



# Naomi Cherny Transcript

DJ: – is June 17, 1999. I am Donna (Joftis?), interviewing Naomi Orenberg Cherny for the Temple Emunah Oral History Project. And if you could just test [inaudible].

Naomi Chrney: That's correct. I was born January 14, 1924.

DJ Great. Okay. I just did that because it was easier for me to put your life in order. If I might just say the one phrase that I thought was really characteristic of you is that you try to give couples a more dignified and meaningful ceremony, and I think that that typifies your life.

NC: Thank you.

DJ: So, if you could just begin where is comfortable for you. I'd love to go over all this history and all these events.

NC: Well, I'll begin at the beginning. As I told you, I was born seventy-five years ago, brought up in the Depression, but it was all right. We survived. I was around at Pearl Harbor and heard Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous "Day of Infamy" speech. There are two things I want to say about FDR, one is that I really believe that the American public would have accepted his paralysis; that if he was hiding it so as not to give the impression of an old man to the enemy, then I can understand, but the American public was very sympathetic to polio sufferers. I mean, everybody could imagine waking up some morning and being completely paralyzed, so the fact that he was on crutches or in a wheelchair wouldn't have made any difference to the American public. But if he was afraid of his image to the enemy, that I can understand. I also heard his "there is nothing to fear," and his fireside chats, and they were the most comforting things. We were at a time when Europe was being invaded by the Nazi machine, and countries were toppling,



and all that was between us was Britain. And then he would get up, and there was a big expression saying, “Don't say anything that would give aid or comfort to the enemy.” And in addition to that, “Nothing but fear, but fear – there's nothing to fear but fear.” He would also reel off figures like, “Oh, we launched so many ships, and we have so many troops and so many tanks.” He'd list off all these things. And then at the end, he would say, “And I don't think these figures would give aid and comfort to the enemy.” And it was so reassuring to listen to.

DJ: Right. And if I might just backtrack earlier than that, you described your childhood in the Depression and your mother and her volunteer work. Can you tell me about –? Start there.

NC: Okay, very good. My father was a (Kohan?), so I always bragged that my lineage goes back to Aaron. They have traced the (Kohan?) through the DNA back to Aaron. So, people say they came over on the *Mayflower*; my lineage goes back three thousand years. Yes, both my mother and my grandmother were very active in charity. What my grandmother used to do – before Ellis Island, Boston was a port for immigrants, and when the boats arrived, my grandmother would go down with baskets of food on her head. She would carry them down to the port to meet the immigrants and help them get settled. She was very active.

DJ: Now, she told you of this? You experienced this.

NC: No, she told me this.

DJ: She told you?

NC: Oh, yeah, this is long before – I mean, this is before Ellis Island. This is the 1800s or early 1900s. I think she came over in very late 1890s. My daughter had the lineage. But once Ellis Island became the port, that was the end of that. My mother used to help out what we call the [inaudible]. It was a home for [inaudible]. Can you imagine a name – the



Home for Incurables? She would go down there and help out – feed the patients. She would come back and tell me about a woman who was completely paralyzed from the neck down. She would read with her tongue, moving the pages with her tongue, but there was nobody to talk to her. The nurses had no time for her, so my mother would sit, feed her, listen to her, and converse with her. I thought that was giving, again, a little more than what was required. So that's what she did. I really think she was a little disappointed I didn't take that route.

DJ: What were your feelings about her when she was doing this?

NC: Both my mother and my grandmother [inaudible]. My grandmother, I was very sorry that women's place – I think, had she been given any opportunities, my grandmother, I think, would have made a career had she been given the opportunity. My mother was [inaudible] house, charity home, but I always felt that my grandmother was a victim of her time, that she was really a brilliant woman.

DJ: And what about your home life during that period?

NC: Well, it was really no different than – we lived in a three-decker on the top floor. Everybody was in the same – we were kidding about it one time. A friend of mine was saying that she had – in the last month in June of school, she outgrew everything. All she had was one blouse and one skirt that fit her. She said for the last month – every night she rinsed out her blouse, and she wore it for a month. I mean, that was the way things were. Nobody thought it was peculiar that she wore the same blouse every day. I mean, everybody was more or less in the same boat.

DJ: You mentioned that everybody had hand-me-downs [inaudible].

NC: Yeah, yeah. [inaudible] mentioned a gray coat that she wore that some aunt had given her. I mean, everybody wore hand-me-downs. It was a way of life. It was all right. We didn't know any better. We assumed that was the way everybody lived.



DJ: And being Jewish, where you were growing up?

NC: Yeah, where I went to school, it was a third – a third Irish or Catholic or whatever, a third Black, and a third Jewish. Yeah, there were problems. But what is very interesting is that when I got married and moved out to Arlington – that's where my husband started business after the war – we were the only Jewish people. My son was the only Jewish boy they had ever had in the school. They had never had a Jewish boy when he went to kindergarten in Arlington. I sent a note in saying what days he would be absent. I had no problem. The neighbors were as pleasant and as friendly – it was just a lovely – it was a blue-collar neighborhood, and I really appreciated the way they were bringing up their kids. The kids minded. They were not spoiled. They were told to do something, and they did it. People were all – when we took people to visit relatives, they would comment on how well-behaved my children were. I said, “That's because I lived in a blue-collar neighborhood.” The kids had never had a library card. I took the whole flock of kids in the neighborhood – got them all library cards.

DJ: That's nice. Now you talk about this feeling of being well-behaved. Was that the expectation for you in your home growing up?

NC: Yeah. Very early. I ran into the feminine girl business. Very early. That was what the big fights were about with my family – my independence. I had three brothers, and I felt that I was entitled to the same things they were. But that was not the attitude, especially my mother. Girls had a place and boys had a place. I don't want to be a boy; I just want the same rights.

DJ: When did you feel you –?

NC: When I started dating. That was when we ran headlong right into it, that I wanted my freedom. Always did.

DJ: Did you have friends that were like that or [inaudible]?



NC: No, I was the independent one. I think it's because I was brought up with three boys, and I saw the way they lived and their freedom, and I thought I was entitled to it.

DJ: Now, what was your father's feeling towards your mother's volunteer work? Was he proud of that and supportive?

NC: Supportive? No. Acceptance. That was what women did. That was a woman's role. He had no problem with that. That's what women did. Women stayed home. Did charity work. There was no problem there. See, when I refused to fit into the mold – I wanted an education. That's what really started it. I put myself through college without accepting a penny from anybody. I got no support at all.

DJ: So, is that where the work of the commission –? What's it called?

NC: Yeah, I went to work for – yeah. In fact, it was – yeah, I did go to work for the War Manpower Commission, and I worked there up until I got married. Well, no, then I went to the Veterans Administration. Well, I don't understand. What is your question?

DJ: Well, my question was, was that the work that you did to put yourself through school?

NC: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely. I held down a full-time job, and the reason I took the job was because the job was next to the college. I went to BU [Boston University], and the War Manpower Commission was two buildings up. So, when I walked in for the interview, I told him – because they had different offices. I said, "I want to work here because it's next door to where I want to go to school." I told them my schedule. And Mr. (Molinari?), my supervisor, said, "Well, I can see you're not going to be a clerk very long," and he gave me absolutely – put in your eight hours. So, I was going to school – 8:30 to 9:30, 11:30 to 12:30, or 5:30 to 6:30. I fit in my hours, and I was always running back and forth, running back and forth between the two.



DJ: When did you study?

NC: [laughter] Yeah, I did. I made the dean's list at least once. It took me six years. It took me six years [inaudible].

DJ: Wow, that's exciting.

NC: In fact, I think I had the highest graduate – of the girls in my class, the highest grades of the girls.

DJ: That was a decision that came right out of high school.

NC: Oh, yeah. The day they told me that I wasn't going to college. Girls don't go to college. I said, "Well, I'm going to college." [laughter]

DJ: Did your brothers go to college?

NC: Oh, sure. Well, not my oldest, because he went with my father. Yeah, he didn't. Well, another thing came up. Don't forget that they went on the GI Bill. See, Arthur – my youngest one was seventeen, so he was in the Navy, and my older brother was in the Signal Corps. They were both GIs, so finances weren't a problem, but I don't think it would have made any difference. They would have gone to college. It was definitely a sexist thing. In fact, education was bad because it made them uppity. They didn't want to get married. It was that attitude.

DJ: So, when did you meet your husband?

NC: Oh, not until after the war.

DJ: Okay, so if I'm putting the dates together correctly, you graduated in '47.

NC: Yeah.



DJ: And you were also married in –?

NC: In fact, that was my mother's – after all those years, she was very definite that I should use my maiden name. I had just got married. But she said, “No, you got it. You earned it while you were an Orenberg, so put it on your degrees that you're an Orenberg.” I said, “Okay.” I had just got married before I graduated.

DJ: Right. How did you meet –?

NC: My older brother, George. Two connections. First of all, let me tell you, Stella Cherny was in my high school class. Oh, just a quick thing on high school. High school was segregated boys and girls.

DJ: Which high school did you go to?

NC: Roxbury Memorial High School. Talk about segregation. It was boys on one side, girls on the other side, and the library was in the middle, and you just did not go on the other side. I mean, you never stepped foot on the other side. So, you had the library in the middle, girls on one side, boys the other. The boys took printing and woodworking. The girls took sewing. So, Stella Cherny walked into one of my classes one day, and I looked at her, and I said, “My God, that’s the most beautiful girl I've ever seen.” She is gorgeous. I don't know if you remember old pictures of Hedy Lamarr with black hair, white skin, green eyes. [inaudible] I knew her, and we went to school together. Then, one day, my older brother George said his friend Jack Cherny was coming to the house. I said, “You mean the beautiful Stella has a brother?” And he said, “Yeah, well, Jack Cherny is a great guy.” He's gone now. “But he's not a good-looking guy,” [inaudible] I said, “Oh, okay.” It wasn't until later that I met Jack's older brother. Lester was about six years older than I, and I used to kid him, saying, “If I had known you at that time when George was bringing Jack home – if I had met you at that time, I'd have just been the brat, the kid sister. You wouldn't have paid any attention to me.” Shortly after, it didn't



take that long, [inaudible] once we straightened a few things out. Then he went to business in Arlington. Do you want me to say anything about my husband?

DJ: I want to know everything.

NC: My husband was a war hero. He fought with General Patton's Third Army. Liberated Paris. He was in for quite a while. When he came home, he and his father and his brother Jack went into business. His father had been an upholsterer but had never been in business. So, the three of them decided to go into business, even though Lester had studied pharmacy. I often wonder if he hadn't been pressured, if he had been better off as a pharmacist. But he was pressured, and so the three of them went into business, and the only place they could find a store was in Arlington. That's why I moved out there. My mother [said], "Your kids will never get a Jewish education. Your kids will never get a good upbringing." I said, "Mother, I'm still in the phone book. You can call me. It doesn't cost you to call me."

DJ: How was it raising them Jewish?

NC: Okay, we started – as I say, when I got out there, he was the only Jewish boy. My son started school in kindergarten, the only Jewish boy in the whole school. [inaudible] No problems. There was a Jewish community in the town, not where I was up in the heights. Jewish education consisted of Dr. (Yud's?) attic. Dr. (Yud?) lived on Mass Avenue in Arlington, and his attic – there were two classes: kindergarten for couples like us who were just moving out, and all others. That was the entire Jewish community. But then they start developing Sun Valley. They start developing, and Jewish couples start moving out. I had heard there was a shul in Lexington. So, on Rosh Hashanah, I called a cab. I'd heard it was on Sylvia Street. I called a cab and said, "Sylvia Street." He let me off at Sylvia Street. I walked up, and sure enough, there was a little congregation there. See, my husband worked twelve hours a day, six days a week, getting the business going. So, anything I did, I was on my own most of the time. I was on my own, raising the



kids – anything I did. At that time, I didn't drive because who in the city drove?

DJ: And you were not working after your children started being born?

NC: That's right. I took ten years off. I worked for about seven years. When the war ended, I went to the Veterans Administration. Mr. (Molanari?), the same one. When he moved, I went with him. Yeah, he was a nice guy. Came to my father's funeral. Very nice person. But yeah, once I got pregnant, I stayed home until my daughter was ready to – I have three children. There's Bobby. He works for Disney down in –

DJ: I saw Kissimmee.

NC: He works for Disney down there. He lives in Kissimmee. David is in Andover. He's a purchasing agent for an electronics firm [inaudible]. And Miriam just started a new job with Foliage as a quality assurance. So, yeah, all three are doing very well. I'm very proud of all three of them. All three are married.

DJ: And it seems they've taken your direction of the business. You started out with a Bachelor of Business, and they seem in that area.

NC: Except Bobby. Bobby's the creative one. Bobby majored in theater at Brandeis, and I said, "Bobby, get behind the curtain, if you're going to go into that field. I don't know one or two people in any of your classes that anybody ever even heard of. So, get into the lighting." And he did, and he did very well. So, he's the one. So, he's working down at Disney with corporate seminars.

DJ: So, it's management, kind of.

NC: Okay, all right.

DJ: I just saw the word management.



NC: You did. You put it right. I never thought of it – you don't associate Disney with management, but you're right. Yeah, you're right.

DJ: Okay. I don't know if this is the right time chronologically, but certainly the founding of the temple, if that happened in this period.

NC: Definitely.

DJ: Okay. So [inaudible] about that.

NC: There were seventy-five couples in the Jewish Community Center, and what we did was we tolerated each other. We range from – the Orthodox would come down and have a fit because somebody was painting on the Sabbath. So, we coexisted because that's all there was. I don't want to name any names. As the new people came in, they wanted a temple, a Reform – the active group wanted a Reform temple. The Orthodox and Conservatives were not that pushy about it. Things were going along. We were a united community. It was a united Jewish community. We saw no reason to split it. But it was a time of animosity, of hatred. It was a very difficult time. I think something like – by the time the split occurred, there were 120 Jewish families. Thirty went to the Reform congregation that started out.

DJ: Is that the one in Belmont?

NC: No, that's another [inaudible]. No, it's one right down here on Lincoln Street, Temple Isaiah. Belmont was having the same problem. In fact, I was talking to somebody from there the other day at the breakfast – was saying they were having the same problem of the temple going Reform. So, we went down and invited them to join us, and quite a few did. So that really helped us. So, a contingent from Belmont did join our group, the Conservative group, and we wound up building two separate temples. I always say I built it.



DJ: Tell me.

NC: [laughter] Well, considering we started out with nothing, what was left of twenty minus thirty families, which was pretty – it was about seventy-five. I don't know. Plus, the Belmont group, so that's what I [inaudible]. We started out. We had a meeting. Lester, my husband, [was] the only practical one there, because just about everybody else were scientists and engineers, deficit financing. So, because Lester was the only one who knew that you can't spend more than you have, he was appointed treasurer. My brother Arthur, who was the only one in the place who had ever gone to Hebrew Teachers College, was the religious [inaudible]. I did education, but my big contribution came in fundraising.

DJ: What did you do? [inaudible]

NC: I went after the money. [inaudible]

DJ: [inaudible] What did that entail?

NC: Well, for example – to this day, I'm kicking myself. There was a couple from Concord, and we had decided that we would ask everybody for a thousand-dollar pledge five years. So, that's what I was doing. I was going around to all the members, asking them to pledge a thousand dollars over a five-year period. So, I met this couple from Concord. I didn't know them too well, and I said, "Gee, they come from Concord. They're probably a little richer than we are." So, I said, "I'm asking twelve hundred." Before I could finish saying, "You can pay it out," he sat down and wrote me a check for twelve hundred dollars out of his checking account. To this day, I'm kicking myself on that one. I should have done some more research. If I had known that he was capable of writing a twelve-hundred-dollar check out of a checking account, I'd have gone after him. So, we raised the money. We had times when we didn't know whether we were going to make it.

DJ: And that was money to get a building.



NC: We raised a quarter of a million dollars. Half a million. We raised half a million dollars. Yeah, we raised it.

DJ: Now I've heard that there was, at first, a building at the corner of Mass Ave and –

NC: Yeah, that was the community center. That was where all denominations – where we were very happy. That was why we saw no reason to split.

DJ: I see. So, to build the building that I knew before the renovation – that's what you raised the funds for?

NC: Okay, we bought – okay, there was this little shul on Sylvia Street when I first moved out in the '40s – '47, '48. When we got together, and this is still a small group, a united group – start outgrowing that little shul on Sylvia, which was really a house that they'd taken out – they had gutted. To build and to buy – this was a house on the corner of Mass Ave. in Winthrop. They sold their shul. Yeah. They sold the shul on Sylvia Street to pay –

DJ: So, you're talking about that house on the corner of Winthrop and –?

NC: And that's where we had all our meetings. That's where I told you about the Orthodox being unhappy that somebody was painting the building on Saturday. Simchat Torah – they didn't know what we were talking about. I said, “We need flags.” They look at me – flags and apples.

DJ: And this was adequate for 120 families?

NC: Yeah.

DJ: At that time?

NC: It was too small.



DJ: And what about religious school? [inaudible]

NC: Yeah. My brother was in charge of it.

DJ: Your brother, Arthur.

NC: Yeah, we were going on very well. We were doing fine. Again, it was too small. We were talking about expanding, but it wasn't until this very vociferous, active – as you can see how I feel about it to this day – split us because they wanted – they did not want a community center. They wanted a Reform [inaudible], and there was just no reasoning. This is what they [inaudible] what they got.

DJ: So, they split off then and started Temple Isaiah. Okay, now we're talking mid-'50s here? Early '50s?

NC: Probably, yeah.

DJ: Then, when were you involved in [inaudible] to the Piper Road building?

NC: That's what I was hitting all these people for a thousand dollars for.

DJ: Oh, to get that one?

NC: Oh, yeah. We didn't have too much trouble financing the building because we had the money from the shul. I mean the Mass Ave. What were the expenses? It was just a house. But, yeah, once we started to split and they would start collecting for Temple Isaiah, then we start – and I say it was a very depressing time because we didn't know where we were going. I mean, all we knew is this group had splintered off. They were very vociferously starting their own temple. We didn't even know how many of our members were going to go with them. So, that's what I was doing. I was going around to the ones we didn't know. They would call me and say, “Gee, we haven't heard from this. We don't know which way they're going.” And I would talk to them.



DJ: When did things start easing up, so that you can go, “Ah?”

NC: They never really did. I mean, gradually, but it was never a question. I mean, some of the – they started these joint activities, these learning [inaudible]. But from the very beginning, Arthur sent them a letter offering to combine the two Hebrew schools to see if we could at least have combined educational programs. And they just weren't interested. There was absolutely no cooperation at all for many years. But then, when this old guard left, moved out, the new people coming into Isaiah didn't have the background. So, then the youth groups start getting together. And then eventually, yeah, today [inaudible].

DJ: Now, was there a Sisterhood or Brotherhood?

NC: Oh, yeah. I was the first education director, religious – something like that. Oh, yeah. (Dora Reingold?) – I saw her just two days ago. She's fine. She was the first president of the Sisterhood, and somebody else went around with a piece of paper. “What do you want to do? What do you want to be?” Oh, yeah. Although I will say – I have to tell you about Hadassah. Hadassah was here when I moved here. In Arlington, there was a Hadassah. I saw it in the paper. I saw it in the *Arlington Minuteman* that there was a Hadassah meeting, and I called them. Before this, there was a Sisterhood. I was doing membership for Hadassah, greeting new people, bringing the traditional bread and salt. I wasn't working. Yeah, that's what I did for Hadassah.

DJ: So, it's sounding a little bit to me – I hope I'm not simplifying this – that your role as a woman was kind of rebellious to you. You had a different path you wanted to pledge, but your role as a Jew was very much in line.

NC: Yeah, I had no problems there. Yeah, you're right. I had no problems with my Jewishness ever. That was never a problem.

DJ: Once you started having children and raising children, how did that influence your feelings about your womanhood?



NC: Career-wise?

DJ: Yes.

NC: Oh, not at all. Oh, no. The day my daughter went to nursery school, I bounced into Harvard and said, "I haven't worked in ten years. Here I am." What they said to me – typical Harvard – is, "We don't often get women of your caliber." But what they meant was that I was old enough to deal – see, they put me in purchasing, in charge of young girls who would come over from Sweden and other countries, stay a year or two to learn the language or get rid of their accents, and then go on. So, I was put in charge of them, and I was a mother hen to them. If they behaved, I would write to their parents, tell them they were doing well. So, I started right off, and what I told the kids when I came home – they hired me on the spot – was that, "Oh, Harvard's in terrible shape. Oh, they're in terrible – their books and everything, and they need me to come down and straighten them out." And I could hear the kids saying, "My mother's at Harvard, and she's helping them out."

DJ: So, what was their feeling towards [inaudible]?

NC: No problem. But then something else happened that affected everything. My mother moved back with me.

DJ: When was that?

NC: When Miriam was born. Yeah, about then. '50s. She had been a widow. My father died. My father died of – okay, he smoked. He smoked Turkish tobacco. When he died, they were just beginning to understand the effects of smoking, because – and they asked if we could do an autopsy, and oh, my mother, she wept, but she allowed it. The results came back. He didn't have cancer, but the Turkish tobacco is pure. It has no filters, no dust in it, so the tobacco had burned holes in his lungs, and therefore he died of pneumonia because he didn't have enough lung. So, yeah, you can say smoking killed



him. It did. He smoked all day in his – that's why I have never put a cigarette to my mouth because he had brown fingers, and his teeth were stained, and he coughed. It was a pretty – yeah. So, although he did die from smoking, it was not from cancer. It was from the holes in his lungs caused by the burning. I don't know how [inaudible].

DJ: Because you were starting to say that things changed when your mother came to live with you.

NC: It worked out very well. We came to an agreement that really was very good. I fixed up the upstairs for her. Lester was still Lester. They got along fine. Lester and my mother got along fine. We made a little apartment for her upstairs with a telephone and her typewriter. See, because she was still doing her charity work, doing mailings, and there was a bathroom up there. We fixed up the bathroom, so she had a little apartment up there. The arrangement was that it was her house from nine to five, and my house from five until the next morning. People say they never saw my mother. I said, "Yeah, because if you're not here during the day, you won't see her." So, if she wanted her friends or anything, it would be during the day. When I came home, the kids would usually have been fed, and she would have put on the potatoes or something for Lester. Then, it'd been a busy day for her. She can go upstairs. When her sister called her from Florida, my Aunt Belle, and said, "Come join me," she'd say, "Oh, no, I can't. Who would sew on David's Boy Scout badges?" [laughter] She didn't think much of my ability to cook or to sew.

DJ: What about sewing and cooking? How did you do those things?

NC: The kids tease me. They say a lot of the stuff I cooked was burnt on the outside but raw on the inside. No, I was never a great cook. But the food was good. Therefore, they had a lot of salads. Their diet was very good. Very basic, but very good. So, instead of roast beef, they had hamburgers, but it was just as nutritious. A lot of soups and salads. I was very conscious of nutrition. As my brother Arthur would say when he was hiring, he



would always look for a bright, lazy person, because the bright person will find an easier way to do it, and that's what I did. I would try to find easier ways to prepare food that would still be nutritious, [inaudible] rushing around.

DJ: Now, that was well before the days of daycare, this and that.

NC: Oh, no. I came home [inaudible].

DJ: Oh, but your mother was in the house, so that was a big help.

NC: Yeah, I'm saying she would put the potatoes on, so I wouldn't have to do that. It worked out very well for many years, and then she died.

DJ: Okay, so this job at Harvard. I don't remember reading about it.

NC: I wasn't there very long. I moved right on. That was my first – I didn't stay there very long. Oh, I worked at Brandeis. Is all this recording?

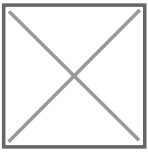
DJ: Yes. Is that okay with you?

NC: Brandeis. I went to Brandeis. I applied. Okay, the story I tell is that after three hundred years, Harvard started to put in a subway. Well, the whole Harvard Square was completely torn up. I got out of work one day at five o'clock. Didn't get home until 6:30. Now, you know how far Cambridge is from Lexington. It took me an hour and a half to get home because the street was torn up. So, the next day, I went in and said, "Goodbye. Call me when the subway's in." Never went back. So, I went to Brandeis, and I worked in the Dean of Students Office. From there, surprise, they put me into fundraising. I was only there three months, and they said, "No, you're going into fundraising." And I loved it. We would invite all the big wheels down. We would wine them and dine them. I was working for the attorney. The personnel told me – she said, "I called up the attorney, and I said to him, 'I have somebody who doesn't have a day's legal experience, but you two



will get along.” And we did. We did. So, our big thrust was scholarships. See, that’s what we were – and wills. That’s what we did. We would have meetings, invite all the lawyers down, explain to them how to set up wills, gifts, trusts, and living trusts. But Bobby was ten years old when I went there. I worked there, never knowing that I was entitled to free tuition. That was the last thing on my mind that my kids were going to get free tuition. I once added it up. It was forty thousand dollars. I got forty thousand dollars’ worth of free tuition, which I never – but I made them money. I mean, I earned it. What I would do, for example, if somebody left us some money, and the lawyers – I was fighting with the lawyers all the time. I’ll tell you [inaudible], a bank trust officer, and a lawyer. So, I would watch, and they would be very reluctant to give us money. We need it for this. We need it for the tax audit. And I would watch. The day after the tax audit, I would call them and say, “Okay, you had your tax audit. We want our money.” [inaudible] See, the difference between a bank officer and an attorney is the bank wasn’t getting anything out of it, so you didn’t get any fees. So, when they were executives of a will, it didn’t benefit them to keep it. So, one time, I got a notice from a bank officer saying he was sending the amount, and then when we got the check, it was more. I called him. I said, “You made a mistake. You’re sending me more than you said you were sending.” He said, “No, as I was writing out the check, I looked at the calendar, and you were entitled to another month’s interest.” See? So, this was what – see, for example, one lawyer, we were left eighteen thousand dollars in the scholarship, and that lawyer put it in a non-interest-bearing checking account for a year. So, anyway, this is what I was doing. So, I earned it, but I did. Bobby went [inaudible]. By the time Miriam came around, they cut it. They cut the amount. So, I wasn’t getting very much tuition benefit. Bobby was complete, but then each year they cut it. So, Miriam, I sent her to England for her junior year abroad. It was cheaper. Tuition was something like \$750, so she went, and she was majoring in English literature. So, I figured, well, if you’re going to study Shakespeare, you may as well study Shakespeare. So, she went to England for her junior year abroad.

DJ: Very interesting. So, all three went to Brandeis then?



NC: Yeah, except then when Miriam came back, I think she went to Northeastern to finish up her last year. [inaudible]

DJ: Interesting.

NC: [inaudible] before I go off on something else. [laughter]

DJ: Well, when I look over the history now, I see your early childhood, and then we went into your early marriage, and these early jobs, while your children are growing up. I don't know whether you want to go now into these jobs like the Minuteman [inaudible] in Hanscom.

NC: All right. I got into a fight.

DJ: You know what? I have a feeling this tape is going to end, so let me change sides.

NC: Sure.

[Recording paused.]

DJ: This is the second side, side B.

NC: I love Brandeis because I got into a fight with the president. If I'm going to fight with somebody, may as well fight with the president. I had been working with Dr. Sachar, who was the most wonderful person – the president. I could go into his office and say, "Somebody in Wisconsin wants to give us a scholarship, but he wants a picture of him handing the check to you," and Dr. Sachar would pick up the phone and make a reservation to go to Wisconsin to have a picture taken. So, this is how we operated. I could walk into his office at any time, and we really got along very well. Well, when he retired, his [inaudible] – I think his name was Bernstein. He had no concept of fundraising. We had a meeting of attorneys to talk to them about scholarships and drawing up wills. He didn't even attend. He didn't think it was his job. His method was to



reduce expenses. While Sachar's was to bring in money, Bernstein's idea was to cut the hot water. His statement was, "You fundraisers have an inflated idea of your own importance." He just did not feel that fundraising was important. So, I got into a couple of [inaudible] with him. So anyhow, I went to Bentley for a while, but then I went to Hanscom.

DJ: Now, if I might just interject, at a certain point, you got the degree from Northeastern.

NC: Right.

DJ: Now, was that after you went to Hanscom or before?

NC: Oh, before. I was still –

DJ: So, relative to Brandeis –

NC: What happens – I was at Brandeis, and one day, President Sachar – this is while Sachar was still there. The president's secretary said, "Naomi, they're having some art courses up at Northeastern right in Burlington. Why don't we go?" I said, "Gee, that sounds like fun." I had my business degree from Boston University, and this is many years later, ten years later. And I said, "Okay." So, I went down with her to the Burlington campus. The counselor looked at me, and he said, "No." He said, "Why don't you go for a master's?" He said, "You have a bachelor's." And I said, "In what?" He said, "Well, what are you doing?" I said, "I'm in Brandeis." He said, "Well, how about education?" I said, "Okay." So he enrolled me. He did it. The counselor enrolled me in the graduate program for education, and I never saw her again academically. They shipped her off to whatever it was she was there, and I got started on a one-night-a-week graduate program at Northeastern. So, what was very funny is – they don't tell you – the core courses – sure, they're in Burlington, but then when you get into your specialty, that's Boston. So, here I am working at Brandeis, and they're not at night. So, one day a week, I've got to go in. How am I going to tell my boss? I'm not going to tell my boss because he'd ride me on it.



So, every afternoon – the way he told my husband later was every Thursday afternoon, she'd get up, and she'd say, "I have an appointment. I have to leave. See you later." And he said, "And I would think it was some unmentionable women's problem." [laughter] After it was all over, I said, "I just didn't want you riding me on it." So, when I finally did tell him, and I was studying for a final, he said, "Do you want me to go in my office and shut the door?" I said, "Yeah." So, he did. Yeah. I got my – yeah, so I started that while – so, I had it before.

DJ: And how did your family –? How were they about your going back to school?

NC: Well, of course, Lester was very supportive. I mean, he supported me. It was a whole different atmosphere. Oh, yeah, the kids, everybody. It was a whole different generation.

DJ: But you were in your mid-fifties.

NC: Yeah. The oldest one in the class. [laughter] Oh, well. So, here I'd had this big fight with the president, and just for spite, really, I went to Bentley. I worked there for about a year in their fundraising, going after – knowing all the – I mean, there's just so much money going around. I only stayed there for about a year. Then I went to Hanscom. I walked into Hanscom. I walked into the personnel office, and he said to me, "We have a job that nobody wants." I said, "That sounds good." I said, "All right, I don't know how long I'm going to be here." I had no idea what was going to be. Fifteen years later. So, he said, "Yeah." I said, "Okay." And you know what the job was? In the chapel. All the reasons that nobody wanted the job were the very reasons that I liked the job. I loved it.

DJ: Tell me those reasons.

NC: I was the only woman, the only civilian, certainly the only Jewish person, the only middle-aged. [laughter] I mean, the chaplains just weren't there administratively. I got out the monthly, the weekly, the Catholic bulletin, the Protestant bulletins, the memorial



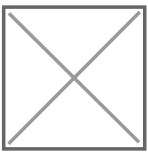
bulletin, the holiday bulletins, and I was able to help the Jewish community. But of all people to be the rabbi, Rabbi [Cary David] Yales from Isaiah. I don't know how much I want to put [inaudible] for this, but I did not approve of a lot of things he was doing. He would come in every other week at 11:30. Anyhow, it would be a half-hour service, and then a half-hour discussion, and we'd have bagels, lox, and cream cheese. We bring the stuff. And then he'd take off. I would ask him to stay. I would say, "The Jewish military people here just want to talk to somebody. They don't have problems and such. They just want to talk." And he'd say, "If they want to talk to me, they can come down to my office." They went down to his office. He charges. I went running over to personnel, and they said, "No, there's nothing. I mean, he's doing his job." I said, "Yeah, but that's just it. He's just doing his job." So, what I was able to do – there was an Episcopalian chaplain who once told me that if he weren't an Episcopalian, he'd be an Orthodox Jew. So, I was sending people to him. Another thing I was able to do is there's money. People don't know there's money. A book fund had never been touched. So, I said, "How much can I have?" They would have given – there was money for speakers. I mean, there was all this money that Rabbi Yales hadn't even looked into that was there going untaken, untouched, returned every year. So, first thing I did is I got up a catalog of Jewish books. I said, "How much can I have for books?" They said, five hundred thousand dollars." So, I sat down and made up a little figure about 480.

DJ: [inaudible] this help from anyone?

NC: No.

DJ: You knew how to pick these books.

NC: Just [inaudible] Jewish family, how to celebrate a Jewish holiday, bringing up a Jewish child. I just went through it. I did show it to Rabbi Yales. He made one or two suggestions, but I stopped at 480 because I figured prices always go up. So, I got the five hundred worth, and we got the books, set up a little library, and they're all gone now.



Help yourself. Another thing I did – the Jewish JWB [Jewish Welfare Board], whatever it is involved in New York – some Jewish organization in New York sends things – has a budget to send things to military bases, and I wrote to them. I got games for children. I got menorahs, candles. They sent a box, a huge box, just loaded with things. So, we start having activities in which I tell them to bring their children, and then I would entertain the children so that the adults could have some Jewish conversation, if you want to call it. So, I would do that. I'd be playing games with the kids, and the adults could have their conversation. But what I did is the installation chaplain at that time was usually a Baptist. So, I'm saying I got more support from Episcopalians and Baptists. He was the one who encouraged me to send away – they know about this money, but nobody had ever been interested in getting it. They wrote me back when they sent the stuff. They said all they want was an acknowledgment, a letter that we received it. I went to Chaplain McPhee, and I said, "Write the letter." And he said, "Sure." I mean, maybe Rabbi Yales thought I should have asked him to do it. I don't know. But it was McPhee who encouraged me to do all this, and so we have very active – so, then I got promoted and went over to EEO, Equal Employment Opportunity. That was in [inaudible].

DJ: That's a marvelous statistic that a hundred percent of people are satisfied with [inaudible].

NC: Exactly, yeah. I have a hundred percent informal – in other words, when people would – I didn't know if I did tell you that my education degree major was counseling, higher education counseling. So, when people would come into me, I knew that most of the time the thing they were complaining about wasn't what the real issue was. I saved the government millions of dollars. Literally, I did. You figure that a formal complaint costs 800,000 to process if it goes to court. I'd [inaudible] one like that. There was a woman who came in and complained that all the men in her office were taking classes all over, and they never invited her to go. When I spoke to the supervisor, he said, "Yeah, that's true. I was afraid if I asked her to go to Texas, she'd think I was coming on to her." So, I



looked it up, and I found out when the next course, the same course, was being given in Boston, signed her up for it, and that was the end of the complaint. And he explained to her why – she said, “Okay.” So, she went wherever it was. We paid for it. We paid for the books. She took the course, and everybody was happy. I mean, this is the sort of thing that, if you step right in before – another time, there was a woman who was saying that, because of her age, everybody would go out to lunch, and they’d all have – and she was an older woman, so they never invited her to go. I got everybody around in a circle, and then we had one of those things, explain their [inaudible]. And they said exactly what I said [inaudible], “We figured that you weren’t interested in going out with us, that you were older, and what we were talking about wouldn’t interest you.” So, this is what I was doing. It worked. It worked. One funny one was a guy called up and said he was filing a complaint. We had arranged for an investigator, and I found him. I said, “You put in a complaint that you didn’t get a promotion.” I don’t remember what the reason was. And he said, “Yeah.” He said, “I did get it.” I said, “Good, you’re dropping the complaint.” And he said, “Well, what about the six months that I should have had it?” I said, “Are you going to make a complaint over a little thing like that?” He said, “Oh, all right.” [laughter] I mean, nobody had ever said to him, “What are you doing? For six months, what is it? So, this is what –?” I forgot.

DJ: Now I know that you’re the justice of the peace now. Are you also still with the economic employment – the equal –?

NC: Okay, I became a justice of the peace while I was at the Chapel. I’m working at the chapel, and people would come in to get married. Oh, it started – oh, God, my grandmother’s turning over into her grave – with a baptism. A couple came in to get their kid baptized, and they didn’t want it to any denomination. They just wanted it to the Christian community. Nobody in the chapel would touch it. If you weren’t going to be baptized, either as a Methodist, a Presbyterian, or a Catholic, they wouldn’t baptize the kid. And they said, “That’s not right. That’s not right.” So, I got on the phone, called up



every reservist, found a Christian Scientist who said he would do it. Then I had her – he came in. He was reserved, comes in once a month. So, I had arranged when he would be coming in, when the parents could make it, when the chapel was free, and I got that kid baptized. [laughter] So now, the same thing started happening with weddings. I said, “Well, there's not much I can do about baptism, but there's something I can do about weddings.” They would turn people away, and they would be military people. I said, “I'm paying for this chapel. What right do they have to turn away anybody because they want a different person to [officiate]?” It's up to them to get them somebody. If they want a Methodist, it's up to them to get them a Methodist. That was my feeling. They don't own it. They would [inaudible] if they own it. They don't own it. We own it. So, when I saw this was going on, that's when I wrote to the governor, to [Michael] Dukakis, and I said that there were enough marriageable people at Hanscom to warrant its own justice of the peace. He agreed with me, and he approved it. I've been doing that over ten years, because I've been renewed – it's every seven years. So, I've been doing it for – in fact, I think I've been renewed twice. I've been doing it for twenty years.

DJ: Are they mainly inter-religious marriages?

NC: I get three categories. I do a lot of weddings right here. See that candlestick? They light candles. I do all kinds of – basically, mainly, I get three categories. One is what I call the second time around – widows, widowers, divorced – who are older, who don't want a big ceremony, who've been through it. So, I get a lot of that. Well, over at the chapel, I used to get divorced couples who the chaplains wouldn't marry. It depended on who was the installation chaplain. If it was not a priest, I would get more support. Sometimes they would – I got a call once from one of the chaplains that a couple that was engaged and were going through the process, and he had just been transferred to Guam. So, would I come down and get them so that she could go with him? See, at some point, sometimes the chapel would work with [inaudible]. If there was a priest, I didn't get very much cooperation because I was marrying all the people that they were turning away. So, the



second category was divorce. The third was the mixed. I got a lot. And not just mixed religiously, mixed Black and white, Chinese, Japanese, Korean. I have done a lot of mixed marriages. If it's Christian and Jewish, then sometimes I'll read a passage from Corinthians in the New Testament, which is very nice. It simply says, if you have not love, you have nothing. Though you have all kinds of material things. If you don't have love, you have nothing. It's a beautiful passage. And for the Jewish, I read from the Old Testament Book of Ruth: "Bid me not to leave thee. Where thou goest, I will go." Yeah, that's what I do for mixed marriage.

DJ: Does it involve a lot of study for you to prepare for [inaudible]?

NC: Okay, let me go back. Rabbi Eiseman said he would send people to me. I once mentioned – he knows. He said if he had a couple that one of them wasn't quite ready to convert, he would send them to me. And then later, if she did – yeah, so he said he had no fault with what I was doing. So, that was good. As far as preparation, I sit down with each couple beforehand, and I have what I call a basic, which has all the legal requirements in it, a basic ceremony. Then we can revise it if they want to add – I say anything that adds dignity or meaning to the ceremony, if they want to write a prayer. The only problem with when couples say they want to write their own ceremony, it gets very short. So, I have a basic, and I will replace. If you want to write your own vow, you want to write your own pledge, you want to add this – fine. You want to have somebody sing a song. You want to recite a poem. But I add it rather than – so, yeah. So, that's more or less what I do. I've had a lot of weddings right here – a lot of hotels, restaurants. I run about two or three a month, mostly weekends.

DJ: Are you still at Minuteman Tech [Minuteman Technical Institute]?

NC: Oh, yeah. I teach accounting once a week at Minuteman Tech. Okay. I have, two weeks ago, retired from Hanscom, but not really in the sense that I am working. See, they called me from personnel and told me that it's costing me money to work. I've



worked for the government twenty-five years, and that my benefits would be greater than what I'm getting, with my benefits and so on, all my retirement benefits. So, what was suggested is that – so, what I've done is I retired, but I'm still there as a volunteer for the Red Cross.

DJ: Oh, how nice.

NC: I like it. I work part-time in the wellness and fitness. It's on base, and I'm authorized by the Red Cross, where they do cholesterol screening and heart, health and wellness. Already I'm in trouble because I said, "Yeah, I see what you're doing here with your ergonomics and your exercise bicycles and your treadmill. But I said, "Where's your mental exercise?" I said, "That's just as important." So, it was the major. The major said, "Fine." So, I'm trying to work up a program, either while they're waiting – in the waiting, there's a table put out, either puzzles or games or just something. Instead of just hanging around waiting for the next appointment, they can be doing something – mental exercise, mental exertion. [inaudible] So I'm still marrying, working – all my life I've done all three: worked, taken care of the house, and either gone to school or taught school. All three.

DJ: Do you have a favorite part of that?

NC: I like marrying. I like teaching. I like working. I like being busy. I think that's what it is. I like being active. I like doing things. There has to be a mental activity. As long as there's a mental activity, I'm fine with it. See, I usually find a way to enlarge whatever it is I'm doing. Make it more, if you know what I mean – expand.

DJ: If I were to ask you to look back and name the single most significant –?

NC: The day my mother said I wouldn't go to college.

DJ: Really?



NC: I mean, she told me the night before when I asked for the deposit. I was going to register the next day. And I said, "Mother, I need the money for the deposit." If she had told me beforehand, I could have babysat or tried to raise it. It just never occurred to me that I wasn't going – yeah, that was the day that I knew I was on my own, that I wasn't going to get anything from anybody. Whatever I was going to do, I was going to do it myself.

DJ: That sort of influenced a lifestyle.

NC: Exactly.

DJ: And you've been out raising money ever since for everyone.

NC: For other people. For other scholarships. For others, yeah. I never thought of it that way, but you're right.

DJ: Wonderful. I don't know whether you want to go on with anything else.

NC: What else do you need? Let me just stop. [Recording paused.] This is just a question to go back over Naomi's earlier childhood days. I had a lot of friends. My mother was a wonderful mother. I mean, I could go to her. I mean, she was very kind and loving, hugging, maternal. As a young child, there were no problems. It wasn't until the teenage [years] that I became a rebellious teenager, which wasn't done in those days. But no, I could invite friends to my house. My father, if he knew I was having a party, he made sure that there was enough for everybody to eat. No, I can't see that my childhood was any different, I say, other than watching FDR campaigning or riding by. I don't think that my childhood was anything exceptional. Now I know we were poor, but at the time, I didn't consider myself any poorer than anybody else. We'd walk along Blue Hill Avenue. That was date night. You'd walk along hoping to meet somebody and have a corned beef sandwich at the G & G Delicatessen. Oh, we did that. But then it got to a point where you didn't want to be seen on Blue Hill Ave on Saturday night, because that meant you didn't



have a date. So, it sort of grew. Summers, we'd go down to the beaches – Nantasket. I didn't work during the summer. We had a good time going on roller coasters. I don't know what it is that –

DJ: No, I just wanted to know if there were more details.

NC: I was one of the top in my class. I got all A's just about. I had no problems at school.

DJ: Okay. The other topic that comes to my mind is the whole Women's Movement, late '60s, early '70s. Did you fit into an organized Women's Movement?

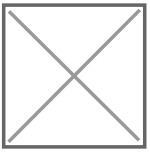
NC: No.

DJ: No, just your personal –

NC: Never. I was never part – other than the organizations, working with the organizations, the Hadassah, the Sisterhood, whatever they got involved in. But no, I was completely out of the '60s. No, I had no part in that.

DJ: Did it affect how you raised your daughter or how you raised your son?

NC: Yeah, well, it wouldn't have – because it would have been the same. What I told my kids is, I want my daughters to know what's under a car. I don't want her to be – from the very beginning, I said, “I want you to know how to handle a screwdriver. I want you to know what's under the car. And I want the boys to know how to type.” That was a big thing. Boys did not – this is before computers. I said, “I want them to ...” And I sent them to summer school. I said, “Whether you go into journalism, public affairs, you're going to have to know how to type.” And I said, “I don't want you to break down on some lonely road,” my daughter, “and not know how to change a tire.” Yeah, that had nothing to do with the Women's Movement at all. I wanted them to be independent and able to take care of [themselves]. I really thought when I went back to work that I could complete my



working life without computers. Boy, was I wrong. [laughter]

DJ: So has that been a new area of learning for you?

NC: Yeah, they sent me to computer school. What really shocked me is – [inaudible] anything – is how bad the teaching is today. I had not been to school for many years, and here I am. I'm the only one there who has never even turned on a computer. The teacher demonstrated what we're to do and walked us through. And then she came over to me – she was doing something – and she said to me, “What are you doing?” And I said, “I'm doing it. That's the only way I'm going to learn it.” And she said, “Oh, no, no, we don't have time for that.” Well, how are you supposed to learn it if you don't practice it and make your own mistake? That class was a complete waste. I was very discouraged.

DJ: Where was that class?

NC: That was when I was at Hanscom. They sent me to a class off Bedford Street at that building there. There's a building where they run – I've been there a few times. They have some contract with the base to run these classes. I came back so discouraged, but then I grabbed the captain, and he sat down with me, and he did it with me. I made my mistakes. He said, “You have to click it once instead of twice.” That makes a big difference. Sometimes you have to click once. Sometimes you have to click twice. He sat down with me, and he taught me more in that half hour than that whole course that I had taken there. I think this is one of the problems in teaching. One of the evaluations in my Minuteman class is, “Instructor interacts very well with her students.” Now that, to me, is what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to interact. All my dealings is – I'm not up there just – and that's what she did to demonstrate. So, I avoided classes after – whenever they had classes up there, sometimes I went, but I never got much out of them. I don't know how we got off on that. Well, you asked about my attitude towards my kids. Yeah, that wasn't affected. That was from the very beginning. I made up my mind that my kids were going to be independent.



DJ: Very good. I'll turn this off now.

[Recording paused.]

NC: I don't know if you want to put that. Okay. Now, when my mother died, I really felt that I had taken care of her. I had given her a home, and she was evidently very happy there. So, that's how I felt when she died, that I had done my best for her, and I worked at it. I really worked at getting along with her. I made the extra effort. [Recording paused.] Family. Okay, I was the only girl. I had three brothers: Sumner, George, and Arthur. Now, I married Lester, and I had three children: Bobby, who married Betsy – he met her at Brandeis. The two met at Brandeis, and they have two girls. Laura is now attending Georgia Institute of Tech, and Sarah is still in high school, and she's looking around to something perhaps within biology. David married Kathleen, and they have two boys who are still in high school. They had beautiful bar mitzvahs. Both of them have beautiful bar mitzvahs. Miriam is married to Bob (Boucher?), but she has no children. She lives upstairs. When my husband died, she and her husband Bob (Boucher?) were very supportive. They still live upstairs, and they've been very helpful. I'm really very grateful to have them here.

DJ: Great.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Donna Joftis: – June 21, 1999. This is Donna (Joftis?) recording Naomi Cherny. This is the third tape, if you could just test.

Naomi Cherny: Yeah, this is a supplement for the other tape that didn't come out too well. Okay, I understand the big topic to discuss today is the atom bomb, my defense of it. First of all, let me say I did see FDR. When he was running for re-election, he came right down through Roxbury, and I was one of the crowds that waved at him and saw him with a big smile and the cigar and the long cigar in his mouth, and he looked so cheerful.



Okay, now the atom bomb. What I say is anybody who was there at that time would have dropped the bomb. You have to be in those circumstances. We had been at war for years. We had defeated Germany, but Japan showed no inclination to join Germany to surrender. The word was definitely not in their vocabulary. They had brainwashed us completely, that they would never surrender, that they would fight to the last man in front of the Emperor's Palace, would commit hara-kiri, kill himself. So, we had already started the movements of transporting all these war-weary GIs who had gone through all this, and now they're going to go start all over again. But even that wasn't the worst. The worst was the pictures. If you had seen a full-page spread of an American soldier being blindfolded and beheaded by a Japanese officer. We heard horror stories of Americans being tortured, killed, and mutilated. It was an absolute horror. So, when the battle started, when all these people started being transported, the decision was made at that time to drop the atom bomb. If you were told that that would shorten the war, rescue our Americans, you would have done it.

DJ: Now, when you say you were in the position of defending it, in what capacity –?

NC: Today. Recently, young people will say, "Well, weren't there any other methods?" What other –? I say they could have surrendered with Germany; that would have been the end of it. But no, they definitely – they would not surrender. That was not anything they were ever going to [do], and we believed it. I mean, it was true. They kept right on fighting.

DJ: Okay. Thank you. Then the other interesting issue I wanted to go back to was this House of Incurables; if you could tell me more about that.

NC: Yeah, I didn't know if I did tell you that it did become the Lemuel Shattuck House, and I walked into – I met somebody who was working there now, and I said, "Oh, you're the old Home for Incurables." They said, "Oh, we've been trying to kill that image for years." But yes, that is what it is. The Lemuel Shattuck House today is the old Bikur



Cholim.

DJ: Say that again.

NC: Bikur, B-I-K-U-R. Bikur Cholim, C-H-O-L-[I]-M. Bikur Cholim. Home for Incurables.

DJ: Did they use any kind of precautions, the people who went into [inaudible]?

NC: No, the diseases that they had, I don't think were as much –

DJ: Communicable.

NC: Yeah, they were old age, cancer, paralysis. No, that was not an issue. My mother never mentioned precautions. No, it was pitiful. These people were hopeless, pitiful, dying, paralyzed, and she would go in and try to cheer them up and say read to them or write for them or feed them, but it was a very depressed – and she would come home very depressed, but she did it.

DJ: Did you ever go with her on any occasion?

NC: No, never.

DJ: And then the third thing, if you wouldn't mind, just going over those three items, the exercise and the cooking and [inaudible].

NC: Okay, let's just see. Which was it first? The cooking. I had been brought up on grease. Everything was fried: fish in a batter, fried potatoes, mashed potatoes, and gravy. At some point, I said that is not the best nutrition. When I was feeding my family, I was looking for something nutritious and quick, and the answer was the broiler. This is long before the microwave, so my broiler was what I used. We had a lot of steak. Steak wasn't that expensive then. Fish, I would put a little dab of lemon and maybe a touch of butter, and broil that and liver with onions, so that a lot of the food I served was broiled with soup



and salad. In that sense, it was a departure from what I had been brought up in and what was the custom at the time.

DJ: Did you bake?

NC: I did, in the sense that I once read that it doesn't matter what you bake, it's the process. No matter if the cake has a hole in the middle, the idea of being with your family, using the blender, and coming out with someone. Yeah, so we did, and I never really expected the results to be that great. So, when they were good, it was a pleasant surprise. Yeah, I did bake with the kids more as a recreation or as a togetherness rather than coming out with anything. But when I had to – for instance, if I had Thanksgiving dinner or something, I did it. I did the whole thing myself – the turkey, the stuffing. Yeah, I did it.

DJ: Great, and you mentioned exercise.

NC: Okay. As I said, the one thing that – to this day, I cannot climb – and this is not something that's recent. A good part of my life, I have had trouble climbing, and I lay that to the fact that as a child, I never climbed. So, the first thing I went after my kids is exercise. The boys built a tree house out in the back, and they'd swing from branch to branch, and I'd go in the house, so I wouldn't look. I got gym sets with ladders on them before they could even walk. When my son went into the Air Force, they had those hand-over-hand exercises, and not everybody dropped into the water, but some did, but he just went right through it. The exercise program was no problem for him. My son, David, won several swimming matches. He was the champion for many years at the Hayden Recreation Centre. Even when he went to Brandeis, he was still winning swimming contests on the swimming team. My daughter, Miriam, I sent her to Hayden for swimming, too. When she went to Girl Scout camp, they threw up their hands. She was so far advanced over anybody there that they gave her a boat and a row, a rowboat, and a couple of [inaudible] said, "Go." She said she never understood why they did that. I



explained it to her. I also read that the only place that there are more jobs than kids for summer work is water – camp counseling, lifeguards, swimming lessons. So that's why I pushed all my kids into that.

DJ: Because they do that for summer jobs.

NC: Every summer. They never had a problem. Miriam at Walden. David, right up here in Lexington, at the hotel, was the lifeguard there. I think that's so much better than bagging groceries. Yeah, so I did, and it worked out well. They all got summer jobs in connection with water, either swimming or teaching. Okay, so that was the second one.

DJ: The other one was a single-sex high school.

NC: Yeah, our school was segregated according to sex. The boys were on one side, the girls were the other side, and the library was in the middle, and you just did not ever go on the other side. I know people complain, but it did have some advantages in that girls were the officers. (Grace Delaney?) was the president. I was editor-in-chief of the yearbook. I don't know what would have happened if I'd had to compete with a boy, but it did give us that. The only thing that I do object to is that the boys did woodworking and printing; the girls did cooking and sewing. [laughter] One breakthrough my senior here did come in when five of us girls were allowed to debate five boys, five boys in the senior class. [inaudible] something like free trade or something. It was such a big event that my mother came down and sat with my teacher. I mean, this was the first breakthrough in my senior year: we were even allowed to know there were boys on the other side. But as we got to be juniors and seniors, it really didn't matter, because we considered them too young. By the time we were that age, we were dating college freshmen, so we really weren't that much interested in the boys in our class.

DJ: Did you ever, at that time, follow the progress of mixing? Do you know what happened after your senior year [inaudible]?



NC: I do know that there was a state recommendation that it be combined. Oh, yeah. I read the report saying that it was extra expenses, listing the extra – two cafeterias, the extra expenses that were being involved by two separate – yeah, I don't know what they did, but I do know that that was a very strong recommendation. Yeah.

DJ: Great.

NC: Now, did that cover everything?

[END OF INTERVIEW]