your own mother?

JKS: My mother, what?

MCF: In what ways did you mother differently than, say, your own mother?

JKS: I don't think very much. I was not as composed as my mother. I flew off the handle and got mad, I guess. Spanked. I took the two oldest – my two oldest grandchildren – and I said "my" again, the two older girls to Israel when they were, I think, eleven and twelve, for three weeks. We had an apartment in Israel for about fourteen years. I took them to Israel, and we had a wonderful, wonderful trip. Marvin said, "Never again, are you going to leave me for three weeks." [laughter] So none of the other children got to do it, although they all managed to be in Israel when I was there. So they know it but

haven't been back recently.

MCF: Do you want to stop and take a break?

JKS: How do you mean?

MCF: Do you want to stop and take a break?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: I'll see what we can find to eat.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: Okay?

MCF: We're going –

JKS: As I said, I never really had any Barry Levinson experiences. I grew up, the first twelve years of my life, in a mixed neighborhood. We then moved to Upper Park Heights, which was, by that time, pretty Jewish and fairly affluent. But then, after I got married and Lee came back from the War, we were looking for a house – before my father got one – and after my father got him back here. We found this great house in Catonsville. It was a little dollhouse, and it had a yard, and I had visions of a pony for JoAnn and all that sort of thing. This very nice lady – it was for rent. This very nice lady took Lee and me and showed us around and talked to us. The next day we came to leave a deposit, and she said, "I'm sorry – I have to ask you this – but, you said you work for Gunther?" Lee said, "Yes." She said, "Isn't that owned by Jewish people?" He said, "Yes". She said, "I can't rent to you if you're part of it." She said, "I'm not allowed to." Lee turned to me, and he said, "Let's go back to Denver." [laughter] But, we found

something else. But not like that.

MCF: When was that?

JKS: That was in 1946, I would guess.

MCF: So, how would you describe Baltimore?

JKS: It was divided. It was totally divided, and I don't mean to denigrate Barry Levinson by saying that. I just wasn't part of groups of kids that went on the other side of Falls Road for the sake of going on the other side of Falls Road. In fact, I didn't even know where Falls Road was. But I forget that Barry Levinson is portraying an old Baltimore that's not nearly as old as my old Baltimore.

MCF: Right.

JKS: My old Baltimore, from youth – was not as segregated as it became. Even though there were areas that were restricted against “Jews, Blacks, and Dogs.” That’s what the sign said on the Meadowbrook swimming pool. Since I never wanted to do anything particularly, and although I did have Christian friends, they lived on Gwynn Oak, and another one lived off of Park Heights Avenue, also – but it was still mixed neighborhoods. I had no reason to want to go over. I never thought about it. Barry Levinson made me aware of Falls Road as the boundary, and here, I live on the wrong side of Falls Road. [laughter] I remember when I.D. Schapiro and Mickey bought their house on Giddings Avenue. They were really about the first people we knew who moved into a totally Christian neighborhood. I should say totally non-Jewish. I don't know if it was Christian or not. But there are still lots of Jewish people who wouldn't even consider living here. Because it's not Jewish.

MCF: What's this area called?

JKS: It's part of Roland Park, but it is the Tuscany, Canterbury area, and it is more related to the Hopkins, I guess that's what the Tuscany, Canterbury. Well, Roland Park, Guilford, and Homeland are very kind of overlapping each other. It's hard to know where the boundaries are.

MCF: So, in what era was this most specifically restricted and segregated?

JKS: Up until after the Second World War. Probably considered a few years later than that.

MCF: When did you see a noticeable change?

JKS: I didn't. It was not noticeable. It was very slow. However, we had already lived – I mean, I say I spent my childhood – in mixed neighborhoods. I lived in the Valley. The priests would ring our doorbell to ask if they could bless the house at certain times of the year. I hunted, and they would come and bless the hounds [laughter] that's wild.

MCF: So, you were very much a part of a Jewish –?

JKS: I was a part, but I wasn't. I didn't date. My father wouldn't let me, and I never had any great desire to. After the hunt, friends would come back to our house and have drinks or something. If one called me up, my father would remind me, [laughter] so it was no great sacrifice when we –

MCF: Was it always understood? Did you always believe that you would marry someone Jewish?

JKS: I think it was understood. I don't think I ever said to myself, "I will marry someone Jewish." I think it was just an automatic thing.

MCF: How has that changed with your own children?

JKS: Considerably. Of our children, one of them is married to a non-Jewish person. Of our grandchildren, no one is yet. Four of them are married. No, five of them are married – all to Jewish people. No, I mean one of them is not – one of them is married to a non-Jew. Yes. It's four and one. And one is [laughter] *comme ci, comme ça*.

MCF: How are you, yourself, comfortable with that? Or are you?

JKS: Well, I worry about their children. But I worry about the children of the ones who are married to Jews, as well as non-Jews.

MCF: What do you worry about?

JKS: That their children won't be raised with enough knowledge of Judaism and enough feeling of responsibility for Israel.

MCF: Do you see a noticeable difference in that care or commitment to causes or issues from your generation?

JKS: Let me put it this way – it's not that they feel less responsibility. But it is not the same kind of emotional responsibility that our generation, my generation, felt.

MCF: Why did you have? What was responsible for that emotion? That tie for you?

JKS: Pictures. Stories. Knowing people who had – I had my very dear friend in Paris is a child of Theresienstadt, and these people are disappearing. There's nobody to tell them, and there's no way that I can tell them the same way a person who went through it can tell them. Then, you struggle with the fact that maybe you're being maudlin if you say, "I want to tell you what happened to the Jews." They don't see much happening to the Jews here. It's a pretty good life. I mean, we're more Jewish under duress.

MCF: You really created – you self-educated yourself Jewishly.

JKS: With a lot of help.

MCF: Yes. But you created those Jewish educational experiences for yourself.

JKS: Yes.

MCF: Your children, it sounds like have had a more organized education.

JKS: Yes, well not really.

MCF: Is that correct?

JKS: All three are very caring people. But they do not get this urge to be in Israel. They hope that they'll give them money and they'll do that sort of thing. But, other than – well, one of them was Campaign Chairman for the Federation. But, after that, it kind of dwindled away. He gives more money than he did, and every year, he gives more money. That's not the problem. The problem is really the next generation.

MCF: Well, what was the connection to Israel? What was the emotional link?

MCF: Okay. This is our third disk with Jane Krieger Schapiro. Today is April 11, 2001. It is about 1:15. She's being interviewed by Marcie Cohen Ferris.

JKS: Marcie, I think that there are two important things that made us so completely involved in Israel. One of them, of course, was the Holocaust. There are all those hundreds of thousands of people who had to go someplace. You saw the ships being turned away from ports, and you knew that these people had to be taken care of. I want to tell you, it wasn't just because they were Jewish – it was because they were human beings – which is something that follows me around with immigration policies and all. [laughter] But then, I think the idea of a struggling new State was very inspirational, and it was just watching this thing grow and seeing it become just wonderfully cultured and social – except for some little bad things that occur. It was an inspiration to us. Every

time you went, you saw something new and something different, and it's not the same.

Ben Gurion said Israel wouldn't really be a State until it had its own thieves, whores, and what-not. It's got them. But it doesn't really need them. I can't honestly send people there for a Chalutzim – an experience of pioneers – unless you go to one of the universities where they're doing the research, and the Blaustein Institute, and the Negev and that kind of thing. You see, they're still struggling with new ideas and, you meet social workers who are – I met social workers who were totally dedicated to what they were doing. When I first started going to Israel, I met a man who was a director – not a Director, General – and we were driving to a very fancy party in Caesarea, and he was talking about the problems in Israel. I said, "Come on, Harry. I said, "I've been all over Israel, and I haven't seen what you're talking about." He said, "Okay, come to my office at 7:30 tomorrow morning." So, I shocked him. I came to his office at 7:30 the next morning, and he sent me out with one of his workers. We visited a nurse, trying to teach people family planning. I say "trying" – because the authorities didn't want her to do it, of course. So, she was doing it in the subterranean. We saw places where people were sleeping, where their apartment was literally mattresses. We saw – in the Women of the Night – and my friends in Israel would say to me, why do you go out and see that stuff for? You know, why do you want to see the ugly side of Israel when there's so much on the beautiful side? I said, "Because Israel can't stay beautiful unless it does something about the ugly part." So that was actually how I got ripe and ready for Project Renewal.

MCF: Tell me what Project Renewal is.

JKS: Project Renewal was a partnership between neighborhoods or towns in Israel with designated communities and States and in Europe. It was a partnership because we were supposed to partner with them in making plans. Because it just seemed better not to go in with your own plans they do this. Because we were not going to get any cooperation. We had a hard enough time getting cooperation on a partnership basis.

We met a lot of resistance. First of all, Israelis didn't know anything about – the Israelis

we working with – about committees, meetings, and how to run anything. Everyone was just kind of a mess. So, apparently, Begin woke up one morning – pardon me, Prime Minister Begin – woke up one morning and said, “We’ve got to improve things here.” He invented Project Renewal, and Baltimore was very ready for it. It just happened to be fortunate that I wanted to go to Israel several times a year, and it was a job that required someone to be there. We’d take groups of people, and it worked out just fine. I met a lot of people with a lot of charisma and a lot of caring in the social work area. But I’m not sure they still exist in the same way. Because they were themselves, Chalutzim and, that was supposed to last for five years. I think we stayed in Ir Ganim for nine years.

MCF: In where?

JKS: Work on Ir Ganim. It’s a Jerusalem neighborhood of mostly North Africans, and they were a people who came and were told – we just live here for a few months, or a couple of years, and decades went by. Of course, there was always the excuse there were wars, and you’re going to get me into a whole other subject. You don’t want to put me there.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: You don’t want me to discuss Israeli politics. [laughter]

MCF: Okay.

JKS: With fellow Jews or with Arabs – because they’re a little wrong on both of them. [laughter] That’s unfortunate.

MCF: Well, can you briefly talk about how you feel about how things are?

JKS: Well, after our part in Project Renewal ended. By the way, we still have a little presence there. We have a scholarship fund that was named in memory of my sister,

who donated the money. It sends young people to vocational schools, and it was back in the era of we had to provide jobs. You've got to provide skilled people. They go to an electrical school. They go to nursing school. The teaching field. Then, we moved on and became – well, our second neighborhood in the Negev was Kiryat Gat. Which became a little less emotional because the people were a little more sophisticated. It's funny to think that in Kiryat Gat, they were more sophisticated than in Jerusalem. But that's how big cities and neighborhoods work. We had a very fine experience there, also. So far, we've done all these things, and we haven't seen an Arab. Except on a tour. Then came Partnership 2000, in which we partnered with a city and an area in the Galil where it's like 9 to 1 Arab. And that's where we saw what a terrible mistake we had made. You went to Shorashim, which was this really lovely, lovely Jewish garden, [laughter] where the people were all college graduates, and it was – I don't want to say "sterile" – that's not the right word. But it's a planned community for certain people. Five miles away, there was Sahknim, which was this Arab village with no roads, no water, no sewage. I thought – people can't live like this, next to people living the other way. However, that's just politics. I'm not part of it anymore, so I would never be a part of internal – except for voicing an opinion. [laughter]

MCF: How did you feel about the experience of being a woman or how did your gender affect the experience that you had once you started going to Israel? Did you have a different experience there than you might have had in the States, in the work that you did there, or not?

JKS: Well, I think Golda did an unbelievable thing for Israel. I think she gave women a voice. The realization that they could sit on these things. That they could be this kind of worker. I think she had a big influence. I never felt female in that respect.

MCF: Did you feel that you had more of a voice in Israel than you did here?

JKS: More what?

MCF: More of a voice in Israel than you might have here?

JKS: Well, not more – I can't say that we were paid attention to, but we were listened to. Israelis are a strange breed, and I'm not sure whether they simply tolerated us or whether they really were sincere in their feelings about it. This is turning out to be an anti-Israel conversation. I love it, [laughter] not the conversation, I love the State. But I do see its problems. No, I didn't mind being a woman in Israel. We were not very often – in Israel, being Orthodox has really nothing to do with anything. You don't know if the person next to you keeps kosher doesn't keep kosher. You go to a kosher restaurant. You go to kosher hotels, and that's of no importance whatsoever. Nobody ever said to me, "Do you keep kosher at home?" Nobody ever said, "Do you go to synagogue?" Because they don't either. [laughter] I don't know. I thought about living in Israel. We really made aliyot, Marvin and I made aliyot only because we lived in a very modest area of Jerusalem, purposely. Because we wanted our Israeli friends to realize that we were not there at the King David. But we were living as Israelis. I learned enough Hebrew to be able to argue with the plumber, and the roof leaked, and this leaked, and that leaked, and everything, and the door blew off the stove one night, and I thought it was a bomb. But I wanted our friends to know that we could live that way – the way they were living and have the same problems and have the same joys, and that's what we did. That was a wonderful experience. It was rather secular, and we played a lot of bridge when we were there. I didn't have any women friends that were not part of the – they were husband and wife teams, mostly in the social life. Because everybody worked during the day, both males and females. So there wasn't time for that.

MCF: Tell me a little bit about your women friendships in your life and what those have meant to you.

JKS: My five best friends died beginning when I was about 40. It's been very hard because I was lucky enough to have such good friends. That has been a tough thing. But, I have a good few, really good friends now who understand my situation and are willing to cope with it. With me.

MCF: Were those five from – what aspects of your life?

JKS: We were not homogeneous. [laughter] They were not a group of people.

MCF: Yes, tell me about that a little bit.

JKS: This was my friend, and this one was my friend. They all went out that way. Didn't go around. So, [laughter] joint pictures. What about them? One of them was the one who got me involved in the synagogue.

MCF: What was her name?

JKS: Her name was Dorothy Manekin. M-A-N-E-K-I-N. She just said to me, "Well, you shouldn't just be going to school. You ought to be doing something Jewish." [laughter] So, I give her credit for that. I don't know how to describe my relationship with my other friends. Each of them was very different, and we had different interests. I had different interests with each of them. I still think of them by name. Four or five people. Well, now I'm old enough [that] I could have a hundred people. But at forty, I wasn't ready to start losing friends, my sister, my mother, and my husband. I guess I come from strong fabric.

MCF: You were forty when you lost your mother?

JKS: I was forty-two. And forty-three, when I lost my husband. Forty when I lost my best friend. One of my best friends.

MCF: So, what have you learned from that experience? What happens? What do you take from that time in your life?

JKS: You don't take, you lose. A little piece of you. And, certainly, a piece of your mind, of your – how do I say it? I mean, I didn't lose anything physically, because I'm still here. I lost the relationship I had with Peggy Hecht. Her relationship was in the country, we loved the country. When we were little girls, I wasn't allowed to have a bicycle. Because they were dangerous. She wasn't allowed to ride a horse, because it was dangerous. I would go to her house, and ride her bicycle, and she would come to my house, and ride my horse. [laughter] We just kind of grew up like – she lied for me when she had to. But that's totally different from someone else who you just went to Hebrew College with. Or someone you worked at the Associated. I was very fortunate. I can make it sound sad but, it's sad for them because they missed a lot of life, that I've been fortunate enough to have and it changes relationships with families.

MCF: Well, it sounds like your women friendships were really important to you.

JKS: I mean, they were wonderful. They were people I could say, “Oh, I'm going to do this G-Day project. Please. Please,” and they were available.

MCF: Were you going to talk to the feminist group in any specific place?

JKS: I have never been affiliated. I mean, I paid my dues. [laughter] But, I never worked.

MCF: Let me ask you one question, too. How do you feel about the choices that your daughters or your daughters-in-law have made about their lives and their families? The way that they balance things?

JKS: I try very hard to be non-judgmental. Because I think every generation thinks that the present generation is the worst that ever was. I think it will go on, ad infinitum. We've been careful, knock-on wood – we've been very fortunate in that the children of our children have been straight. They haven't had any police problems or school problems. They haven't been kicked out of any schools or anything.

MCF: Is that what you meant by "straight"?

JKS: By "straight," I meant that they don't take dope.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: [laughter] Had they not taken dope – what is the expression? [laughter] They do dope – if they did, I certainly don't know about it. But I don't think they ever did. They may have tried marijuana, and that sort of thing, which, I guess, you can't grow up without trying. So that whatever my children have done has been right for their children.

They don't need me to judge them. I'm a worrywart. I mean, did you get home? Did she get home? Did the plane land? All this sort of stuff that they poo-pooed because if the plane doesn't land, then first you hear it on television. But that doesn't keep me from worrying. I might say to my daughter, did one of the kids hear about this new treatment for something? She'll either say to me yes, or no, or I can't talk to her about it anymore. Do you want to do it? [laughter]

MCF: Yes.

JKS: But I'm not sitting in judgment of my children. If I think that my children are not perfect, which I do, I know the results are good. Therefore, they've got to be doing something right. I just hope the next generation does the same thing.

MCF: Oh, tell me the story – because you mentioned it – and I just wanted to make sure that we get back to it – when you had lunch at the Center Club.

JKS: Oh. [laughter] That was my 40th birthday.

MCF: What year was that?

JKS: 1962. Oh, I thought you were looking something up. My mother and father, and Lee and I were going to the Center Club to celebrate.

MCF: What's the Center Club?

JKS: The Center Club was a downtown – at that point, a very plushy kind of business club. They had a dining room where men and women could eat together.

MCF: For stuff – a Jewish Club?

JKS: Yes. Then, they had a dining room where only men could eat. That was at lunchtime. At nighttime, women could come in. So, we went and walked into the ladies' dining room, and it was crowded. The waiter said, "You'll have to wait for a half hour," and I said, "We don't have to wait for a half hour." That room in there is empty. There's hardly anybody in there. He says, "But you're not allowed there." I said, "Okay." So I said, "Are you with me?" to my father and my husband, and they said, "Sure." So we just walked ourselves into that dining room and ordered lunch. Simple.

MCF: Wow.

JKS: Please, I'd like to have done it a hundred times [laughter] at a hundred different places. But that's what we did.

MCF: What were the repercussions?

JKS: None. We changed the rule.

MCF: Right then?

JKS: Well, I don't know if it was very –

MCF: Soon after?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: It just takes one person.

JKS: Those things often carry on because nobody thinks about them. Actually, the women's dining room is nicer. It was prettier. Smaller, naturally more intimate. That was a long time ago. I was the first woman to serve, I believe, on the Executive Committee of our Federation.

MCF: What kind of experience was that?

JKS: I had a special place at the Federation. My father was President. Lee was in line to be President. I had done the women's thing. I was kind of representing my father as he got older. I took him to a UJA Fundraising meeting where there are no women. He wanted to go, and I went with him. So, they got kind of used to seeing me, and I think that's all it really takes.

MCF: Yes.

JKS: They have to see that a person is comfortable and even more comfortable if there were two women, but I never thought about that. Just now, I'm beginning to say – there are fourteen men and three women on this Committee – that's ridiculous. But, in truth, if I thought they were filling the Committees by what's –

MCF: Gender?

JKS: No. By skills, then I wouldn't object. Because I don't want any preference. I think women are smart enough not to need preference. I think that in our own way. I don't believe being pushy and noisy solves anything.

MCF: The Associated? The Federation? Tell me about that.

JKS: Well, that's our Federation. Do you want more?

MCF: I just wasn't sure if that was the same thing.

JKS: That is our Federation.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: For all the years I can remember – were the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: Now, we're the Baltimore Federation of Jewish Charities. Just because everybody else has Federation.

MCF: Okay. I wanted to ask you, as a native Baltimorean and also as a Jewish person that's seen a lot of Jewish communities elsewhere in the United States, do you think there was a specific regional Jewish experience here in Baltimore that you can describe? Or did you feel, no, it's much the same here as—?

JKS: I don't think it was the same. I think Baltimore was extremely fortunate to have had Harry Greenstein, who was the first President of the Associated – first professional, whatever he's called then – an Executive Director of the Associated – this was a very divided community. Christian, and I don't mean Christian – Russian and Jewish, German. Completely divided the community. Baltimore had the fortune to have Harry Greenstein, who later was a General in the Army Reserves. He was at the Nuremberg Trials. I've some copies of his stuff as the Director because he had the ability to bind people, and I think that made Baltimore a much, much better community. Then, we had Dr. Kaplan, who was a dynamic leader.

MCF: So you'd say it was more about what made Baltimore a Jewish experience, the way that it had more to do with individuals than maybe geography or regional food or –

JKS: Definitely.

MCF: Accents, or language, or being a Southern –

JKS: It could have happened in Richmond, just as well as in Baltimore. I mean, Baltimore was an entry port. But we're not talking about a hundred years ago. Or 150 years ago. We're talking about fifty, seventy-five years ago. I can't go back more than seventy-five, except when my sister was born. I was three then. [laughter] I don't know what else. I'll think of a hundred things.

MCF: Well, think about that. Maybe we can talk about that later today.

JKS: I was just lucky the Associated was born in me. I mean, I was born in the Associated.

MCF: Right.

JKS: It makes a big difference in your life. My grandchildren have a charitable foundation, which presents small problems because most of them don't live here. So they have to resolve how they're going to spend their money and so forth. But they're taking it very seriously.

MCF: What's it called?

JKS: It's called the Keshet Fund.

MCF: The Keshet?

JKS: They poured over a Hebrew-English dictionary for two days [laughter] to get the name.

MCF: I wanted to just ask you a couple of more things, and then we'll wrap it up. This is kind of a funny question, but it has something to do kind of like with the issues of domestic religion and domestic expressions of Jewishness. When you were growing up, was there anything that – objects, books, or stuff that made your childhood home feel like a Jewish home?

JKS: My mother lit Shabbat candles, which I have to assume were followed by Kiddush. [laughter]

MCF: So there were candles?

JKS: Yes.

MCF: Around? Candlesticks?

JKS: There were not – if you walk around here, you'll see artifacts from Israel, and you'll see spice boxes. That sort of thing. There was never that. A mezuzah was on the door, of course. But my parents were not practicing synagogue-goers. Later in life, my mother became attached to the synagogue. But it was kind of a haven for her. She would go in even if they weren't services and sit there and meditate, I assume.

MCF: Okay.

JKS: But she didn't know any Hebrew or any of the service, really.

MCF: What to you, in your life, or in your home, you know, is important to make this feel like a Jewish home? A Jewish place to be?

JKS: I'll show you.

MCF: Okay. Can I walk around with this?

JKS: I don't know. [laughter]

___: [pause in tape -- while walking around -- checking microphone connections...]

JKS: Well, we're going to walk out the door and look to the right.

JKS: Those are Dutch antiques, and they say, "Blessed be your coming in, and blessed be your going."

MCF: Beautiful.

JKS: And I always have them someplace.

MCF: Are they little paintings?

JKS: Yes, glass covered.

MCF: They're Dutch?

JKS: Oh, they're tiles, actually.

MCF: Oh, those are beautiful. I love those.

JKS: They're Jewish. And my grandchildren, family pictures. There's nothing special Jewish – oh, I forgot about that – H. Krieger's, too.

MCF: Right. A ceramic jug that says "Herman ..."

JKS: Well, I have the Jewish encyclopedia if that makes a house Jewish.

MCF: Right. Books.

JKS: [laughter]

MCF: Herman Krieger's Sons Wholesale and Retail Liquors, One East Lee Street, Baltimore, Maryland. It's like a gallon jug, right? Ceramic jug.

JKS: I have a couple of Jewish posters in the back hall, where there's a Chagall. Those are my grandsons.

MCF: Those are great.

JKS: These are Rubens, they're not Jewish. [laughter] They're Rubens. There's the Hanukkah.

MCF: Yeah.

JKS: This is a spice box. A menorah, a spice box, a Torah cup, plate. I guess there's a lot. These all came from Israel. This is – I forget which one this is. Oh, that's from the Archeology Department at the University.

MCF: Many books, Shofars, menorahs, spice boxes –

JKS: And a lot of French posters. [laughter]

MCF: Yes. It's a great mix. [Recording paused.] I think other things that are that you have holidays here – celebrate with family?

JKS: No question. I just got a phone call from my granddaughter in California. She said, "I'm going to come home. I'm going to be in Baltimore. Will you have Friday night dinner?" [laughter] I said, "Of course." We don't have that much anymore. Just when kids are in.

MCF: Any issues about race? We didn't discuss that much. That affected Jewish life here or –?

JKS: Yes, I kind of shudder when I think that my mother had two maids and paid six dollars a week to each of them. [laughter] I can't believe that I could possibly remember something so ugly. No, we have no race problem, thank God.

MCF: Were you involved in the Civil Rights or social –

JKS: Not really. I mean, as a paying sponsor, yes.

MCF: Right.

JKS: But I didn't. My children of a political scientist professor have done a little marching in their time. I once went over when that lousy Frenchman was here. Pompidou – but I think that that's the only time I demonstrated in my life. I have a little problem with political pressure. I'm not sure it really works. We got a letter yesterday. I got a fax from the Associated, with copies of letters, maybe we'll scratch it out later, with copies of letters to send to the Governor, regarding the location of a bar near the Holocaust Memorial.

MCF: Yes, I heard about that.

JKS: I'm not so sure that Governor Glendening receiving all these identical things is going to pay any more attention to a thousand of them than he will for one. I guess someday I'll have to have a discussion with the head of the Baltimore Jewish Council or something about that. But I generally don't do it. I haven't decided whether to do this – it's a stupid place to put a bar. A nightclub. But I worry about that. I worry if – I really like IPAC being called one of the strongest lobbies in the United States. I think that we show ourselves as what we are; we don't need to do that. But I must be wrong.

MCF: Let's talk just a little bit – just to close up here – about this point of your life. I just want you to kind of think a little bit or talk out loud about what does this point of your life feel like. What are your challenges? What are your rewards? What do you see happening?

JKS: Well, first of all –

MCF: I think we talked over lunch, too, about the health challenges with Marvin, and we didn't really put that on tape.

JKS: I was going to say I'm not the same person I was five years ago or seven years ago. I'm much less independent than I was. Maybe I would be anyway, for the advancing years, but I tend to do what he wants to do most of the time. He does not resent my going to meetings. So, I go, but I don't drive at night any longer. So that presents – growing old presents problems that you have to learn to cope with. I'm having a little struggle coping with aging.

MCF: Which parts?

JKS: Oh, because I want to keep doing things, and it bothers me when I can't do them or I do them less efficiently.

MCF: Have you had health challenges of your own?

JKS: Yes, I have a fake valve. A fake heart valve. I had a fall about a year and four or five months ago that – all my hair is not growing back where it was. It didn't cut the skin, it just made this enormous swelling – I mean, literally. If you were to see it, you would not miss it. I got purple all the way down my body. [laughter] I broke my wrist, but that was kind of incidental to the horrors. But it showed me that I have to be more careful.

I'm not used to looking where I'm going and being careful. I tend to run rather than walk. The kids used to say that I was like their guard at football. I went through the crowd, and they could come behind me.

It's hard to settle yourself into – should I say – not living fully. Or not living as fully as you've lived? But then, all these things I've told you, I'm eternally grateful. I don't know, and you might not want to hear this. But my belief in God's very strange. Because I'm a student of Lou Kaplan, partly. I don't think God's listening to us. I think that if God was directing traffic at this point, he could not have allowed the Holocaust. If we worship

someone who allowed it to happen, we're worshipping a Devil. So, I choose to believe in God as the Creator. I do believe that something is in us that didn't happen from a big bang. [laughter] Man is too special. Pardon me, human kindness is too special to be an accident. But I don't think He's directing traffic at this point. However, I say my prayers at night, which is –

MCF: Just in case.

JKS: Yes. Just in case He wants to listen to me. I don't ask Him for anything except for my children to be okay. [laughter]

MCF: What gives you joy these days?

JKS: What do I enjoy these days?

MCF: Or, what gives you joy?

JKS: Being with the children and grandchildren. I can't really say there's anything more important. I enjoy some of my friends. We don't socialize nearly as much as we used to, and I don't really miss it that much. But I get great joy out of the children and the grandchildren. I play bridge, which I enjoy. I like going to my meetings. I like still being part of the Israel Overseas Committee and sit in a chair. [laughter]

MCF: What are the major organizational activities that you are now involved in?

JKS: Just the Associated. I was on the Goucher Board once, but Boards that don't ask anything of you – are not for me. As a matter of fact, maybe the Associated has Board members they don't ask anything of. But I wouldn't know it because they do ask me or I volunteer. I am a very fortunate woman. I'm sorry you don't know my children, my grandchildren, and my great-grandchildren. Because they're the best.

MCF: Oh, you can tell.

JKS: Oh, absolutely, by the looks of them. [laughter]

MCF: Well, you can. I mean, you know, you can just see that. Well, I think that we should probably give you a rest. You've been talking for a long time.

JKS: Okay.

MCF: I just wanted to thank Mrs. Schapiro for participating in this Interview. It's been really exciting. We're going to finish on April 11th, 2001, at 2:00 o'clock. Thank you for the Interview.

JKS: Thank you, Marcie. It was a pleasure. I didn't know I knew so much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]