Ruth: Today is November 11, 2011. We are at the home of Tilda Finzi Cohen in Atlanta, Georgia. This interview will be for the Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Project of the Breman Jewish Heritage and Holocaust Museum. John Kent is the interviewer.

John: Let’s start with the basics. When were you born, and what was your name when you were born?

Tilda: When I was born, my name was Mazel Tov Finzi. I was born July 11, 1933.

John: Where?

Tilda: In Split [Yugoslavia], in the former Yugoslavia, now Croatia. I hate to call it ‘Croatia’. I prefer to call it ‘Dalmatia’, that was the region.

John: Which languages did you grow up with?

Tilda: I basically grew up with Serbo-Croatian, that was my first language. My parents always spoke in Ladino... we didn’t call it ‘Ladino,’ we called it ‘Spanish’... so I wouldn’t

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1 Additional information about Tilda Finzi Cohen can be found in the interview she provided on April 14, 1998 by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in its oral history volunteer collection. The recording is available at collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn506689.

2 Split is a city in the Croatian region of Dalmatia, on the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea. It is centered on the structure of the ancient Roman palace of the Emperor Diocletian and its bay and port. It is the largest Dalmatian city, and the second-largest city of Croatia.

3 Dalmatia is a historical region of Croatia on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.
understand, and so the housekeeper wouldn’t understand. But, I picked it up so I knew all the
secrets of the house but they didn’t know I understood. It was interesting. Until the age of
basically seven, I spoke Serbo-Croatian, and was exposed to Spanish.

**John:** What were your parents’ names?

**Tilda:** My father’s name was Moritz . . . Maurice Finzi [sp] and my mother’s name was
Hannah Finzi [sp]. Then, during the Italian occupation, somehow my father’s name was
changed to ‘Mauricio.’ He died Mauricio Finzi. I was never . . . called ‘Mazel Tov.’ It was
always ‘Mazal Ta’ (which was Ladino) and then [it] was Matilda. Then . . . we were shortened
to ‘Tilda.’ All the ‘Mazel Tovs’ turned out to be ‘Tilda’ in that family, of which there were
many. But first grade, when I went to school, on my birth certificate, it said ‘Mazel Tov Finzi.’ I
nearly died when the teacher called this name—she couldn’t pronounce it to begin with. But
thank G-d, they used last names in schools then . . . Finzi.

**John:** Was there any reason your parents called you that?

**Tilda:** Yes. They named me that because my father’s [sister] died at a very young age. [My
father’s mother] had just had a child—her fourth child. I think she was in her thirties. [The
child] died of typhus on the isle of Bisevo [Croatian: Biševo], [in the] middle of the Adriatic
Sea. My father, when he had his first daughter, which was me, one and only, was immediately
. . . I was named after my aunt. Also, all my uncles had a ‘Tilda.’ Everybody named their first
daughter . . . everybody who had . . . three of them, Tilda.

**John:** Did you have a brother?

**Tilda:** No. I never had any sisters or brothers. There was a second birth. My mother gave birth
to another child that died at birth. Then the war, so I was always an only child.

**John:** Describe your parents, what kind of people were they? How do you remember them?

**Tilda:** I remember them very often. My father was quiet, not very well-educated in the sense
of not ever having gone beyond the fifth grade or sixth. But [he was] very bright, very well-read,
very progressive, leaned very much to the left. On the other hand, [he] could read all the prayers
. . . Hebrew, went to synagogue, always a community leader. My mother was a very beautiful

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4 Ladino, also known as Judeo-Spanish, is a romance language derived from old Spanish. Today, it is primarily
spoken by Sephardic Jews (Jews of Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East and their descendants) in
more than 30 countries. It is recognized as a minority language in Israel and Turkey.

5 Typhus is contracted from the bite of a louse, and results in chills, delirium, high fever, headaches and muscle pain
and if untreated often results in death. It was common in the camps and ghettos due to hygienic conditions and the
constant infestation by lice.
woman, blond, blue-eyed, from Sarajevo \(^6\) [Bosnia and Herzegovina]. He met her in Sarajevo when he went to visit, and within a year . . . or so they were married.

**John:** What were their personalities like?

**Tilda:** My mother was very vivacious, she had a beautiful voice, sang a lot . . . actually sang in the *Lira*, the Sephardic choir in Sarajevo, and went to Greece \(^7\) . . . to Salonika \(^8\) [Greece], because Salonika was . . . they sang a lot of the Sephardic songs, the Ladino tunes. She was also very good at singing Yugoslavian . . . Bosnian songs.

**John:** And your dad?

**Tilda:** My dad was a leader. I can’t explain why but he was always. If there was an organization to be president of . . . he was. If it was in Split, if it was in Bari \(^9\) in Italy, if it was when he arrived in . . . New York [City, New York]. He was twice, I think, president of the organization of Yugoslav Jews in the United States. Many attorneys were in that group that had come and very successful, but he was comfortable and spoke well, wrote well. [He] spoke German, spoke Italian, and spoke Serbo-Croatian. English was a different thing. He was already in his forties when he arrived here so it was difficult.

**John:** What was family life like in the 1930’s?

**Tilda:** I was born in 1933. Family life was . . . that I remember before the Second World War, very regulated, but very wonderful. We were on the beach so I was a swimmer. I learned how to swim before I learned, I think, to read. Definitely, reading was not one of my strengths. I was the only child. My parents were very active. The Jewish community of Split was very, very active. Had actually a building where they met on a regular basis. Not the synagogue, it was almost like a club. It was called ‘Jordan’ . . . [it] means the ‘River Jordan’ in Serbo-Croatian.

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\(^6\) Sarajevo is the capital and largest city of Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the First World War, Sarajevo became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Sarajevo was captured by Germany on April 15, 1941. The Axis powers (Germany, Italy and Japan) created the Independent State of Croatia, and included Sarajevo in its territory. Following the liberation of Sarajevo on April 6, 1945 by the Allies, it became the capital of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina within the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. On October 15, 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its sovereignty from Yugoslavia. The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was admitted into the United Nations on May 22, 1992.

\(^7\) Greece, officially the Hellenic Republic, and known since ancient times as ‘Hellas,’ is a country in Southern Europe.

\(^8\) Thessaloniki, often referenced as ‘Salonika,’ is the second largest city in Greece and the capital of Greek Macedonia. The city housed a major Jewish community, mostly of Sephardic origin, until the middle of the Second World War.

\(^9\) Bari is the capital city of the province of Bari and of the Apulia region, on the Adriatic Sea, in Italy.
They were very active. It reminded me . . . they had the Vitzo,\(^{10}\) the Women’s Zionist organization. They had clubs, they had cards, they had plays . . . so they were very active in that community . . . cooking class. It was a community . . . I just read this morning, I had thought was about 300. Before the start of the Second World War . . . before 1939 or 1940, there were 270 or something people living there. It was very small, but we had a rabbi, we had a synagogue . . . a very old synagogue.

**John:** Do you remember the rabbi’s name?

**Tilda:** I definitely do. I remember Izzy Finzi [sp]. He was a first cousin of my father . . . my father’s first cousin, the son of Uncle Momy [sp: 8:52]. My father was very close to . . . his father. Izzy was a rabbi but he was also very left-wing, and unfortunately got caught. The fascists caught him and they starved him to death in Italy, in one of the prisons. Or he was hung, we never knew, but he definitely in 1942 [he] was taken [and] imprisoned. He was active with the partisans. He was anti-fascist, anti-German. He wasn’t communist, he was just anti-fascist and anti-Nazi and anti-German.

**John:** Before the war, what would you say was the relationship between the Jews and the rest of the population?

**Tilda:** The relationship was quite good. As a matter of fact, my parents . . . my father, who was from Split, had many non-Jewish friends. [He] had his routine of stopping in the different shops on his way to work. I don’t know how much socially we saw each other. My father stopped, and kind of maybe went out to have a midmorning snack, which was *marenda* [Croatian: breakfast eaten with cutlery]. But socially, it was the Jewish community, the synagogue, the Jordan, the club that my father belonged to . . . My father, everybody, all the Jews, you did not join, you were part of it.

**John:** The kids at school, were they okay with you? Was there any teasing?

**Tilda:** School . . . that is where the pain comes in. I started school in 1940. I was seven years old. That was first grade. I had gone to a little nursery school. I had friends. There were very few Jewish children my age. There was one little boy. We were born a month apart. Our parents were friends. I would like to talk about him later. Forgive me, I lost my train of thought.

**John:** You were saying how the school was a bad memory.

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\(^{10}\) The ‘Vitzo’ or ‘WIZO’ is the Women’s International Zionist Organization founded on July 7, 1920 to provide community services for residents of Mandate Palestine. It had branches across Europe before the Second World War.
**Tilda:** The school was actually . . . girls and boys were separated. That was the way schools were. I was the only Jewish girl in my class. I was not aware . . . maybe in an upper grade, maybe second or third, there might have been some Jewish children, but I was not aware of it because I just started in September of 1940. That was my first year. Except for that ‘Mazel Tov’ name, but otherwise I was quite well accepted.

**John:** What did Jewishness mean to you?

**Tilda:** Jewishness meant a great deal. Please, it meant Friday taking the chicken to be killed at the synagogue. This is actually taking the live chicken, and bringing home a dead chicken because that was the only way the chicken would be kosher. We really did not keep kosher. There was no way to get kosher meat. In Sarajevo, there was kosher meat. My mother had come from a kosher home in Sarajevo, so we used to take the chicken to be killed in a special basement of the synagogue . . . once a week, maybe even not that often. It depends if the rabbi was there to kill the chicken, which he was. That was how it began . . . it began by taking a bath Friday evening, then getting dressed, then having the Shabbat [Hebrew: Sabbath] dinner, and lighting the candles. My father always sang the Kiddush, . . . a very lengthy Kiddush. It was very much in the lighting of the candles, everything. My father used to go to synagogue on Friday evening for services. Women did not. I did not. Saturday morning, I don’t remember him going very often but he had a store. The store had to be closed on Sunday very often so I don’t think he went. It meant Pesach. It meant all the pots were boiled, the house was torn up. It was very traditional. We always had big seders. My father’s brothers and sister, they were all . . .

**John:** Was there any sense of being different from non-Jews or was it more of a cultural type thing?

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11 Kosher is a set of Jewish dietary laws. Food that may be consumed according to halakah (Jewish law) is termed ‘kosher’ in English. Food that is not in accordance with Jewish law is called treif. The word ‘kosher’ has become English vernacular, a colloquialism meaning proper, legitimate, genuine, fair, or acceptable.

12 Shabbat [Hebrew: Sabbath] is the Jewish day of rest and is observed on Saturdays. Shabbat observance entails refraining from work activities, often with great rigor, and engaging in restful activities to honor the day. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday night, and is ushered in by lighting candles and reciting a blessing. It is closed the following evening with the recitation of the havdalah blessing.

13 Hebrew: ‘Sanctification.’ A blessing recited over wine or grape juice to sanctify the Sabbath and Jewish holidays.

14 Pesach [Hebrew: Passover] is the anniversary of Israel’s liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, matzot [Hebrew], is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelites during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had no time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the seder [Hebrew: order], the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The seder service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life.

15 Hebrew for ‘order.’ The ritual meal eaten at home on the first and second nights of Passover. The family meal is accompanied by the retelling of the story of the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt.
Tilda: Yes. I think the whole thing, the way we . . . the holidays. I don’t remember much antagonism. We were not too many.

John: What was the general standard of living during the 1930’s there in that part of Europe?

Tilda: I can speak of my own family, which was middle class. By middle class, we had probably much smaller but pretty much like this [referring to her home]. We had . . . my mother had help in the house, which was not something [unusual] because there was a maid’s room in the house. She did have help in the house, somebody who lived in. But this was not a luxury. We did not have a car, refrigeration we didn’t have, so you had to go shopping for food every morning. It was definitely middle class, parties at the club, my parents went, and occasionally a dinner out, not often, definitely going to the coffee shop on the Riva [waterfront in Split], and have a coffee. I think I knew about people. My father had a store.

John: What kind?

Tilda: A dry goods store . . . [cloth] by the yard. After 1936 . . . basically the collapse of the economy, he had to close the store but became a traveling salesman. He was very much into textiles. Life continued about the same, nothing changed, until the war started.

John: What kind of a kid were you? How would you describe yourself?

Tilda: Anxious to go to school, an only child, [I] was anxious to go to school. Basically, [I] adored the beach. I learned how to swim before [anything else]. I think, fairly independent, because I lived in a small town with no traffic. We did not live within the walls of the old Diocletian Palace\(^{16}\) but . . . I could freely move around . . . in first grade, definitely walked to school by myself. As a matter of fact, I always made fun of the German refugees. They had come to Split after the problems in Germany.\(^ {17}\) We had an influx. The mothers used to bring these girls . . . they always went with the mother, and this was a joke for me. It was kind of because they were in a strange place, and I was in my home town. It was kind of different.

John: When you mentioned your father was a leader . . . was he into politics and current events, was it that kind of community leadership?

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\(^{16}\) Diocletian’s Palace is a building in Split, Croatia, that was built by the Roman emperor Diocletian at the turn of the fourth century. Diocletian built the massive palace in preparation for his retirement on May 1, 305.

\(^{17}\) Adolf Hitler and the Nazis came to power in 1933 in Germany and immediately began a systematic program of persecution of the Jews. The Nazis conducted a boycott of their business, enacted the Nuremberg Laws, stripping them of citizenship and other rights, stole their businesses, drove them from their occupations and homes, and instituted a myriad of other petty and no-so-petty restrictions and discrimination.
**Tilda:** He was a leader in the Jewish community. I think he was also somewhat a leader in the resistance movement or something, but that was not publicized, that was not spoken of. That was secret.

**John:** Was there much talk in your family, in your neighborhood about things changing in the late 1930’s? I know they did not have CNN [Cable News Network] in those days.

**Tilda:** That’s the big thing. We did not have . . .

**John:** Did you know the war was coming?

**Tilda:** That is a very interesting thing. I was six-and-one-half . . . I was seven, when there was something in the air. Then my father was called into . . . because I don’t know who declared war. I think Germany wanted to occupy . . . they declared war on Yugoslavia. My father was called into the army. He left, and all at once, things changed. I believe this was in the late winter of 1940 or early 1941. There was definitely a change. My father left . . . he had to go in the military to fight against the Germans. Yugoslavia, at that point, was under the king [Peter II] and Rabbi [Isaac Abraham] Alkalay, that you mentioned, was very close to the king. There was a change . . . the big change, I remember vividly. One night, my mother said that we were invited to lunch or dinner . . . to one of the other families. It was on the other side, maybe 20 minutes or one-half hour walk but that for us was nothing . . . nice streets. We left in the evening, we were not afraid of walking at night. It was just the two of us. We came toward the center of town and there was this sea of soldiers . . . German. The war was declared. I guess they already had. We couldn’t hear from my father. Marching through the city . . . this was an overwhelming feeling. I don’t know why I remembered it so clearly. Last night I was thinking of it . . . the sea of marching Germans, they marched through the town. My mother and I kind of went to the side, and made it home. In the morning, there was absolutely no trace of the Germans. They just walked through . . . they marched through the town and went someplace. I

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18 CNN is an American cable and satellite television channel that is owned by Turner Broadcasting System, a division of Time Warner. The 24-hour cable news channel was founded in 1990 by Ten Turner. CNN was the first to provide 24-hour news coverage and was the first all-news television channel in the United States.

19 King Peter II was the last king of Yugoslavia and the last member of a dynasty that was founded in the early 1800’s. Peter II came to the throne when his father King Alexander I was murdered in France during a state visit. Because Peter was still a minor his father’s cousin Prince Paul of Yugoslavia was appointed Regent. Regent Prince Paul then declared that the Kingdom of Yugoslavia would join the Axis on March 25, 1941. Two days later, King Peter, at age 17, replaced his uncle in a coup d’etat and backed out of the agreement with Germany. After Yugoslavia was invaded by Germany Peter II fled to Greece, then Jerusalem, then Cairo, then Great Britain where he joined the other governments-in-exile.

20 Rabbi Isaac Abraham (Avroham Yitzchok [Hebrew]) Alkalay was the Chief Rabbi of Yugoslavia from 1924 to 1941. He was appointed by King Alexander I, who was king of Yugoslavia from 1921 to 1934.
would assume them to have come from the north and gone south towards maybe Dubrovnik [Yugoslavia at the time being referenced, now Croatia] or something. I don’t really . . . you are seven years old and it’s not anything but definitely this was not part of the country that they were going to occupy.

**John:** Once your father had to leave, what did you and your mom do?

**Tilda:** We stayed . . . it wasn’t for a very long period of time. It was two or three weeks maybe, or maybe a month. We just continued our real lives. The lady that was in the house, she was still there. We just continued. My mother was always worrying about how my father [was]. We got a telegram that he was okay. He was not taken prisoner. A lot of people were taken prisoners . . . different from prisoners-of-war, by the Germans. My father was not caught. He sent a telegram, “I am okay. I am going to try somehow to make it home.” Within a week, I think, he returned home.

**John:** He wasn’t really trained to be a soldier, he was just drafted?

**Tilda:** He had been . . . it’s like here . . . you were drafted. You didn’t . . . but he had served in the First World War in Austria. That was where he learned, in the Austrian army, and he had learned German at that time.

**John:** He came back after a few weeks?

**Tilda:** Yes. Maybe a month, but I don’t even know that it was that long.

**John:** This was early 1941?

**Tilda:** Very early 1941. Maybe summer, maybe spring, early spring of 1941.

**John:** What was the situation around you?

**Tilda:** That part I don’t remember. I remember that it was kind of unsettled. That’s all I remember. It changed very rapidly because the Italians came. The Italians came to occupy . . . Split, to them, was part of the city that belonged always to them . . . the Diocletian Palace . . . many of the old timers spoke Italian, with the Venetian dialect, many of the older ones, the younger ones, no. The Italians came, occupied the city and things started to happen.21

**John:** Go through it a week at a time or a day at a time.

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21 The Italians occupied Split on April 6, 1941.
Tilda: That I don’t remember. The only thing I remember is that, all at once, my mother’s family [and] my father’s family that lived in Zagreb\(^{22}\) [Yugoslavia at the time being referenced, now Croatia,] or Zagabria [Italian], Belgrade\(^{23}\) [Yugoslavia at the time being referenced, now Serbia] or in Sarajevo . . . they all had brothers and sisters . . . started coming to Split. Because we were now occupied by the Italians, there was a feeling that they would be lenient with the Jews, not [treat them] . . . fairly, but they would not put them in concentration camps. [Benito] Mussolini\(^{24}\) I don’t think was really a killer of Jews. That is when [we went] from a family of three . . . my mother, my father and I, and the housekeeper . . . things changed. There was an influx of family members. They were all escaping the Germans from these cities. They would stay with us for a few weeks, and then they would go, and find a room someplace or something like that. This was a drastic change. There was a house full of people. Cooking was . . . there could be 10, 15 people in the house, and it’s little.

John: What was the feeling in the air, was it fear?

Tilda: They were all fearful. They all had come . . . basically had left these cities with false papers—false identification cards and things like that. Things in Split were changing. The school was taken over by the Italians. They brought in Italian . . . they wanted to basically nationalize the city of Split under Italian government . . . hopefully, for them, if they won the war, so they wanted already the children to start speaking Italian and learning. The school, they

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\(^{22}\) Zagreb is the capital and the largest city of the Republic of Croatia. At the start of the Second World War, the Jewish community of Zagreb was 11,000. After World War II, only 2,500 Jews lived in Zagreb.

\(^{23}\) Belgrade (or “White City”) is the capital and largest city of Serbia. On March 25, 1941, the government of the regent Prince Paul of Yugoslavia signed a Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in an effort to keep Yugoslavia neutral during the Second World War. The pact required Yugoslavia to allow transit through its territory to German troops headed for Greece. The signing of this agreement by Prince Paul was immediately followed by mass protests in Belgrade, and a military coup d’état overthrowing the regency, placing King Peter II on the throne, and denouncing the previous government’s decision to join the Axis. Although the new Prime Minister, Colonel Dušan Simović, sought within days to retract this statement, Hitler ordered the invasion of Yugoslavia on March 27, 1941. As a result, when German, Italian, Hungarian and Bulgarian forces invaded Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941, the city of Belgrade was heavily bombed by the Luftwaffe [German Air Force]. Eleven days later, after the Simović government and King Peter II fled to London, Yugoslavia surrendered to the Axis powers. The Germans established a military occupation administration in Serbia, based in Belgrade. Belgrade became the seat of the regime, headed by General Milan Nedić. By the summer of 1942, virtually no Jews remained alive in Serbia, unless they had joined the Partisans or were in hiding. The city remained under German occupation until October 20, 1944, when it was liberated by the Soviet Army and the Partisans.

\(^{24}\) Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) was an Italian politician, journalist, and leader of the National Fascist Party. He ruled Italy as Prime Minister from 1922 until he was ousted in 1943. He ruled constitutionally until 1925, when he dropped all pretense of democracy and set up a legal dictatorship. He was known as ‘Il Duce.’ Mussolini was captured and executed near Lake Como by Italian partisans on April 27, 1945.
brought in a teacher from Italy. Definitely someone I think wore a black shirt\(^{25}\) a fascist. I had a new teacher. The classes everything was in Italian. She made believe I believe she did speak some Serbo-Croatian but she made believe she never spoke it. This is where I became the teacher’s pet. I think she knew I was Jewish, with a name like ‘Finzi’ in that part of the world. But still the children in class did not understand her. She spoke Italian to the class. But I spoke Ladino, Spanish, and I understood everything, so she would make me translate for them. Somehow, I understood her. I still don’t know why but I guess I don’t know, because maybe the Spanish. My father spoke Italian, so I had heard that spoken. My father spoke it with many of the old timers Jewish citizens of Split who were the old timers, the Marpols, Godot [sp: 29:05], the families that spoke Italian. I must have been exposed to it, but not aware. I could not speak it but I definitely understood it and could translate it.

One fine day, I was in school. I loved school. The teacher said, “Finzi, you have to go get your father, and you can stay home.” I said, “But I didn’t do anything.” [She said,] “Honey, you didn’t do anything but I have to speak to your father. Take your books and go get your father.” We had two sessions, some kids went in the mornings, some didn’t it was overcrowded. After lunch, I had left my parents, with some of the family members that escaped from the other parts occupied by Germans. I got home, I said, “Dad, I didn’t do anything, the teacher wants you to come.” He said, “Yes, honey, why don’t you stay home.” This is something [for which] I blame my father. Instead of telling me why the teacher wanted him to come, he said, “I’ll go and meet with her.” I said, “But I want to come back.” [He said,] “No.” [I said,] “Yes, yes, yes.” [He said,] “Okay, come back with me.” When we got back she talked to my father, who spoke Italian fluently, and she told him that because I was Jewish, I could no longer attend school. My father said, “Should I tell her to come with me?” [She said,] “No, let her stay until the end of the afternoon, then she will come home.” When I got home, they said, “School you can’t go anymore. Jewish children cannot go to public schools.”

**John:** Did you get any explanation for that?

**Tilda:** The explanation was—Jewish we knew I didn’t, I was seven years old my parents knew because the racial laws were already in full not use, what is the word they

\(^{25}\) Blackshirts or ‘*Camicie Nere*’ [Italian] were members of the armed squads of Italian fascists under Benito Mussolini, who wore black shirts as part of their uniform.
took place in Italy already. We are talking about 1941, I think, 1939, the racial . . . all the university students, high school, elementary school . . . no one could go to public schools.

John: Was your father allowed to still have his store?

Tilda: No, all the businesses were closed. The maid had to leave. All these things started happening. The businesses were not . . . the beach was closed to Jews. As a matter of fact, in their book, it said, “Evitato l’ingresso agli Ebrei” [Italian], which meant “Entrance is prohibited to Jews.” There was one that said, “Gli Ebrei e i cani” [Italian] “Jews and dogs.” But anyway, I just read before you all arrived, where it said, be careful because if the Jews left any of their towels, they are full of vermin, throw them [away]. It was just so, so wild. This was the beach that was the built beach where there were bathrooms . . . we were not allowed. Actually within a month, this whole thing changed: no Jews in schools, no help in the house, no stores owned by Jews, no beach, no congregating in coffee shops. You couldn’t congregate in coffee shops. Yes?

John: Was it the Italian government putting out those rules?

Tilda: Yes. The fascists . . . Mussolini, he was following basically Hitler’s racial laws, but in a milder manner in some ways, much milder. I am here.

John: What were your parents and the other Jewish folks saying about these changes?

Tilda: Actually, they were very proactive. The first things that happened, we have to now educate these children. All the teachers lost their jobs who were Jews, all the professors who were Jewish, so we are going to form a school. We are going to go to the private homes of people or we are going to meet at . . . some buildings that the synagogue owned. It was, I think, a few weeks. I think they were very aware of things that were coming. They did not talk to me, as a child, I was not made aware of that. They were organized mentally, much more organized than I thought because within a week or two, they already had organized who was going to be . . .

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26 Benito Mussolini was pressured by his more powerful ally and mentor, Nazi Germany and Adolf Hitler, to enact laws in Italy that copied Germany’s 1935 Nuremberg Laws. Mussolini did so in July 1938. The series of Italian laws were called the ‘Manifesto of Race.’ Like the Nuremberg Laws these laws stripped Jews of Italian citizenship and any position in the government or professions.

27 Hitler’s racial laws were a set of policies and laws implemented by Nazi Germany, asserting the superiority of the “Aryan race,” and based on a specific racist doctrine which claimed scientific legitimacy. These policies targeted Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, handicapped people, and others who were labeled as inferior in a racial hierarchy to the “master race” of Germans. In Germany, the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 were passed on November 15, 1935. They included the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, prohibiting marriages and sexual relations between Jews and Germans, and the Reich Citizenship Law, which stripped Jews of their German citizenship. These laws were emulated by allies of the Nazis.
Other people were teaching. But, very interesting, our instruction was not to be in Serbo-Croatian. Our instruction was . . . we had to still continue studying in Italian. Interesting . . . so basically . . . my uncle who had studied in Italy, at Polytech\textsuperscript{28} in Milan . . . was a professor, because he spoke [Italian]. Our teachers had to speak Italian. At the end of the school year, the Italian authorities gave us the permission of going and giving exams. You know the terms to be . . . when you go from one grade to the other . . .

**John:** Graduate?

**Tilda:** No, promoted to the next grade. We were actually preparing for the exam. We were just following the normal Italian curriculum, with math, with everything. Our rabbi . . . not Izzy . . . there was another rabbi . . . Alteris [sp], who had come . . . Izzy was in jail . . . came to teach us Jewish religion. Basically, we met in these rooms . . . it was above, or near the synagogue. We had classes there. Again, double shift . . . some groups went in the morning, some [in the afternoon]. By now, there was an addition . . . we were 300 families before, 300 souls, 300 people, by now, there were probably more like 1,000 people because all the refugees from all the other cities, they had fled from the German-occupied part.

**John:** Were they living in your apartment also?

**Tilda:** They were living wherever they could find a room. My mother had two brothers, a sister. They were living wherever they could. They found rooms with gentile people. But, so we had school. It was so interesting because we met in the afternoon. One teacher would leave, and we were left alone, maybe 20 of us, two or three grades together. There was a ping-pong table . . . we used the ping-pong table for our classroom. We just sat all around, and, I think, learned quite a lot. But when the rabbi used to come, I remember being the leader. By then, it was five o’clock, it was getting dark. If he was late, I said, “Let’s turn off . . . let me get on top of the table, and unscrew the bulb.” When the rabbi came there was no light there, so he would let us go home early. It was just . . . I remember this so vividly! They said, “Finzi, get on top of the chair . . . you’re small . . . get on the table, on top of the chair.” I unscrewed the bulb, and when the rabbi came, the light was in the bathroom down the hall, but we didn’t have light, so he sent us home. Then, they discovered. There was a lot of . . . we had fun. Now, the boys and the girls

\textsuperscript{28} Polytechnic University of Milan [Italian: Politecnico di Milan] is the largest technical university in Italy. It was founded in 1863, and is the oldest university in Milan. From 1927 until the end of the Second World War, it was known as 'Regio Politecnico' [English: Royal Polytechnic].
were together. My little friend that . . . I knew him since I was born, was in class with me and other people . . . some of the German Jews, some of the Austrian-Jewish kids.

**John:** Do you remember that boy’s name?

**Tilda:** The boy’s name was Muscov Finzi [sp]. He had the same last name as mine, no relation. He died in concentration camp.\(^29\)

**John:** Did you know anything about what your father was planning to do for work, for business, once the store was taken away?

**Tilda:** It was very interesting. There was no work. I think the most that you could do was sell something . . . black market. Interestingly enough, there was this Italian family that owned a couple of shops . . . they were going . . . Italian fascist family . . . that my father sold to as a manufacturing representative . . . sold to them merchandise. The husband and wife decided to go to Trieste [Italy] first, to buy, which was a bigger city. No more did the traveling salesmen come, they had to go and buy merchandise for the store. They took a boat from Split to Trieste, the boat was torpedoed, and the couple was killed. There were teenage children left. The . . . Italian fascist authorities asked this Italian family, “Who do you think your father would want us to ask to manage the stores, and liquidate the stores for you so you could get the money?” He said, “The only person that my dad respected and would want in Split would be Mauricio Finzi.” They said, “But he is Jewish.” “I don’t care,” the young man said. “Mr. Finzi was the only one that my father always said if you have any problem, go to him.” Here my father, who was a Jew, who could not work, went to work for this family to liquidate the stores, price, and sell. It was very interesting, and they had to pay him. The rule was bent there because there was this tragedy that these young teenagers were left with no family, and somebody had to liquidate it. My father for, I think, maybe six, seven months, worked liquidating those stores, and selling the merchandise, and helping the kids. It was interesting how . . . basically, I don’t think the Germans would ever have done that . . . the Nazis would never have done something like that.

\(^29\) The Axis powers invaded Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941, and Yugoslavia surrendered on April 17, 1941. The Axis powers dismembered Yugoslavia, exploiting ethnic tension to reinforce new territorial boundaries. Germany and Italy divided Croatia into zones of influence, in which each stationed troops. Split, Yugoslavia was initially in the Italian-occupied zone. After the Italian government surrendered to the Allies in September of 1943, the Germans occupied the former Italian zone of Yugoslavia. On September 28, 1943, all Jewish adult men remaining in Split were interned, and, eventually, they were deported to Sajmište, where they were all murdered. In March 1944, 300 women and children were deported from Split to Jasenovac, where they died. Sajmište and Jasenovac were extermination camps established in the Independent State of Croatia, a puppet state of Nazi Germany, which was controlled by the governing fascist Ustaše movement in part of Yugoslavia during World War II.
When you said, what he did, that’s what he did. Then, after that, we didn’t have money any more. This rug is in memory of the rug that my parents had in Split, which was the first thing that left our house. My parents sold it so we could live on. The dining room, which was the fancier . . . that was . . . we did not have living rooms, we had dining rooms . . . that furniture from that left the house, just for money to live on.

**John:** Did your family leave the area at all or did you stay there?

**Tilda:** We stayed there until September 8, 1943.

**John:** So about two-and-one-half years of that life?

**Tilda:** Yes. The fascists did . . . went and beat up the guys coming out of synagogue on Friday night, and destroyed all the synagogue (I have the book) and burned all the books. It was just . . . I don’t know, I go in there and my English is gone . . . I want to use different words, forgive me. I taught English for a long time, so it is not that I don’t speak it. It was rough. My uncle was in jail because . . . to be in jail was not a terrible thing, you were proud. In jail, they didn’t use to give him food so family used to bring food. Who was elected always to bring food to the jail for Uncle Chaim? My mother was afraid to go, my father was afraid, so Tilda . . . because the Italians never hurt children. This was not, I can’t explain, but it wasn’t something. I spoke, by then, Italian, and I would bring food to my uncle once a day . . . midday. They would even open the thing . . . he was in this different, I don’t know. They would say, “You want to see your uncle? I will call him. Chaim, Chaim, come to the window! Your niece is here. Tilda è qui [Italian].” Oh G-d, I am going to switch languages on you, forgive me . . . “Tilda is here.” This was one of my things that I did on a daily basis until he got let out, and he came back to live with us. But he died fighting with the partisans. Then he went to the partisans, Tito’s partisans, like we did.

**John:** Was there much of a military or police presence in the streets?

**Tilda:** Yes, yes. The fascists . . . there was a very military presence . . . the fascists, people who were working in the underground, working for the partisans. My little cousin, first cousin, who was at my parents’ wedding [when] she was about seven . . . she was 17 . . . very beautiful

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30 Josip Broz Tito was the supreme commander of the People’s Liberation Army and Partisan Detachment, known as the ‘Partisans,’ in Yugoslavia during World War II. In 1933, Tito was appointed Prime Minister of a provisional executive body formed in Yugoslavia, called the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (Nacionalni komitet oslobodenja Jugoslavije or NKOJ). At the time, he received the title, “Marshal of Yugoslavia.” The Partisans were recognized as the Allied Yugoslav resistance movement, and granted supplies and wartime support. Later, Tito became the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.
girl. She was in the underground, and she was selected to throw vitriol [acid] at one of the big fascist commanders of the city. She did it. Blinded him and then escaped into the partisans... was in the partisans, and died there of typhus. Her name was the same as mine, Tilda Finzi. I told you, all the brothers named their daughters Tilda. He was the oldest, my uncle... Giuseppe, and that was their only child. She did. She was... there was very much the influence of young people who used to go the synagogue downstairs. There was a group that met there regularly... the rabbi was the leader, the one that got [arrested]. It was a very resistant... if they thought the Jews did not fight back, they sure did, I can tell you that, they sure did. My cousin threw vitriol. This was a major thing in this little town. It was one of the evenings. Everybody was walking on the promenade. It was awful. She did escape, she was not caught by them, and died in the partisans.

**John:** Was there any retaliation?

**Tilda:** Big retaliation, yes. Lots of people were put in jail. Lots of people were... please help me, I can’t think of the word... tortured to speak and say [who did it]. But I don’t know that anyone... it was horrible, horrible. This was not only Jews. This was the movement. There was a mixed group that fought the fascists. It was a mixed group... actually, the ones that left, and went to the partisans later. The partisans were Tito’s partisans.

**John:** So the Jews had both the Italians and the Germans as enemies.

**Tilda:** Yes. I did not see a German except for that passing through that city that evening, I never saw a German.

**John:** So there wasn’t any combat in that part of the country?

**Tilda:** No, there was no combat, none whatsoever... except the partisans were in the mountains, and they used to do sabotage. The bus, the train... this was the... I was aware of this because they used to speak Ladino... Spanish... my parents, when they used to speak of these things. My cousin Tilda is up in the mountains. I understood, and I would think to myself, “My G-d, if they had known that I knew all this stuff. My parents.” But they thought I didn’t understand Ladino.

**John:** They wanted to protect you from knowing?

**Tilda:** An eight year old. But it was just kind of... a different world.

**John:** You say your family left in September, 1943?
Tilda: September 8, 1943. Italy capitulated—capitulated, it means, basically, they dropped their arms and walked away. It was the armistice. Because there was the Italian legal government, but Duce [Italian: ‘The Leader’] [Benito] Mussolini took over somehow, and he allied himself more with Hitler than before. Basically, the Germans were coming. We felt the Germans would come. The Italians were leaving with us, and going to the mountains, and leaving their arms and their uniforms. They were trying to get back home.

John: What do you remember of leaving?

Tilda: I remember vividly about leaving. That I remember very much. We were trying to get to Italy . . . we felt like Italy was going to be [safe]. We were waiting. The Allied forces were in southern Italy, they were in Sicily . . . they were in southern Italy already. They were probably in Bari, in the southern part of Italy. We felt they were coming over. They are going to cross the Adriatic [Sea], and we are going to be safe. My father felt, “I don’t think so. I am not waiting. We are going to walk up in the mountains.” I had a feeling my father was a little different than most people. We had an apartment, just an apartment. But people did not want to leave their homes, they were afraid. My father said, “[No], we are going up to the mountains,” so we walked. <Telephone rings> We walked up in the mountains for about a day or two and finally came to the . . . partisan base. My father was taken in the partisan army so he left, and went with the partisans. My mother and I were left, and slept in the fields with our blankets.

John: You and your mom were asleep out in the fields?

Tilda: Yes, but there were many people, you don’t think. Everybody escaped. The whole thing . . . Germans are coming. It was like crowds were going up the mountains. My dad was gone. That was the last time I saw my Uncle Chaim, the one that was in jail, the one I used to [bring food]. He left, and he left us his blankets. He said, “You need them more.” They both went to be trained as soldiers to fight the Germans. We were there . . . there was . . . the captain in charge of the whole thing, was a Finzi, too, would you believe? He was an architect . . . a very well-known architect before the war, who my parents fed, one of the people that came for lunch every day. If we had gotten caught, we would have been all dead, but we did not get caught. He became a big commandant in the whole area of the partisans. My mother got in touch. He came over and he said, “I am going to Split by car . . . this was a big . . . car and a

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31 On September 8, 1943, the Italian government surrendered to the Allies. On the same date, the Germans launched Operation Axis, the occupation of northern Italy.
driver. I have to do some things in Split. You go down there get winter coats, get shoes . . . this is not going to end. I will pick you up on my way back.” She left me there alone in this little village with other people. She left, and came back that evening with Finzi. I can’t think of his first name, but he was at my house, at my parent’s house. It’s funny because after the war, my parents went back to Split, and Bosnia and Belgrade, and saw him. That bag that hangs over there, handmade by an artist, was given by him to them to thank them for all the help they gave him. It’s kind of, I don’t know why, I wouldn’t not have mentioned it if that bag was not hanging there. Within maybe a week after that or 10 days, they sent my father back. Did this cousin have anything to do with it? I don’t know. My father, in 1943, was already 43 years old. I think they felt at that time, 43 was pretty old to be fighting in the mountains, so they sent him back. They send him back . . . they told him to come back. He found us in the same place he left us. Then, the problem was now how to, what to do. We were living outside. We had a mensa [Italian: soldiers’ mess], which is a feeding place . . . cooking for the soldiers. They decided that they had to do something about the Jewish people, because if they got caught by the Germans . . . especially older, elderly [and] young children. They decided that some people were going to go walk around, and go to the coast, and some people were going to go by trucks around. My father was selected to walk . . . my mother and I, because I was 10 . . . but little, that we would go in the trucks. All the stuff we had, we took with us in the truck. They were taking us back to the beach so we could take small boats to the islands on the Adriatic Sea. Unfortunately, as we got close to Split, they had a message, and they had to dump us on the road, and then we could continue on foot. They had to go back to Split to pick up stuff, pick up people. Here we have all the stuff. My father is walking through the mountains with other people, the able-bodied. The mothers and the children [were riding in trucks] with all the luggage, so everything was abandoned. Whatever Mother and I could carry, they told us which way to go, on the coast towards another town. It’s one of these things. I always remember this. My father arrived there expecting us to be there, and we were not there. We were not there for hours. I guess he didn’t know what to do. He knew the direction where the road would be so he started walking towards, going the opposite way. My G-d, the reunion between the three of us, it was one of those things, it was

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32 In her USHMM testimony, Tilda identifies the commander as her father’s cousin, Yakiel Finzi. He became a professor at the University of Sarajevo after the war.
unbelievable. “Where are the things,” [he asked]. I said, “We left everything, just abandoned everything.” But that night, we all got in small boats, and we went to one of the small islands.

<End Disk 1>
<Start Disk 2>

John: So you arrived at that small island?

Tilda: From where we met our dad, we had to wait until night. We had to go . . . very dark night . . . to go from the coast to the small island. Maybe three or four . . . three hours or so, they left us there, and partisans were there. We were put in schools . . . by schools . . . where we slept on this trip . . . and fed us something. Then a few nights later, we went the same way, one island to the other. From Brac [Yugoslavian: Brač] to Hvar33 . . . from Hvar . . . it was just basically working ourselves to the middle of the Adriatic—from one island to another. As a matter of fact, Rosh Ha-Shanah34 of 1943 . . . we left home on September 11, 1943. I think that Rosh Ha-Shanah that year . . . I looked it up in synagogue one year. We have old books so I could find out when Rosh Ha-Shanah was in 1943 . . . I think it was like the end of September. We were on one of the larger islands. My mother and some of the women prepared food . . . in this big . . . went to the bakery and borrowed a big pan, put vegetables and meat and everything, and brought it to bakery to cook in the oven. We had a meal for Rosh Ha-Shanah in one of the restaurants. It was a communal type of living but I remember that Rosh Ha-Shanah. My father, some of them, said some prayers. Finally, we ended up on the island of Cres.35 The island of Cres never was occupied by the Germans. It always stayed in Tito’s hands. Tito . . . all his wounded soldiers that he had stayed in Cres. They had a hospital. I think that the Americans or Allies, some big ship . . . now we are talking about a big ship. Tito is sending all the wounded men to Bari, Italy to be treated by the Allies in the hospital there. They decided that some of the Jewish families would go underneath . . . under . . . the wounded were in the . . . what is the bottom of the boat that you would go under?

33 Brač and Hvar are islands in the Adriatic Sea. Today it is Croatia. There are more than a thousand islands along the Croatian coast of the Adriatic Sea. Some are large and inhabited, others are smaller and deserted. Brac and Hvar are very close to Split and among the largest of the inhabited islands.

34 Hebrew for ‘head of the year,’ i.e. New Year festival. The cycle of the High Holy Days begins with Rosh Ha-Shanah. It introduces the Ten Days of Penitence, when Jews examine their souls and take stock of their actions. On the tenth day is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The tradition is that on Rosh Ha-Shanah, G-d sits in judgment on humanity. Then, the fate of every living creature is inscribed in the Book of Life or Death. These decisions may be revoked by prayer and repentance before the sealing of the books on Yom Kippur.

35 Cres is an island in the Adriatic Sea. So they are working themselves north along the coastal islands. Brac and Hvar are in the south and Cres is in the north very close to northern Italy.
John: Cargo hold?

Tilda: Yes, whatever it is. We were put in there . . . quite a few of us, I think maybe 40, 50, I don’t know. We went to Bari, Italy. By Yom Kippur,\(^{36}\) we were in Bari.\(^{37}\) That was 10 days later . . . we were in Bari. I remember we started to fast . . . a can of corned beef, which was probably not kosher for sure, it might have had pork . . . but what I am trying to say . . . we were still observing. It’s amazing! We ended up in Bari. This was, the Allies were there, the Americans. For the first time, I saw an African-American person, driving a jeep. It was just like . . . the chocolate we were given and chewing gum . . . I had never heard of chewing gum but gum, I saw. It was . . . all this was just like . . . it was October, I think, the beginning. The dates I should have looked up in Italy. That was basically the escape. Now, most of the people did not leave Split. Most of the people stayed. My father was not willing to stay . . . he felt . . . as I told you, Muscov [sp], my little friend, and his mother, and his grandmother were taken to concentration camp. He wrote letters from camp, “Please send me food, my Jewish friend.” My cousin, the one who actually I told you about his father being the engineer who taught science and math, his mother did not feel that he could walk. He was a year younger than I. She stayed behind. She felt like they could survive. My uncle left, and became a leader in the partisans, but they stayed. Basically, both of them, the mother and my little cousin, Shalom Finzi, both of them were killed in concentration camps. Lots and lots of friends, my parents’ friends . . . the community was basically decimated. But I ended up in Italy. I spoke Italian, my father spoke Italian, my mother spoke Italian. We were kind of, fairly fine . . . lived in schools again.

John: This was about November 1943?

Tilda: I think it was more like October . . . the end of October. Then we found . . .

John: Where exactly in Italy?

Tilda: Bari.

John: Is that an island or a town?

\(^{36}\) Hebrew for ‘Day of Atonement.’ The most sacred day of the Jewish year. Yom Kippur is a 25 hour fast day. Most of the day is spent in prayer, reciting yizkor for deceased relatives, confessing sins, requesting divine forgiveness, and listening to Torah readings and sermons. People greet each other with the wish that they may be sealed in the heavenly book for a good year ahead. The day ends with the blowing of the shofar (a ram’s horn).

\(^{37}\) Interestingly, Bari is in southern Italy in the heel. Essentially they retraced their slow island hopping north by returning directly south down the Adriatic in the direction they had just come from. They had to go this far south because northern Italy was in the hands of the Germans but southern Italy was occupied by the Allies and was safe for Jewish refugees.
**Tilda:** Bari is quite a big [town] . . . it is the capital of Apulia\(^{38}\) . . . of the region of Italy. The capital city . . . it is quite a large city. Bari is . . . it is a very nice city in . . . big city, much bigger than Split. This is where . . . when I first . . . there were . . . bombs were falling there. The Germans were bombing because it was a very large port. My father was walking around the street. We were maybe at the school, but the school means we had in a school room, and the bathroom was down . . . not in school but just sleeping on, not paglia [Italian: straw].

**Ruth:** Pallets?

**Tilda:** No, blankets and straw. They brought straw, and laid it down on the floor, and gave us military blankets. My father was walking on the street, and one man approached him. [He] said was he [was] Jewish in German. It was a member of the Israeli, the British army from Israel, an Israeli soldier in the British army.\(^{39}\) My father after . . . always looked for him. He helped us so much. It was unbelievable how much food and moral support . . . I think he was originally from Ukraine. They must have been speaking more Serbo-Croatian. Ukrainian and Serbo-Croatian is very similar. David, I know his name was David . . . we got involved in this with them. Then, there was so much bombing in Bari that we had to leave, and go up in the small towns. In the small towns, there was the map division of the British army run by the whole group from Israel. They were the ones that . . . those people, I think, were working for the Irgun,\(^{40}\) too, they were double . . . they were there. They were looking for Jews to bring . . . for the first Pesach. For the rest of my life, when it’s . . . they were looking for somebody, they invited all the Israeli citizens that were in the RAF . . .

**John:** RAF . . . Royal Air Force.

**Tilda:** Yes. No, the planes . . . in the air. (Why is my English failing me? I am so sorry.)

**Ruth:** The three languages running together.

**Tilda:** Because I am in a different country now, so what I am remembering now is everything spoken.

**John:** Did you think in Italian in those days?

**Tilda:** I always think the language I speak. But I am going back in history so I am back. I am not in English. I didn’t speak English yet. They were having a seder. All the Jews that were

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\(^{38}\) Apulia, or ‘Puglia’ in Italian, is a region of southern Italy bordering the Adriatic Sea in the east, the Ionian Sea to the southeast, and the Strait of Otranto and Gulf of Taranto in the south.

\(^{39}\) This reference is to the Palestinian Brigade of the British Army.

\(^{40}\) Irgun was a Zionist paramilitary group that operated in Mandate Palestine between 1931 and 1948.
serving in the British army, or air force . . . that is the word . . . were coming to this big seder . . . hundreds of people. The commander of that map division . . . they were drawing maps. They were good at maps. They decided they were going to have a seder, and they needed a child to say the Ma Nishtana,\textsuperscript{41} so I was selected. I did not read Hebrew. He taught me . . . I had to go every day for him to teach me the Ma Nishtana. There were no tapes then. I always remember I was put on a chair, again on a chair, on a table, to say Ma Nishtana, for this . . . I remember a sea of blue because they were wearing these navy blue uniforms, and the military color . . . the air force was wearing blue uniforms. All the refugees they were hiding, we were all invited . . . not hiding at that point, they were just escaping from Bari. That was my first seder. I always have to tell my children the story . . . the Ma Nishtana, when I said it the first time there. It was very kind of safe, but we were worried about members of families . . . different places. My mother slowly started hearing about one brother being killed, and fighting with the partisans, and the second one. But life continued. I always remember in Bari. Is this too long?

\textbf{John:}  No.

\textbf{Tilda:}  We always rented one room. Finally, we got out of the school. My parents rented one room in somebody’s basement apartment. I am not talking about basement in a house. I’m talking there were many apartments in the building. There was a lady who had the basement apartment, and she was renting her bedroom. Her husband was a prisoner of war or something so he [was not there]. It was very interesting. My father was 43. There were these different families that we had come from Split together, a few. One night, one afternoon, one of the men . . . I guess to give privacy, this family . . . [my] parents never had any privacy, now I think back. One of the men said, “I am taking all the kids” . . . there were three or four kids . . . “I am taking them to the movies this afternoon so parents can have time to be [alone].” Don’t you think, it was the worst bombing that afternoon . . . the worst. We had to go in a shelter. I was 10. I was so fearful that I would never find my parents again. It was such a scary, scary feeling. Because the bomb . . . when we got out of the bomb shelter, they told us to walk in the middle of the street, because the windows were still . . . all the windows were [broken], and be careful of our feet. It was fine. In comparison to the people that went to concentration camps, I don’t feel that I had any [problem]. But anyway, we made it to the little room. My parents were fine. But after that was when we decided, that’s it, it’s too much. Bari was a major, major, major port in

\textsuperscript{41}This refers to the four questions that are sung during the Passover seder.
southern Italy, where the Allies had all their stuff delivered. As a matter of fact, we had a big explosion where the allies had . . . what did they use for chemo?

Ruth: Radiation?

Tilda: No, chemo. They used a certain . . . when I had chemo a few years . . . four, five years ago for cancer . . . I kept saying this tastes vaguely familiar in my throat. It has been written up in one of the history books. Americans did have the gas . . . what gas?

John: Nitrous gas?

Tilda: Maybe something. Germans bombed the ship, bombed the port, and it exploded, and there were thousands of dead people in Bari. It was written . . . one of the history books about southern Italy, written after the war, maybe a few years ago, pointed that out. My memory doesn’t serve me, I don’t know what kind of gas, but it’s going to come. That’s why when we left, we went up into small towns because the bombing was very severe . . . and the war. It was fine. School started opening. I started going to school. My father started [working] in Bari, in southern Italy. But we were occupied by the Allies. It was safe, relatively safe. Again, the little Jewish community got together, started functioning as a Jewish community. I remember being at . . . going to . . . having a Hanukkah party, as a matter of fact, and the Ma’oz Tzur, and all the songs and everything. Many Italian Jews were there, they had come from the north, escaped. There was a small Jewish community. My father again was doing his work . . . being someone.

John: There was a general sense of safety, like you had escaped the worst?

Tilda: Yes, definitely. Are you kidding? We were safe. We were worried about members of my mother’s, my father’s [families], but we . . . were with the Allies . . . British, Americans, and Israeli soldiers who had big seders for themselves and for us. We were fine, and my father was working. There were no jobs. But he was working in the black market selling . . . I don’t know what he was doing . . . selling dollars . . . collecting little gold and melting . . . but he made a living . . . not collecting, buying gold, and melting it down and selling it, stuff like that.

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42 In her USHMM testimony, Tilda indicates that this was mustard gas.
43 Hebrew for ‘dedication.’ An eight-day festival of lights that usually falls around Christmas on the Christian calendar. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees in 165 BCE over the Seleucid rule of Palestine, who had desecrated the Temple. The Maccabees wanted to re-dedicate the Temple altar to Jewish worship by rekindling the menorah (seven-branched candelabra used in the Temple) but could only find one small jar of ritually pure olive oil. The oil continued to burn miraculously for eight days, enabling them to prepare more oil. The hanukiah with its eight branches commemorates this miracle.
44 Ma’oz Tzur [Hebrew: Rock of Ages] is a Jewish liturgical poem, written in Hebrew, that is sung on Hanukkah after the lighting of the festival lights.
John: What was your Mom doing? Was she pretty much a full-time mother?

Tilda: Yes, my mother... cooking... we always lived, maybe rented, a big old house. There was just all these friends and single people, and the women were cooking. I wasn’t always... I do dishes very well. I was already doing lots of dishes.

John: Did you have a best friend at the time?

Tilda: Mostly Italian, no, not really, Italian. Yes, I still have pictures of very good friends... daughter of a doctor... physician that lived in the apartment next door. That Israeli commander was their best friend. He was a kid. Once the war ended, [in] 1945, we moved back to Bari.

John: When did the war exactly end in that spot?

Tilda: For us, I don’t know. That is maybe in 1944, 1945, exactly when Germany...

John: What season... when you were told that you were all free?

Tilda: No, nobody said. It was... the front was... there was a very... Foggia... [Italy]... I don’t know if you ever heard of Foggia. There was a big battle where the Germans actually gained some terrain, and they were coming back down. It was fearful. Until the end of 1944, it is funny because I don’t remember the year exactly... .

John: It was in the winter?

Tilda: I don’t know. We were... displaced people, persons came... we were in this place, on the beach, it was one of these, it’s like... when it probably ended was in 1945, that I think. That was something I should have prepared myself. We were in this place... the apartment, they did not want us in apartments. They wanted us in displaced people’s camps... made friends. As a matter of fact, one of my best friends... I met another Finzi... there were so many Finzis... Bianca Finzi. Bianca lives in Florida now, and is married to Joe Gottfried. We were still in displaced persons’ [camp]. She was four years older. How I made friends... I was 13... I made friends with her. She was learning a trade to be a beautician. She cut my hair. I just visited them... I visited her and her husband in Florida, last December. With them, I met a boyfriend. Milan Cohen [sp], who was in Israel. He was six years older... a 13-[year-old] and a 19-year-old, can you believe... ? He just sent me... look at that painting over there. I saw him in Miami, in Florida, and he said he would never recognize me. The only thing he recognized was my nose, my big nose. But he sent me a painting in memory of the old times, he said. I

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45 Foggia is a city in the Apulia region of Italy, and is the capital of the Foggia province. On September 27, 1943, the British captured the airfields of Foggia near the coast of the Adriatic Sea.
don’t think . . . displaced persons camps . . . we had a life. We actually made good friends, friends that we still keep in touch. There is nothing like getting together with these people. You have a common language almost. You have something that you experienced that you can’t reproduce now. It is a strange thing. I have very good friends here, who tell me forget what happened, just go on. When we get together, we speak three, four languages at the same time because they are Sephardic . . . a few words of Ladino, Serbo-Croatian, Italian and English. Who else can you do this with?

**John:** How did your parents decide what to do next?

**Tilda:** The war ended, and we moved. I started going to school. Bari was all the end of the war . . . people were moving . . . very few Jews. Black market, there was no need for black market . . . my father couldn’t find a job. We couldn’t stay in Italy, we were not citizens. Nobody could find a job. We went to Milan [Italy], and lived there, I think, until 1950. I went to Jewish day school for one year. I couldn’t . . . the Hebrew, I couldn’t master . . . [when I] went to school there. My father did work there, more or less, made a living. I don’t know how, but he made a living. We could go to Israel, we could go apply to come to the [United] States, or go back to Yugoslavia. Some of our family members that had gone back to Yugoslavia, had gone to Israel . . . they suggested that maybe we better go to the [United] States. My father, even if we could have stayed in Italy, did not want to stay. His worry was that I would marry somebody non-Jewish. I was 16, 17. We decided we would try to come to the [United] States.

**John:** Do you remember any discussion of either Israel or the United States?

**Tilda:** There were many discussions, many, many discussions. We were living fairly comfortably in Milan.

**John:** So you were pretty close to Israel, that wasn’t far, far away?

**Tilda:** By today’s standards, not by those standards. Plus, my aunt ended up being interned in Cyprus. They went to Israel. They were in Cyprus. I don’t know for how long. My father was friendly with Solomon Uziel [sp], who was [in] the Irgun buying arms, and maybe my dad . . . I don’t know what he was doing. But Solomon, as a matter of fact, he didn’t go back, but he was friendly.

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46 The Republic of Cyprus is an island country in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Cyprus became a British crown colony in 1925, and was governed by the British throughout World War II. It gained its independence on August 16, 1960. From August 13, 1946 to February 10, 1949, the British government detained Jews seeking to enter Palestine in detention camps in Cyprus, hoping that the detention would put an end to Jewish immigration to Palestine. Most of the Jewish immigrants were European survivors of the Holocaust trying to enter Palestine. During this period, 52,000 Jews passed through the Cyprus camps, having been taken off 39 boats in their attempt to get to Palestine. Some of the detainees spent only a few months on Cyprus, but many were held there for a year or longer.
buying arms for Israel. I don’t know. It was like . . . it was a feeling that the people who had gone to Israel, they couldn’t find . . . life was very difficult. The decision was made that we would apply to come to the [United] States. It took a few years, so we lived in Milan, until the summer of 1950, when we were processed, and all this, and came to the United States.

**John:** What do you remember of the trip over?

**Tilda:** The trip over . . .

**John:** Was it a ship or an airplane?

**Tilda:** It was a ship. The trip over . . . my father said, “We are not going in one of these. I am going to get some money, and we are going to go commercial.” HIAS [Hebrew Immigration Aid Society] was bringing us, so we could come. We came, and it was a very nice . . . a week. For me, it was devastating, leaving Italy. I had grown up in Italy. I went to Italy when I was 10. I was 17. I had friends. I was a teenager. It was hard. My parents had already put me in private English classes, so I would be prepared. Instead of preparing themselves, they prepared me.

**John:** Where did you arrive first?

**Tilda:** We arrived in New York City [New York]. HIAS met us, and they took us to a school again. It wasn’t a school. It was the highest building in downtown New York. I think it was an old school. Many refugees were coming . . . 1950 . . . many, many refugees. Uncle Beppe [Italian: nickname for ‘Giuseppe’], the one whose daughter was Tilda Finzi, who . . . she was the one [who threw the vitriol]. They came . . . the two of them, alone, and they were living in the lower East Side [of Manhattan, New York]. That was devastating, going to their apartment . . . small apartment on Broome Street. With the bathroom outside, and we had come from Milan [Italy], where we had lived a fairly middle class life. My father said, “We’ll manage. We’ll do something.” Somehow, again, in one room, in uptown New York, and then, [we] finally found an apartment.

I went to high school . . . 17 years old. I spoke some English but very little, and I was thrown in class. [I] went to high school for a year, and met wonderful people. I had a wonderful math teacher, who had . . . Esther Jacobs, who taught me math. I was in one of her classes, and

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47 HIAS was founded in 1881. Its original purpose was the help the constant flow of Jewish immigrants from Russian in relocating. During and after World War II, they had offices throughout Europe, South and Central America and the Far East. They worked to get Jews out of Europe and to any country that would have them by providing tickets and information about visas. After World War II, they assisted 167,000 Jews to leave DP camps and emigrate elsewhere.
took the Regents\textsuperscript{48} and got the highest grade ever. I think it was a perfect score. There were not too many perfect scores. A 99, I think, and she was so angry that I didn’t get 100. She was the one who arranged for me to get English classes . . . private, go to special school, because I couldn’t . . . English was very hard. They didn’t have the same thing as English as a Second [Language] [ESL]. They did not accommodate in any way. I had to take English Regents. I got a 54 . . . no 64, and the teacher would not change it. It was just . . . everything was traumatic . . . everything was painful. She went to the principal, and the principal called Albany\textsuperscript{49} [New York], and they changed it to the passing grade, so that I got a scholarship. I graduated fifth in my class of 100.

I was accepted at Hunter College [New York City, New York].\textsuperscript{50} I worked as a waitress and went to Hunter. Why is this painful, for G-d’s sake? It was hard because the working . . . I had to help my family. My father didn’t work, my mother didn’t work. I was working as a waitress making good tips in Liggett Drug Store\textsuperscript{51} after school, and went to college. I did very well, but English was just horrendous because there were never special classes. It was not . . . you were treated . . . you came . . . you had to swim, you had to just . . . but I kind of . . . Then one of my friends invited me over for dinner, and said that she wanted me to meet her brother, who I didn’t like, but I met her cousin. We fell in love and were married, four or five months later. I had two-and-one-half years of college. He was in graduate school, getting his masters in social work. He was 27 already. I was 20.

\textbf{John:} Was it an American family?

\textbf{Tilda:} An American family . . . Leonard Cohen, right there . . . born in Brooklyn [New York], raised in Ohio. His cousin was Iris Fagan [sp]. He had been in the army in Germany, and had come back.

\textbf{John:} What was it about him that really attracted you?

\textsuperscript{48} Regents are statewide standardized examinations given in core high school subjects in New York City.

\textsuperscript{49} Albany is the capital city of the state of New York. The Department of Education for the state of New York is housed in Albany, and is responsible for the production and administration of the Regents Examinations.

\textsuperscript{50} Hunter College is a public university and one of the constituent organizations of the City University of New York, located in the Lenox Hill neighborhood of Manhattan’s Upper East Side.

\textsuperscript{51} In 1902, Louis K. Liggett persuaded 40 druggists to invest in a drug company that would manufacture and distribute products in franchised stores. In 1903, the United Drug Company (UDC) began operations, and by 1929, UDC had 21 manufacturing plants throughout the United States. It employed over 25,000 workers, supplied 10,000 Rexall Drug Stores, and operated a chain of over 500 Liggett Drug Stores in the United States.
Tilda: I don’t know. As a matter of fact, if you ever want to see it, there is a movie on Facebook now, of my wedding with Leonard. We were married on “Bride and Groom” . . . on the program “Bride and Groom” . . . that was very, very . . . “National Broadcasting Company requests the honor of your presence at the marriage of Miss Tilda Finzi to Mr. Leonard Lincoln Cohen.” It was actually a program that . . . because I was in college, my parents were poor, he came from fairly lower middle-class background, he was getting his masters, was working part-time, so basically, we needed . . . the wedding. Then we moved to Pittsburgh [Pennsylvania], and I left my parents. This was painful for them. I was the connection with English. I was the one that did everything for them. They did everything for me. I was the one that if they needed to go . . . English . . . neither one of them spoke it. I ended up in Pittsburgh, and had a baby about a year later . . . a year-and-one-half.

John: What part of Pittsburgh?

Tilda: We actually lived in Shadyside\(^{52}\) for a while. After that we bought a house in Eastmont [Pennsylvania]. Are you familiar?

John: Yes, I used to live in Shadyside.

Tilda: I worked in a shoe store in Shadyside . . . Forbes [sp]. [I] was hoping to go back to college after Leonard finished school but never made it, because I had one child and another. Then, Leonard came here to Atlanta [and] became the executive director of Jewish Family Services, here in Atlanta. Whenever he dealt with refugees, he would come home and say, “But they bought a car, they must be having some money.” I would say, “Honey, don’t worry. Let them.” I always found an excuse. “Give them a chance . . . they came from Russia, they came from here, they are not . . . just give them a chance, help them for a few more months. Let them get on their feet.” I had a different . . . this honesty bit was, telling completely. You have to be secure. You have to develop some security. Now I have three children . . . that is what the picture . . . I have three daughters.

John: Names?

Tilda: Named Deborah Cohen Sobel. She got married. She went . . . got an MSW, too . . . Masters of Social Work from University of Maryland . . . met her husband, who went to [John] Hopkins Med[ical] School [Baltimore, Maryland], and they are living here in Atlanta. He is a physician. She is in private practice and social work. Second daughter, Sandy Cohen Kalter [sp].

\(^{52}\) Shadyside is a neighborhood in the East End of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
She went to Northwestern School of Journalism, wrote for a paper in upstate New York for a year and decided to go to law school. [She] got her law degree from GW [George Washington University—Washington, D.C.] and has been living in [Washington,] DC ever since. [She] worked for King and Spalding [sp] here in Atlanta. One of her clients, Medtronics, hired her. She’s now vice-president, I don’t know, she’s got a big job with Medtronics. She is an attorney. My baby, Naomi Sue Cohen Benator [sp], she graduated from the University of Virginia [Charlottesville, Virginia], has two boys, and she is a stay-at-home mom, very bright. She likes to write.

**John:** What makes you cry about these things . . . this is the happy part?

**Tilda:** It’s the happy part. This is the surviving. If I had not survived, this whole family . . . I have six grandchildren. I have five grandsons. My husband always wanted a boy, and then he had five grandsons and one granddaughter. It makes me feel, I don’t know, I think it is the sadness for all the people, like Muscov, who did not survive. A different . . . he could have had . . . an only child like I was, can you imagine? He could have had all this . . . my other . . . the people I knew that didn’t. Maybe I am crying because I lost my husband, that was the closest person. I don’t have brothers. I don’t have sisters. I have children, but they are Americans. My husband was American, but he understood. I just feel sorry for the people that did not survive.

**John:** How did the war affect your parents once they came here?

**Tilda:** My father, again, he worked as a mailroom clerk in some company. [He] didn’t speak English. My mother went to work as a maid, helping people clean. But within a year after I left home, my father worked for this Minehart & Company [sp] and became head of the mailroom without English. He really did well. My mother went to work in a factory finishing watches. They managed. They bought a condo[minium] in Brooklyn [New York]. My father was two or three, twice president of the American . . . in the community. He was always very involved, led *seders*. Sandy saw my father leading the *seders* in a picture . . . he led *seders* in a hotel for all the Yugoslav Jews. He could never come here the first night. It was always the second night because he had to lead the *seder* for his community. They loved their granddaughters, adored them. This was the big . . . they never lived, neither one of them lived to come to any of the weddings. They died. They kind of knew that Debbie was going to marry Kenny. Actually, Kenny Sobel, he invited them, he loved them. He invited them to his medical school graduation.
at Hopkins. It was kind of . . . they already knew that Debbie was going to . . . they died six months apart.

**John:** What year?

**Tilda:** My father died in 1979, he was almost 80. My mother died six months later, 1980. A month before Debbie’s wedding . . . Debbie was married on June 29, 1980, and my mother died a month before. The story continues. We have, Leonard is gone . . . I have a granddaughter that is 27, a grandson.

**John:** You were a full-time mom pretty much during the 1950’s and 1960’s?

**Tilda:** Myself.

**John:** You left yourself out of the story.

**Tilda:** I did, didn’t I? No, I . . . when Naomi started school . . . Naomi was about a year or two old, I saw an advertisement in the paper. Berlitz had, “Would you like to speak Serbo-Croatian? Would you like to speak Italian? Come take classes.” I said, “In Atlanta, Georgia, Serbo-Croatian [and] Italian?” I am talking about 45 years ago.

**John:** When did you come to Atlanta?

**Tilda:** Leonard was in social work. Social work paid but not very well. They were looking for executives in the Jewish field. Administration was not his *forté*, but he decided that he would try it. We went to Denver [Colorado] for a year. They moved us to Denver. He got a job with the foundation type of thing. It did not work out. He was really a psychiatric social worker. We were there for a year. It didn’t work out. Then, somebody called him, would he like to come to Atlanta? It was Ed Kahn, who was the executive director of the Atlanta Federation. They had a small agency with one clinical social worker, and they called him and offered him the position. He came down. He said, “I am not going to Atlanta.” It was the South. This was still segregated. But I wanted to come back east. Denver was not . . . so I said, “Why don’t you come for the interview?” He did, and he got the job. Then, the agency grew. He was with the agency for 28 years, and retired at 63 . . . probably, half way retired, half way, I think, they wanted somebody with more business. Anyway, he was 63. He had been . . . he stayed in the reserves, and was a lieutenant colonel in the reserves, so retired from the reserves. Naomi was about three years old . . . that ad in the paper . . . I called them. [The director of the school] says, “I don’t

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53 Berlitz Corporation is a global leadership training and language education company. It was founded in 1878 by Maximilian D. Berlitz in Providence, Rhode Island.
have an Italian teacher. I don’t have a Serbo-Croatian teacher.” They put this ad in. He said to me, “What do you do?” I said, “I want to know where you get your teachers. I want to make friends with people that speak Serbo-Croatian and Italian because I don’t have them.” “Why don’t you come talk to me?” the manager, the director of the school said at Berlitz. I said, “But I can’t work, I have three children.” [He said,] “Come talk to me.” I went down to 3400 Peachtree [Street] in Lenox, and I talked to him. He said, “I will train you, you can teach, you can teach in the evenings, a few hours.” Leonard says to me, “Honey, try it.” [I said,] “But it is going to cost me more for babysitters.” “It doesn’t matter,” he said, “if you just make enough to cover your babysitting cost, go.” I did, and I got trained to teach, and then started teaching Italian. Then, [I] started training teachers because I had the course to train, so I became a trainer for the Berlitz Method,\textsuperscript{54} the direct method, which is no translation. Somehow, they tested me, they felt I could speak . . . I spoke English well enough to teach it, maybe with a slight accent, but I could. The very interesting part was that IBM, Siemens . . . if they came from Germany, if they had me teach them once, because of the grammatical structure that I used, somehow, all the Germans requested me. It was so weird. Maybe because I speak Serbo-Croatian and Serbo-Croatian has cases. I don’t know if any of you ever studied Latin, but the structure of the language of German [is similar]. You have to teach them the cases, the nominative, genitive, it doesn’t matter . . . I took Latin in school. I didn’t want to teach Germans, but every time I substituted for someone else, the Germans requested me because I knew where they were coming from. I don’t speak German but I knew where they were coming from linguistically.

\textbf{John:} How did you feel dealing with Germans?

\textbf{Tilda:} It is so strange because there is a plate right there that one of my German students painted for me. Her son . . . there was such guilt that her son went to volunteer in Israel, at a nursing home with elderly people. I met her son, and he was wonderful. How did it . . . it was actually . . . I would still not buy a German car, but I developed, somewhat . . . they were very good to me. I had to place it in my mind. These were people younger than I. As soon as I realized they were younger than I. I was ten during the war. If they were under ten during the war, I could teach them. I taught . . . it was just one of these funny things. Maybe because of my language background . . . I could understand what they were trying to express, how they were

\textsuperscript{54} ‘The Berlitz Method,’ or the direct method, advocates teaching through the target language only. The rationale for this method of teaching is that students will be able to work out grammatical rules from the input language provided, without necessarily being able to explain the rules overtly.
trying, what they were trying to do, put the verb at the end like they do in Latin or something. My languages . . . But in college, I was really a math major. That’s what Mrs. Jacobs, my math teacher, she couldn’t believe that I was getting married. I was getting married, I had to go, in her mind, I had to get a degree. I never actually graduated from college, but I had a fairly good job teaching. I taught until five years ago . . . no, six years ago, until my husband got sick. I had to take care of him. My best . . . the director of the Inlingua language school, Rosine Sauvage, became one of my best friends, who went to Bari to visit my old house. I have all the stuff there. She took pictures. I think that being with a lot of foreigners, because I taught always with foreigners . . . taught foreigners . . . with foreigners, trained all the teachers . . . even people that were teaching Arabic, Japanese. I was training all the teachers in the direct method of teaching, so I was exposed to a completely different group of people. It was fun. I really enjoyed it. Many Coca-Cola executives, Siemens executives . . . taught them how to make . . . I can’t believe that I knew how to teach them how to make speeches because it’s the correction. When somebody makes a mispronunciation error on TV, I die. When somebody says “between you and I” . . . I could kill them, because, after all it’s a preposition. It’s all these things about me. But I think, Leonard . . . as a matter of fact, that picture over there, is some of the Coca-Cola executives that were coming here to learn English . . . right there, right here, the little picture . . . Coca-Cola executives that were coming here to learn English because, after all, they had to deal with the United States. They stayed here for three months. I became friends with them. They came to my house, and cooked fish, and stuff. There is my husband there dancing. He is having a ball with all these people. He met a lot of . . . because he was so embedded in the Jewish community, and expectations were high. Here was something that I made these friends away from . . . all the foreigners and all the people from different countries.

John: What involvement did you have with the Jewish world here when you first came?

Tilda: Actually, I was not involved. It was very interesting. Leonard was extremely involved. I kind of . . . I made Jewish friends, very good Jewish friends, like the Waitzman’s, Mort and Aviva Waitzman, our best friends. That is how my daughter met her husband. It’s Aviva Waitzman’s cousin’s son. I was not involved. Leonard was very involved. At that time, the Jewish community was very small.

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55 The Atlanta Inlingua Language Center was a language school established in 1980. Its President was Rosine Sauvage.
John: Was this in the 1950’s or 1960’s?

Tilda: We came here in 1960. It was a small Jewish community. He ran the Ben Massell Dental Clinic\textsuperscript{56} . . . that’s Jewish Family Services.\textsuperscript{57} It was just a very . . . somehow, even when the kids went to the Hebrew school in the evening . . . the ‘Hebrew High’, it was known, they were always known, Leonard. It was a different community. Now it is a very large community. My daughter, Sandy, was citywide President of B’nai B’rith Youth Organization [BBYO] is a Jewish youth movement for students in grades from 8 through 12. The organization emphasizes its youth leadership model in which teen leaders are elected by their peers on a local, regional and international level and are given the opportunity to make their own programmatic decisions. [B’nai B’rith Youth Organization],\textsuperscript{58} so they did [get involved] . . . the children. I basically belonged, went to synagogue, but was not involved. It’s strange because now, I am very involved in NORC [Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities].\textsuperscript{59}

Ruth: Which synagogue did you go to?

Tilda: We used to go to Shearith Israel,\textsuperscript{60} until my parents were going to move down here. My parents, being Sephardic,\textsuperscript{61} we switched to Or VeShalom.\textsuperscript{62} My parents never had a chance to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[56] In 1915, philanthropist Morris Hirsch established the Morris Hirsch Clinic to provide outpatient medical services to unable to afford care. A dental program was added to the clinic in 1929. In 1956, the dental clinic moved to Pryor Street and was renamed the Ben Massell Dental Clinic. The brothers Irving and Marvin Goldstein, both dentists, supported a volunteer dental force that served 6,000 patients each year. The Ben Massell Dental Clinic is in still existence today.
\item[57] JF&CS is a result of the merging of two separate organizations, both of which started as committees of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. The first, Jewish Family Services was founded around 1890. The agency became an autonomous organization in 1982. In 1979, Jewish Vocational Services was started. It became independent in 1985. The two agencies merged in 1997 to become JF&CS.
\item[58] B’nai B’rith Youth Organization (BBYO) is a Jewish youth movement for students in grades from 8 through 12. The organization emphasizes its youth leadership model in which teen leaders are elected by their peers on a local, regional and international level and are given the opportunity to make their own programmatic decisions.
\item[59] The Georgia Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities Initiative (NORC) is an organization that helps support older adults in the community so they can remain in their homes for as long as possible and avoid premature institutionalization. It is affiliated with the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta.
\item[60] Founded in 1904, Shearith Israel began as a congregation that met in the homes of congregants until 1906 when they began using a Methodist church on Hunter Street. After World War II, Rabbi Tobias Geffen moved the congregation to University Drive, where it became the first synagogue in DeKalb County. In the 1960’s, they removed the barrier between the men’s and women’s sections in the sanctuary, and officially became affiliated with the Conservative movement in 2002.
\item[61] Sephardic Jews are the Jews of Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East and their descendants. The adjective “Sephardic” and corresponding nouns Sephardí (singular) and Sephardim (plural) are derived from the Hebrew word ‘Sepharad,’ which refers to Spain. Historically, the vernacular language of Sephardic Jews was Ladino, a Romance language derived from Old Spanish, incorporating elements from the old Romance languages of the Iberian Peninsula, Hebrew, Aramaic, and in the lands receiving those who were exiled, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian vocabulary.
\item[62] Congregation Or VeShalom was established by refugees of the Ottoman Empire, namely from Turkey and the Isle of Rhodes. The congregation began in 1920 and was based at Central and Woodward Avenues until 1948 when it
\end{footnotes}
move, but Leonard became an adopted Sephard. He loved Or VeShalom, and was on the board for a few years, but I didn’t [get involved], even in the synagogue. Somehow, Leonard was so involved in the Jewish community, maybe not consciously, I was afraid of making mistakes maybe, I was afraid of being in some way, I don’t know . . .

**John:** Embarrassing him somehow?

**Tilda:** Maybe doing something . . . maybe not embarrassing. I am quite . . . tend to be outspoken. As a matter of fact, I wasn’t going to marry Leonard. A big thing was when I met him, there were the Rosenberg crisis.\(^63\) I told him, “My G-d, how horrible.” We were talking, and I said, “They are killing Jews, executing Jews.” He told me, “They deserved it, they were traitors.” In my house, my parents and I were sitting shiva\(^64\) almost for the Rosenbergs. For us, it was, we just had come two years before. I said, “My G-d, this just didn’t . . .” I tend to be—I don’t know, maybe not. I think I changed him a little.

**Ruth:** You had just mentioned the Rosenberg trial had just happened, and the Rosenbergs were . . .

**Tilda:** . . . they were being executed. The night they were executed, my parents shut out the lights. It was like . . . we had come, I don’t know the year . . . I got married . . . 1953 . . . this must have been 1953, the beginning of 1953. We had been here two years. This trial was horrendous. It was just awful. My father said, “They’re executing Jews here in America.” It was just a horrible thing. It was so sad . . . the children . . . it was just awful. This guy I am considering marrying, who wants me to marry him, says that they were traitors. I could not believe that I was marrying somebody I didn’t know. That we were so . . . I didn’t know what he thought.

**Ruth:** Do you think it has anything to do with the fact that he was so much more Americanized than you were?

\(^{63}\) Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were Jewish-Americans who were executed on June 19, 1953 for conspiracy to commit espionage, relating to passing information about the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union.  

\(^{64}\) Shiva, literally “seven,” is the week-long mourning period in Judaism for first-degree relatives: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, and spouse. The ritual is referred to as “sitting shiva.” Immediately after burial, first-degree relatives assume the status of “mourner.” This state lasts for seven days, during which the family members traditionally gather in one home and receive visitors. At the funeral, mourners traditionally rent an outer garment, a ritual known as “kerish.” The garment is worn throughout shiva.
Tilda: He was completely Americanized. This is what I was marrying . . . completely. His family was, too. His family asked me if we had sidewalks in Europe. Then they asked me . . . his aunt asked me . . . after all I’m marrying somebody who has a master’s degree . . . will I know how to serve people, will I know how to entertain? My feeling . . . they here ate apples with their hands and their mouths. I was used to eating an apple with a knife and fork. My father went through all this, teaching me how to eat. I think it was . . . in my mind, I think it was, number one, my parents were somewhat left wing always. This was a tragedy, the Rosenbergs . . . this was a big tragedy. I still . . . when I see it . . . this was a joke between us, always, for the rest of our lives because I almost didn’t want to marry him because of his strong feelings.

John: Did it matter whether they were guilty or innocent?

Tilda: To me, it did not really matter.

John: Just that they were Jewish?

Tilda: It did not matter . . . that they were being executed mattered. After all, they did not spy for the Germans, they spied for the Russians. Those were our allies at the time when they spied for them. Come on! But if you came from where . . . you can’t think of me now . . . you have to think of me at 19, having survived the war, having lost so many people . . . and these two. It was . . .

John: Did you feel threatened in America, being Jewish in America and knowing they were executing Jews?

Tilda: Yes, very threatened. My parents, they were like . . . they were very frightened. They didn’t understand, but neither did I. I’m sure neither did many other people. This was a major . . . Leonard and I always joked about this. It was one of those things that almost, almost . . . But I was madly in love with him. He was very handsome. I was not as attractive as he was. He was a very handsome man. He was attracted to me. When he met me the first time, he looked at me, “Eh, she’s okay.” Then a half hour later, he kissed me. I said, “He likes the way I talked, he liked me, something appealed.” But you have to watch this movie of my wedding because it was so cute.

John: What was it like moving to the South compared to New York, which is more evolved?

Tilda: Living in the South was very difficult, in part, but Leonard needed a job. The job was good. We lived not far from here on Adina Drive. There were very few Chinese restaurants. There was one downtown, so Leonard used to say, “Bring the girls (we had two then) . . . bring
the girls, take the bus down, and bring them to 41 Exchange Place” . . . where Jewish Federation was . . . Jewish Family Services were there. “Bring them there in the afternoon. We will go to dinner. I will have my car there, and we’ll go home.” Tilda takes two little girls, gets on the bus. The bus is full of African-American women . . . now black, whatever . . . there I get on the bus with these two little girls . . . one was five, one was two or maybe . . . I don’t know . . . I sit them, each one . . . I sit next to an African-American lady, and I sit. I didn’t know. I maybe knew but didn’t know it, that the bus was segregated. One white woman, who was filthy, who was just a mess, takes my children, and puts them in her lap and next to her because I sat the children next to [the black women]. To me, this was . . . I got into a fight with this woman. I said, “Will you leave my children where I sat them?” It was just unbelievable. We were going downtown. We were going against the traffic. Does that make sense? Because in the morning, the maids were coming. In the evening, afternoons, they were going back downtown. I was going downtown to meet Leonard at the Chinese restaurant to go out to dinner with the girls. It was very difficult, but things were changing. We were still involved. Leonard was in the same building with the ADL, Anti-Defamation League. Did I say that correctly? Yes. He was . . . we became friends with the people, so they were fighting. We were like in the front lines. We knew what was going on . . . people were really fighting for it. We came, and they were going to close the schools. They didn’t. Atlanta did not, but they were going to close the schools in Atlanta.

**John:** Why?

**Tilda:** The public schools because of integration. They were going to integrate the schools. That was in 1960 . . . that was part of the reason that they had a problem filling the position at JFS [Jewish Family Services] . . . nobody would, people were scared.

**John:** Given your experience in Europe?

**Tilda:** I was the one that was upset that they would not let my child sit . . . I remember the first man who gave me a chocolate bar in Bari, Italy, was an African-American guy. It was, and I had lived in New York where I . . . it was just not [right]. It was difficult. People could do something. I don’t . . . we were in the [South]. Was it difficult . . . some of the terms people used . . . I still have problems . . . the terminology. Maybe that’s part of why I didn’t quite belong to

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65 The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913 “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” ADL fights antisemitism and all forms of bigotry, defends democratic ideals and protects civil rights.
the Jewish community. I belonged but I did not integrate myself into it because of the difference in . . .

**John:** Do you want to explain that?

**Tilda:** I don’t . . . “they had a schwartze [Yiddish: a black person] coming” or something and that was very [disturbing]. I had a lady who I adored because I developed mono[neucleosis] when I came to Atlanta. Miss Eunice was wonderful. She came, and took care of me and my children. Miss Eunice was a part of the family. Eunice would come, and I wanted her to sit down, and eat with us. It was just one of those things. After Eunice got sick and couldn’t work . . . she just worked once every two weeks for me. But when I was sick . . . the mono . . . I had two little girls, she was coming every day. She became a member of our family. It was very hard, that part. Maybe that’s why I didn’t fit, integrate. That’s interesting. I never thought of that, that I didn’t integrate as readily among the Jewish community. Yes, the people from ADL, yes, the people there were—the Fingers [sp], the Boftiks [sp: 1:09:23] . . . these are all people that are now gone . . . the director of the ADL, that was different. But in the regular Jewish community, Leonard worked with them. I don’t know what his feelings [were]. But, with the women, it was different, because women used to, I don’t know, they had all . . . Maybe that’s why I . . . the school . . . the foreigners, I fit in better, it just worked for me.

**John:** Did you connect much with the survivors and other immigrants?

**Tilda:** That is very interesting. No. I did, if it was the Bornsteins that lived . . . Regina and Max . . . lived across the street. We were very close. We barbequed, they came over for barbeques. But I was . . . even there . . . I was a little, I didn’t consider myself a survivor. I still don’t because they were in camps . . . they survived the camps. It was just . . . I could not ever compare myself. I was thrown out of school. I was not being able to go to the beach. I could not go to the public beach, but I could go to the beach ten minutes away where I was free to swim, at ten years of age, ten, no eight, nine, unsupervised by my parents, no lifeguard. The kids went swimming . . . basically, my train of thought has left me, forgive me.

**John:** The people who were in the camps had it harder?

**Tilda:** Yes, yes, so much harder. I couldn’t . . . the number. They just survived such horrendous things. I really didn’t. I survived with my parents. I came to the United States with

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66 Mononucleosis (“Mono”) is a common illness that leaves a person feeling tired and weak for weeks or months. It is usually caused by the Epstein-Barr virus, and is most common in teens and young adults.
my parents. I even learned English more easily. I fit in. I was accepted. Basically, [I] did not [spend time with other survivors]. Now, I do go. That is where I met—Ruth [Einstein] and I met. I do go to the survivors. I go to Café Europa. I was always working. I had three children at home. Then, when the time came that I could have gone, Leonard was sick for five years in a row so I took care of him. Now, I find that I still am more comfortable, it’s interesting . . . I am more comfortable with this group than I am again . . . I feel like I am . . . with the survivors’ group. But, as Ruth said, many of them did not go to camps . . . they were not in concentration [camps]. Some of them were . . . but these are the survivors that probably came actually to the States before the war, and during the war, or were hidden someplace, or something, so they were not. But I considered survivors only the people that [were in the concentration camps]. It is hard for me . . . even when I testified for [Steven] Spielberg, the Shoah [Foundation] . . . I felt like, until my children contacted them, I never contacted anybody . . . feeling that I was lucky.

John: How did life change for you after your husband passed?

Tilda: That’s a hard one. There is nothing from my past. I have . . . in Israel, I have cousins, but they were all born after the war. We barely . . . we still speak, some of them speak Serbo-Croatian. Some don’t speak any of the languages, first cousins. Basically, I don’t . . . all my aunts and uncles are gone, my parents . . . I’m the only one . . . with Leonard gone, I feel alone, even if I have three children, three son-in-laws, six grandchildren. They are really wonderful, but it’s just different . . . life is changed. I am trying, yes?

Ruth: You said several times, I keep going back to this . . . the difference between European sensibility, and an American one, and where your comfort level is. I was wondering what parts of Yugoslavia or Europe or your parents that you tried to teach your children about, whether they were interested, and what you brought with you when you came to America?

Tilda: I brought a lot. I think I brought foreign languages. I have one daughter, Sandy, who spent a year in Spain, who is absolutely fluent in Spanish, as a matter of fact, completely fluent.

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67 Café Europa Monday is a social program for Holocaust survivors on the fourth Monday of the month at Congregation Beth Jacob. It is organized by the Holocaust Survivors Assistance Program at Jewish Family & Career Services.

68 In 1994, Steven Spielberg founded the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, a nonprofit organization established to record testimonies in video format of survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust. Between 1994 and 1999, the Foundation conducted nearly 52,000 interviews in 56 countries and in 32 languages. Interviewees included Jewish survivors, Jehovah's Witness survivors, homosexual survivors, liberators and liberation witnesses, political prisoners, rescuers and aid providers, Roma and Sinti survivors, survivors of Eugenics policies, and war crimes trials participants. In 2005, the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation transferred the collection to the University of Southern California.
The others have traveled. I think . . . the foods, my grand[children] . . . as a matter of fact, I’m going back to Split in December, the middle of December, with my daughter in Washington.

**Ruth:** Have you been back since the war?

**Tilda:** I have been back twice. Leonard and I went alone once. All this medication . . . my son-in-law, who is a [doctor], gave tranquilizers. I didn’t take anything. It was kind of a progressive thing. I told Leonard, “We are going to Venice. We are flying from Atlanta to Venice. If I have the courage, we are going to go back to Split.” We got to Venice [Italy], and I went to the train station. [Leonard] doesn’t speak Italian. He was well, but was not . . . already was having some problems. When I decided that we would take a train to Trieste [Italy], [we] took a train to Trieste. That was already . . . two languages were spoken in Trieste. We had a good time . . . went to a restaurant, and met somebody in the restaurant. It was just . . . I decided, maybe we will try to work ourselves. Then I decided, “We will take a bus to Fiume [Italy], and see how that goes.” Never reservations . . . I don’t have any. It was about eight, nine years ago, so I was already in my late sixties. [Leonard] was in his seventies. [We] took a bus, from Rijeka [Croatia] . . . we got into Rijeka, got a bus. Nobody spoke English . . . this was big, definitely . . . but I speak it fluently, so it was okay. We got on this bus, and, ten o’clock at night, arrived in Split . . . maybe nine. I told Leonard, there should be the Riva, in the center of town. This is the first time. When I left, I was 10 . . . when I [came back], I was about 78 years, maybe nine. I said, “That is the hotel.” There was a fancy hotel. [We] went to the hotel, got our reservations, checked in. I speak the language, it’s a different thing. I told Leonard, “Let’s go for a walk.” He says, “Where, at night?” I said, “Yes, we are going to go to the piazza.” The first thing I walked to is the synagogue. “It was a synagogue. It’s not a synagogue.” I said, “Let’s go here.” He said, “How do you remember, it’s 60 years.” Every turn in the old town. I took the right turn, and we got there. [The synagogue] was closed . . . you don’t have a feeling it’s a synagogue . . . you have to go up the steps, like most synagogues. We couldn’t walk up the steps . . . but I pointed out to Leonard where. We are coming back in the piazza. A man approaches me, and says, “We were alone?” I wasn’t afraid, it was strange. This man approached, and asked where we are from. Afterwards, I felt like it could have been a secret something. I said that I was from the city, I was born in Split, and it was my first time in 60 years here. I said, “I want to visit a synagogue.” The guy was lovely, very nice. I still don’t

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69 The *Riva* is the seaside promenade in Split.
know because he kind of wanted to know. I was very open, there was nothing to hide. The Communist countries . . . I don’t know, but it was interesting because Leonard was a little fearful. I was home, I felt safe. It was strange. [We] walked back to the hotel. The next morning [we] got up, and went and knocked on the door of the synagogue. There, we were offered coffee because it was a Jewish community. You say the name ‘Finzi,’ and it’s . . . this is . . . there is a list of all the people that died. I was home.

**John:** Did you go back to your apartment? Was it still there?

**Tilda:** As a matter of fact, I have pictures. I did not go inside. The building is just the same. It almost felt like home. I walked up the steps. The most interesting thing . . . we had what they call the upper part of the houses, where we kept the wood for the . . . not the basement, it was the upper part. If you ever had a reminder of an odor . . . the dry wood odor, of that, *seffitta* [Italian: attic], what is that?

**Ruth:** The attic?

**Tilda:** Good, thank you so much. It was the attic just had this . . . it was open. Everybody has the little sheds. That’s where I felt I was home because I went up there every day with the woman that helped to bring wood down. The odor of that dry wood in that attic was so [strong], because it was in the summer. I can’t explain . . . it brought back everything. I rang the bell of the house. I have a bell like that here . . . *dring, dring, dring*, just sings, turns. Nobody answered. I can’t explain. I went back. I went downstairs. I went to my best friend’s who lived in the basement, and rang the bell. I knew she wasn’t there but I had to ring a manager, and I asked. Maritin [sp: 1:23:56] doesn’t live here . . . but walked. The name of the street had changed but I knew exactly. It was almost every turn . . . I was ten when I left . . . every turn I knew where to turn. Leonard was so amazed that I just knew the city . . . where my father’s store was, where all the other people were.

The next day, we went back to the Jewish community. On Friday night, they had a little dinner and a service. Leonard said *kaddish* for his father, because it was his *yahrzeit* there. There was not enough people . . . men [for a *minyan*] . . . nobody knew how to pray. It was just being home, it felt like [home]. Of course, people came over. I knew your dad, I remember you

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70 “Sanctification” in Hebrew. The prayer is a sanctification of G-d’s name. It is recited at funerals, and by mourners in memory of a loved one who has died.

71 “Anniversary” in Hebrew. Each year, the anniversary of the death of a relative is observed by lighting a special *yahrzeit* candle and reciting the *Kaddish* prayer.
I didn’t know them. They were older than I. Two years later, I went back with my Debbie and Kenny, the ones that live in town, and their two children, Alana [sp] and Jake, the oldest. They loved it, absolutely loved it. When your grandchildren . . . they can’t believe that I swam in the sea with them . . . it’s not the ocean, it’s the Adriatic [Sea]. When my children said, “But, Nonna [sp], you swim and talk, how can you swim and talk?” I told them, “Honey, I learned how to swim before I learned how to read.” This is . . . it’s just . . . they made friends there. My granddaughter went back. She made [a friend], Leah Levy [sp], met a young woman. Leah has come to visit us here, when she was in Texas studying. My granddaughter went back to Split, and stayed with Leah for a week . . . so, yes, the connection. Now, in December, I am going with my [family]. I think everybody wants to go. In the cemetery, I find my grandfather and my grandmother, who I never knew. It was a very . . . it’s still . . . when I’d go the market to buy fruit, and they look at me . . . I look American. Then I start speaking, and they say, “Ali ti si naša,” [Croatian] which means “But you are ours.” I thought, “Ha, ha, I am yours . . . what you did to my people.” To them, the way I speak, I’m theirs, so it’s . . .

**Ruth:** Talk more about that . . . are you theirs?

**Tilda:** I am not. I don’t belong any place! I am in Italy, and they say, “You are Italian,” because I speak without an accent. “You don’t have to pay.” I pay for my tickets to the museum. [The ticket taker] says, “Today is Sunday, Italians don’t pay.” I said, “My husband is not, let me pay for him.” Yes, you belong, but you still . . . deep down. What I said is very interesting, and this may not be relevant, but when I go to support groups . . . at the hospice when my husband died . . . they said, “How is it?” I said, “I am in a foreign country again, since I lost my husband, I feel like I have to learn again, learning a language, and learning a different language. I am in a foreign country again.”

**John:** Who are your people? They’re not Italians, they’re not Yugoslavians, they’re not Americans.

**Tilda:** They are Americans, mostly. My children are Americans. What am I? I don’t . . .

**John:** When you say, I don’t have any people, or something like that, I don’t belong anywhere?

**Tilda:** This is a feeling of being a foreigner . . . it’s still, even after so many years. I came here in 1950. You would think that after 62 years, I would feel . . . I don’t know that other people feel this, I really don’t. <acknowledgement off camera> They do, they do. It is so strange, because
when we meet one another, there is just a feeling, there is a common ground, a very common thought.

**Ruth:** This has nothing to do with your feelings of being able to live in America?

**Tilda:** No, no, I am very . . . I know the rules. I don’t have any problem going to the bank . . . I don’t have any problem talking to the banker. No, no, I know the rules. It is a deep down feeling. I almost feel guilty for judging.

**John:** Judging who?

**Tilda:** Being . . . I am afraid of what I am going to say.

**Ruth:** No, please.

**Tilda:** I find that many Americans are somewhat naïve at times. I don’t know, I can’t quite explain. Even now, I am hoping my grandson is okay. He went to teach English in Korea for a year. He’s traveling, and got caught in Cambodia, and lost his passport. It was just awful, the last few days. As a matter of fact, I was almost going to cancel this. I felt that they robbed him of his passport. He didn’t have [a clue]. It was so much so . . . it was just an awful time the last few days. I felt like . . . Jake, you don’t understand different cultures. We are very trusting. We trust . . . see I consider myself an American . . . because I said, we, Americans, trust people. Leonard used to tell me, you’re much more cautious, you’re less trusting of people. I always wonder if there is something, but, after all, my past is different.

**John:** What are the ways that you are different from, let’s say, other immigrants?

**Tilda:** I am not different in any . . . I don’t believe that I am different from any immigrants. I am different from native-born Americans.

**John:** I was wondering if the Holocaust part of your experience is different than just somebody coming from Europe to America, for example?

**Tilda:** Yes, coming now. I was hurt . . . for a child, to be thrown out of school. For a child to not . . . all your . . . you thought things you were entitled to . . . you were entitled to go to the beach. These things were mine. As a minor . . . still, it’s a minor thing . . . with what other people suffered, you can’t compare. Maybe it is me who is more sensitive, just personality . . . I don’t know.

**John:** If your great, great-grandchildren watch this 50 years from now, what would you want them to know about you, what would you want them to learn from your experience?

**Tilda:** That’s a very interesting question.
John: Or people in a museum who might watch this in 50 years, what should they know about you?

Tilda: Good question. Number one, to accept the stranger, the big thing, and to, basically, don’t judge someone because they came from a different country [or] because they are not the same as you are. They might have something to offer. Give them the benefit of the doubt, help them out. We are always, everybody is a stranger in some place, and we have lots of refugees in this country. As a matter of fact, the man that spoke some year, he just called me yesterday. We might get together tomorrow or the next [day] . . . the Bosnian man. Just be accepting of the differences, I think, and maybe, learn languages. I think that . . . it’s not important. I think, here in the United States, if somebody . . . if I would . . . just please, please . . . just open up your horizons . . . go expand your horizons a little . . . like my grand . . . think of the way other people think. Don’t . . . there is an American way of . . . I think things are changing though, I believe, but it is very . . . that’s about it. But I had a good life. It was . . . and if you save one life, you save the world.72

John: What is meaningful for you now? What is your next phase?

Tilda: I don’t know. I’m 78 years old now. Here, I am going to Europe in a month. I don’t think I would go alone, but I probably, maybe could. I don’t know. I would like to make new friends, and I have. My children say that I am making new friends. I love opera, and my husband didn’t, so now I go every other week to see the Metropolitan Opera, with a new friend that I have made. One of the women that runs one of my grief support groups . . . I go to two. Make friends, make new friends. I don’t know what else I expect. I don’t know. Maybe move away from this house, but this is the only home I have ever known except for my little apartment. It’s very hard. This is home. My grandchildren, and my children just feel like, “Oh, Mom.” This is . . . for them, [this house] represents everything. My friend Aviva says, “Tilda, this is your little villa in the Mediterranean” because it is not typically American.

Ruth: I love it! I think it’s wonderful.

72 Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 37a.
Tilda: You know me, with my very modern... this is the rocker that I bought for $50 in Pittsburgh, in the room... very fancy. It is a Herman Miller\textsuperscript{73} rocker that I nursed my three girls in.

John: Sixty years ago.

Tilda: Yes, 56 years ago. It is very interesting. I go for... nobody would have gone for this rocker, but I loved it. I love modern furniture, modern stuff. So, that’s why, I am unconventional.

Ruth: Yes, you have that open mind you were just talking about, those broad horizons you were just mentioning, you have them.

Tilda: I do?

Ruth: Yes.

Tilda: I hope so. Thank you very much. Thank you for letting me talk. I really feel like my grandchildren and great-grandchildren maybe will find this interesting.

<End Disk 2>

INTERVIEW ENDS

\textsuperscript{73} Herman Miller is an office furniture manufacturer based in Grand Rapids (Zeeland), Michigan. They became famous for their ergonomic office chairs and their innovative designs. Today they also manufacture furniture for the home.