

**THE WILLIAM BREMAN JEWISH HERITAGE MUSEUM
ESTHER AND HERBERT TAYLOR
JEWISH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF ATLANTA
ATLANTA JEWS**

MEMOIRIST: STUART EIZENSTAT
INTERVIEWER: SANDRA BERMAN
DATE: NOVEMBER 23, 2009
LOCATION: ATLANTA, GEORGIA

<Begin Disk 1>

INTERVIEW BEGINS

BERMAN: Today is November 23, 2009. I'm with Stuart Eizenstat, who has agreed to participate in the Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Project of the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum. I'm Sandy Berman. I'm very grateful that you have agreed to come in. I know your schedule is very, very busy. I know you have been interviewed countless number of times. It must be a bore to you. I'm not going to concentrate so much on your political life but more about your life here in Atlanta and your roots because that is part of our history and the history we want to get on tape. If you could talk a little bit about when you were born, where you were born, and how you came to Atlanta at such an early age.

EIZENSTAT: My grandfather, Ezor Eizenstat, was born and raised in a little *shtetl*¹ in what is now Belarus, called Zakali [sp].² When I was in the [Bill] Clinton³ Administration, [as] Under Secretary of State, I was doing Holocaust restitution work, I had an occasion to go to Belarus for my work. I took a side trip and actually found the village. He came to Atlanta in 1904 and lived on the southeast side of town, what would probably now be near second base at the Atlanta stadium,⁴ in the Capitol Avenue, Washington Avenue near what was then AA [Ahavath Achim] synagogue.⁵ My father was born and raised in Atlanta. They belonged to

¹ The Yiddish term for town, '*shtetl*' commonly refers to small towns or villages in pre-World War II Eastern and Central Europe with a significant Jewish presence that were primarily Yiddish speaking.

² He pronounces the name with a 'Z' sound. There is a town spelled Shakali. This may be the town he references.

³ William Jefferson Clinton (1946-) was the 42nd President of the United States. He served from 1993 to 2001. He was a Democrat.

⁴ Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium served as the home ballpark for the Atlanta Braves baseball team for 31 seasons from 1966 to 1996. In 1997, the Braves moved less than one block to Turner Field. It was built to serve the 1996 Summer Olympics. The Braves played their final game at Turner Field on October 2, 2016. In 2016, Georgia State University bought the ballpark and redesigned it for a college football stadium. The Braves played their first game in 2017 in their new home stadium, SunTrust Park, located in Cobb County, a suburb north of the city.

⁵ Ahavath Achim was founded in 1887 in a small room on Gilmer Street. In 1901 they moved to a permanent

the AA synagogue. My father got a remarkably rich Jewish education. He was tutored by Rabbi [Tobias] Geffen.⁶ They also belonged to Shearith Israel.⁷ Rabbi Geffen was really his tutor. Some of my earliest recollections are of my father on Friday night . . .

BERMAN: What is your father's name?

EIZENSTAT: My father was Leo. I'll continue this spot and then double back to how he met my mother. But some of my earliest recollections were on Friday night after *Shabbat*⁸ dinner, going into the den in our hall on Windemere Drive. He would take the *parshat*⁹ of the week and go over it. It was all in Hebrew. No English translation [in] his *Bible*. At the bottom in very tiny script was the Russian commentary on that *parshat*, which he could read fluently and understand fluently. That *Bible* had a particular meaning for me because of the amount of time I spent with him going over the *parshat* of the week for many years. Every time I was sworn into office as Ambassador to the European Union, as Under Secretary of State, as Under Secretary of Commerce, as Deputy of the Treasury Secretary, I was sworn in on that *Bible*. It had almost fallen apart and had to continue to be taped. It is something that has stayed with me. He grew up in that area in southeast Atlanta. He went to Boys High School. I later went to Grady High School, which was the same school. He worked in various shoe stores during summers while he was going to Emory [University]. He was going to Emory for a year or two. Then he was drafted in the [United States] Army. He met my mother in the following way. They lived in a duplex home in southeast. I think it was on Washington Street. They lived on the second floor. Mr. and Mrs. Davis lived on the first floor. Mr. Davis' daughters included Dorothy, who became Dorothy Medintz, after Camp Barney Medintz¹⁰ was made, and two other sisters. So the families were obviously very, very close. My

building at the corner of Piedmont and Gilmer Street. In 1921, the congregation constructed a synagogue at Washington Street and Woodward Avenue. The final service in that building was held in 1958 to make way for construction of the Downtown Connector (the concurrent section of Interstate 75 and Interstate 85 through Atlanta). The synagogue moved to its current location on Peachtree Battle Avenue in 1958.

⁶ Rabbi Tobias Geffen (1870-1970) was an Orthodox rabbi and leader of Shearith Israel in Atlanta from 1910-1970. He is widely known for his 1935 decision that certified Coca-Cola as kosher. He also organized the first Hebrew school in Atlanta and standardized regulation of kosher supervision in the Atlanta area.

⁷ 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. In 2002, they officially became affiliated with the Conservative movement.

⁸ *Shabbat* (Hebrew) or *Shabbos* (Yiddish) 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.

⁹ The weekly cycle of readings from the *Torah*.

¹⁰ Camp Barney Medintz, is a Jewish camp in Cleveland, Georgia, named in honor of Barney Medintz (1910-1960). He was a Jewish leader both nationally and locally in Atlanta. He was one of the national leaders of the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Bond Organization. He was also vice-president of the National Community

Aunt Dorothy married my Uncle Barney, who was my mother's brother. There were four children from that side of the family. My Uncle Barney was the oldest. My mother, Sylvia. My Uncle Coleman. Then my Aunt Sarah, after whom I was named, who died at an early age. They had come from Lithuania. Again, during my Clinton administration years, I was doing work in Lithuania. Lithuania has extraordinary archives. I was able to find the 1897 census through a professional, who helped us go through the archives, my great grandfather, my great grandmother, and all of their children, including my grandfather, Israel Medintz. He was then around 12. He was listed in the census. There were two other daughters of eight children, who we did not know, because the whole family moved from Lithuania to Chicago [Illinois]. I inquired when I was at a family event who these two additional children were, sisters of my grandfather. One elderly relative remembered that they had come in 1938 on a boat and had gotten as far as Cuba. One had an eye disease, glaucoma, or some such problem, and they were sent back. The other sister went with her, and they were killed in the Holocaust.¹¹ My mother's side and the rest all moved to Chicago. They had a remarkably close family, a very, very large extended family in Chicago. More on Chicago in a minute because that is actually where I was born. There was a club named after my great grandfather from Lithuania. That club met once a month, all the relatives, until quite recently when most passed away. It was really a very, very close family. The Davis family in Atlanta, this is where the connection comes. My Aunt Dorothy met my Uncle Barney when he had moved to Atlanta. He was actually born in London. He went from Lithuania to London, London to Chicago. He went to Northwestern [University]. [He] was an excellent athlete. [He] came to the old [Jewish Educational] Alliance,¹² the predecessor to the JCC [Jewish Community Center], as the athletic director after graduating from Northwestern. He ended up setting up a service uniform company on Plaza Way. His initial job was the old Alliance. I still remember as a kid going to basketball games

Relations Advisory Council, vice-president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds and a former member of the executive committee of the American Jewish Committee. Locally he was president of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and past president of the Atlanta Jewish Community Council and the Atlanta Bureau of Jewish Education. He was also president of the Southeast Regional Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. Medintz graduated from Northwestern University at Evanston, Illinois, where he was a star basketball player. He came to Atlanta after he graduated to become a recreation director at the Jewish Educational Alliance.

¹¹ The systematic, government-sponsored attempt by the Germans to annihilate the Jews of Europe between 1939 and 1945, which resulted in the deaths of nearly 6,000,000 Jews.

¹² The Jewish Educational Alliance operated from 1910 to 1948 on the site where the Atlanta- Fulton County Stadium was located. The JEA was once the hub of Jewish life in Atlanta. Families congregated there for social, educational, sports and cultural programs. The JEA ran camps and held classes to help some new residents learn to read and write English. For newcomers, it became a refuge, with programs to help them acclimate to a new home. The JEA stayed at that site until the late 1940's, when it evolved into the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and moved to Peachtree Street. It stayed there until 1998, when the building was sold and the center moved to Dunwoody. In 2000, it was renamed the 'Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.'

at the old Alliance. There used to be a little balcony up at top where they would manually change the score. That was his job. He met Dorothy Davis. They were married. Aunt Dorothy knew my father and had lived in the same duplex. When my mother, my Uncle Barney's sister, Sylvia, was coming to visit from Chicago, where she had grown up, Uncle Barney and Aunt Dorothy had a whole list of Jewish men for her to meet. As they told the story to me, my father, Leo, was the sixth person on the list. She was each night going on a different one. By coincidence, my father had worked at Mr. Davis' store part time as well. Mother had come in to see Aunt Dorothy. They met there, and he asked her if she would go out with him that night. She said, "I am supposed to see you, but I'm supposed to see you as the sixth person." He said, "How about tonight?" She said yes, and they were engaged three weeks later.

BERMAN: Oh my Gosh. That is a great story.

EIZENSTAT: And married in Atlanta. I was born in Chicago by an accident of the war because my father was drafted at that time. [He] went to Boca Raton [Florida], Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and various Army bases. He taught what was then called Morse code, which was the special code that was used in the Army for secret messages. My mother moved from Atlanta, where they were living, to Chicago because he was gone. She wanted to be with her parents when she delivered. I was born at Garfield Park Hospital in Chicago on January 15, 1943. My father was then released from service honorably. He joked that when they drafted him, everybody went out and bought Japanese <unintelligible>. But he was released honorably. In those days, if you had a child, it was easier to be released. He moved back to Atlanta. My mother moved to Atlanta with me when I was eight months old. We lived on Boulevard near Georgia Baptist Hospital, just a block or two from Georgia Baptist Hospital, in an apartment. When I was about five years old, we moved to 1830 Windemere Drive, which is off Rock Spring and Cheshire Bridge [Roads], where Rhodes Bakery is. That is where I grew up. She lived there for some 50 years. Only in 2002, when her health began to fail, did we move her to Washington [D.C.] to be with us. I went to Morningside Grammar School. Morningside was probably 70 percent Jewish. It's hard for people who didn't grow up in Atlanta and don't know Southern Jewry, to imagine a school in Atlanta, Georgia, which was 70 percent Jewish, but it was. I went to Grady High School, which was probably 50 percent Jewish at the time. Virtually all of my friends had come from the Jewish community in the Morningside area and through a variety of other Jewish activities. It included the following. First, I went to JCC summer camp when it was on 10th Street and then the old JCC on Peachtree Street. Morris Benveniste was my counsellor. I still remember Morris taking half of a watermelon and rubbing my face in it. That was part of our initiation, I suppose. I went there a number of summers. I went to Hebrew school

on 10th Street at the AA. Mr. Steinberg and Mr. Zelman were teachers, of blessed memory. I loved them very much. I went all the way through high school graduation. I didn't stop at my *bar mitzvah*.¹³ I was, actually, *bar mitzvahed* at the old AA around Washington Street. It was an intimidating atmosphere in those days. The *bimah*¹⁴ was in the middle of the congregation. The older men would stand around

<End Disk 1>

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EIZENSTAT: waiting for you to make the slightest slip so they could jump in and correct you. There were other similar Jewish activities. I want to come back to AA synagogue in a minute but to continue this sort of stream. I also went to Sunday school at the AA in addition to Hebrew school. I had Mr. Alterman and others as teachers. [We] went regularly to the AA. We were very regular attendees. Rabbi [Harry] Epstein¹⁵ was the rabbi at that time.

BERMAN: Could you reflect a little bit about Rabbi Epstein and your memories of him?

EIZENSTAT: My mother set up something when we were 12. Our whole group was in the pre-*bar mitzveh* period, called the Minyonaires. It was a Sunday morning program. She worked with Rabbi Epstein to set that up. We would get our lessons and have special tutoring. Then we would have breakfast. Rabbi Epstein was very supportive of that. Rabbi Epstein was a formidable figure. To show you how deep our roots are in Atlanta, when Rabbi Epstein first came to Atlanta, we're talking about 1928, my grandfather was among those who met him at the train station. They took him immediately from the train. He had actually been tutored, I think, in Poland . . .

BERMAN: Lithuania.

EIZENSTAT: Lithuania. And then went to Chicago, I think, for a short period of time. Then came to Atlanta. At that time, the AA was an Orthodox congregation. My grandfather was among those who met him and quizzed him. According to the story my grandfather and father told, he came right off the train, went to the basement of the synagogue, and the most knowledgeable of the men, including my grandfather, quizzed him on every conceivable detail. My father tells the story that when his father, my grandfather, came home, speaking in Yiddish, of course, my father said to him,

¹³ Hebrew for 'son of commandment.' A rite of passage for Jewish boys aged 13 years and one day. At that time, a Jewish boy is considered a responsible adult for most religious purposes. He is now duty bound to keep the commandments, he puts on *tefillin*, and may be counted to the *minyan* quorum for public worship. He celebrates the *bar mitzvah* by being called up to the reading of the *Torah* in the synagogue, usually on the next available Sabbath after his Hebrew birthday.

¹⁴ Hebrew for 'platform.' The *bimah* is a raised structure in the synagogue from which the *Torah* is read and from which prayers are led.

¹⁵ Rabbi Harry Epstein (1903-2003) served as the rabbi of Ahavath Achim from 1928 to 1982. Under his leadership the congregation began to shift to Conservatism, which they adopted in 1952. Rabbi Epstein retired in 1982, becoming Rabbi Emeritus, and Rabbi Arnold Goodman assumed the rabbinic post.

“What do you think of this young rabbi?” My grandfather said, “He is very young, but he knows his *pentaluch*,” which means every detail. So our relationship with Rabbi Epstein goes back to my great grandfather. He had a major impact on my life. He was a wonderful speaker. I do a lot of public speaking, and I am a shadow of his public speaking. I learned a lot about public speaking from him but a lot about Judaism and the importance of religion. He had a really formative part in my life. It’s important to also reflect back on the home where my father grew up and that whole period because it had some seminal impacts. I remember going to my grandfather’s home on many occasions on Sundays and spending time with him and my grandmother. One connection between then and now, 2009, is that he had an old Russian samovar by the fireplace, which is how they made tea in Russia. You put coal inside. It is actually a beautiful piece. You put the teacup on the top to heat. He would drink the tea with a lump of sugar. The connection between that, is that my mother passed away in 2007. As we were going through her effects, we saw a box that had that old samovar. Rusty and so forth. We have since moved into a very nice condo in the Washington area, and we had that polished. It is in our living room, as we speak. It is one of our centerpieces. It is a great piece of work. There were other interesting things about that era. For one thing, when my grandmother died at around 1953 or 1954, I would have been around 10 or so, my grandfather announced he was leaving Atlanta. [He] told my father, Leo, my Aunt Ida, who married Harry Minsk, the whole Minsk family, Malcom and Donald and their families, and my Uncle Berry [Eizenstat], who married Bessie. I have a lecture series at the AA, which we have tonight. I will be speaking for my late father, mother, and Uncle Berry and Aunt Bessie. He said. “I’m going to Israel. I’m going to make *aliyah*.”¹⁶ He was then in his 80s. They all said, “You’re crazy. At your age. You have no one there. How can you possibly do it?” He said, “I want to be buried in the Holy Land.” In 1954 or 1955, he left and went to Israel. He settled in a town called, Petah Tikvah, which is near Tel Aviv [Israel]. It was one of the first settlements of the first and second *aliyahs* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. My Aunt Ida went to visit him. In those days, you didn’t just fly. She took a boat to Haifa Harbor. We have relatives in Haifa, who have told this story to me several times, including two weeks ago when my wife, Fran, and I were in Israel. He called them up and said, “My daughter Ida is coming from Atlanta to visit me. I’d like to welcome her in a special way. Can you hire, in Haifa, a brass band to play for her when she comes off the boat?” They said, “We’re people of very limited means. We can’t hire a brass band.” He said, “Well, can you get me a clarinet, and I’ll do it?” This is the Frankel family. They said, “How do you know how to play the

¹⁶ *Aliyah* (Hebrew: ascent) is the immigration of Jews from the diaspora to Israel. It is one of the most basic tenets of Zionism. It also means the honor of being called up to the reading of the *Torah* at religious services.

clarinet?” He said, “I’ve played the clarinet in Azar’s band before I came over to Atlanta.” When I was first told this story with Tom and Sarah Frankel in Haifa, who we saw just a few weeks ago when we were there, we went right to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and figured the date he would have been born, which would have been around 1873 or 1874. He would have been about 16 years old. One of the reasons for the large *aliyahs* from Russia between 1903 and 1905 was because of the pogroms but also because of the Russo-Japanese War,¹⁷ where the Jews were conscripted to fight on the frontlines. That led to this mass *aliyah*. He then serenaded her when she came off. Fast forward to 1965. I’m at Harvard Law School. I visit him. He is now in his 90s. I saw him at an old-age home in Petah Tikvah. He was blind in one eye. His English was never very good, but we were able to converse in my sort of pidgin Yiddish and his pidgin English. It was very memorable. I can see it as it were now. He passed away about six months later. Fast forward again to 1981. I finished my tenure in the [Jimmy] Carter administration.¹⁸ I should say the voters finished it when he lost the 1980 election. My wife and I were invited by Prime Minister [Menachem] Begin¹⁹ to come to Israel as his guests to thank me for my help <unintelligible> during the Carter administration. One of the first places we went was to the cemetery. Malcolm Minsk, my first cousin, my Aunt Ida’s son, said, “When you are there, check to see if your great grandfather might be buried in that same cemetery with your grandfather from Atlanta.” She said, “I remember *Zeyde*²⁰ saying that he not only wanted to be buried in the Holy Land, he wanted to be buried with his father.” Nobody ever followed up. I went to the cemetery with my wife, Fran. I said, “I want to see the gravestone of Ezor Eizenstat. He died sometime around late 1965 or early 1966.” We didn’t have the precise date of death. They had the gravesites chronologically, not alphabetically. It took him a couple of minutes. He found it. We walked over. It was unmistakably his from the time of death. There was an Ezor Eizenstat label. My father was labeled, Leo. We said a prayer. We put some stones on it. I said, “This was my grandfather. I think there is a possibility that my great grandfather, his father, might be buried here. The only thing I know is his name might be Eizenstat. I have no idea what his first name is. I don’t know the year, decade, or century in which he might be buried.” Without hesitation, he said, “I know exactly where it is. It’s one row over. Your grandfather

¹⁷ The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) grew out of rival imperial ambitions of the Russian Empire and the Empire of Japan over Manchuria and Korea. The Japanese, eyeing Manchuria’s fertile farm lands and mineral deposits, attained victory over the Russian forces and occupied Manchuria (which is on the Chinese mainland right across from the Japanese home islands) and renamed it ‘Manchuko.’ After World War II, when the Japanese forces were defeated, China and Russia fought over Manchuria again and today most of it belongs to China.

¹⁸ James Earl “Jimmy” Carter Jr. (1924-) was the 39th President of the United States from 1977 to 1981. He was a Democrat.

¹⁹ Menachem Begin (1913-1992) was the sixth Prime Minister of the State of Israel and founder of Likud [the Labor party].

²⁰ ‘*Zeyde*’ is Yiddish for “old man” but meant in an affectionate sort of way. It has come to mean ‘Grandpa.’

wanted to be buried next to him.” There it was, labeled Eizenstat. First name Ezor. Buried in 1910 in Petah Tikvah cemetery. We’ve gone through *chevra kadisha*²¹ records and newspapers to try to find out and piece this together. As best we can determine, my grandfather left in 1904 from Belarus, what was then called White Russia, to Atlanta. We have both records of the Robbins [sp] family who signed for them to come in. My great grandfather must have left at roughly the same time. One went to Palestine, and one went to Atlanta. So there was that connection. One other Atlanta story about my grandfather living in this duplex in the southeast. There is a wonderful story that my father tells about a great Atlanta institution. When my father was a young boy, he said there was a knock on the door one evening and a well-dressed man was at the door. My grandfather, who spoke very little English, welcomed him. He saw the two chatting. My grandfather closed the door. My father said to him in Yiddish, “<unintelligible>, what was all this about?” He said, “He was just a salesman.” My father said, “What was he selling?” He said, “He was selling stock.” “What was he selling stock in?” He said, “He was selling stock in a company called Coca-Cola for five cents a share.” My father said to him, “Why didn’t you buy the stock?” My boys said this should be our epithet if we ever have a family emblem, it should be on there. My grandfather said, “Because no one will ever drink colored water.”

BERMAN: That’s great.

EIZENSTAT: What would have happened if he purchased just one share from the 1920s!

BERMAN: Can I interject for one second and ask you a couple of questions that I have been very curious about? You grew up in the 1950s and 1960s here in Atlanta. You had to witness some unbelievable changes in the situation between blacks and whites and the Civil Rights era. Do you have any recollections of that? How did that affect you?

EIZENSTAT: Very strong recollections. It actually goes to a very similar story in my life. My first recollections are of being a young boy and being raised by a black maid. I mean, my mother was a wonderful mother, but she was there all of the time. She cooked. I grew up with collards and all the black vegetables, okra and so forth. That was an accepted way of life. They were paid very, very little. When we were in our *bar mitzvah* period, I was then on Windemere Drive. We would go to *shul*²² still back on Washington Street. During that whole cycle, almost every Saturday, one of us was being *bar mitzvahed*. So we would go to each other’s *bar mitzvahs*. We

²¹ An organization of Jewish men and women who see to it that the bodies of Jews are prepared for burial according to Jewish tradition. The task is considered a laudable as the recipient cannot return the gift. It is referred to as a ‘good deed of truth.’

²² *Shul* is a Yiddish word for synagogue that is derived from a German word meaning “school,” and emphasizes the synagogue’s role as a place of study.

had a routine. We would go back from that synagogue from AA [to] downtown. We would have lunch, go to a movie,

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EIZENSTAT: and then take the bus back to the Morningside area. One particular Saturday, I got on the bus. I had the last seat in the last row of the white section of the bus. I suppose two-thirds of the bus was white and a third was black. There was an elderly black lady who got on the bus at the same time, a lady with bags. I was sitting on the seat on the end row. I was saying to myself, “I really should get up and let her sit down so she won’t have to stand with those heavy bags.” I can remember debating in my own mind, “this is the right thing to do, but it’s against the law of segregation. If I let her sit here, she might get arrested. I might get arrested.” I kept struggling with this and did not get up. I remember it to this day. Other recollections of that time. My mother once took myself and several of my friends to a place called Mooney’s Lake²³ to swim. There was a sign outside that lake, saying “Private. No blacks or Jews allowed.” I also remember going to Rich’s Department Store, which was just below Five Points. There was a restaurant there.

BERMAN: Magnolia Room.

EIZENSTAT: The Magnolia Room. There were separate white and black drinking fountains, so labeled. Separate white and black rest rooms. No blacks were allowed in the Magnolia Room. I also remember in my junior year of high school at Grady. Governor Vandiver. Ernest Vandiver²⁴ said he was going to do what [Governor] George Wallace²⁵ had done. He was going to close the public schools rather than integrate in the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education*.²⁶ My mother was in a panic because I’m in my senior year, and I couldn’t go to Grady. She looked at Emory at Oxford, which was a high school program that Emory had sponsored. A private school. She was prepared to enroll me there before Vandiver conceded. <unintelligible>. It’s very important for people to

²³ Mooney's Lake was a summer swimming area off of Morosgo Drive in Buckhead that was in business from 1920-58. Today the area is occupied by the I-85/GA 400 interchange.

²⁴ Samuel Ernest Vandiver Jr. (1918-2005), was an American politician who was the 73rd Governor of Georgia from 1959 to 1963.

²⁵ George Corley Wallace, Jr. (1919-1998) was an American politician and the 45th Governor of Alabama, having served two nonconsecutive terms and two consecutive terms as a Democrat: 1963–1967, 1971–1979 and 1983–1987. During the Civil Rights Era he was noted for his Southern populist and segregationist attitudes. Wallace’s most remembered utterance was: “*In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.*” He tried to stop desegregation in schools by physically standing in the way of black students at several universities in 1963. Federal marshals and the Alabama National Guard under federal command forced him to step aside. He later renounced these views at the end of his life.

²⁶ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* 347 U.S. 483 (1954) was a landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court that declared state laws establishing separate public schools for black and white students unconstitutional. The ruling paved the way for integration and the civil rights movement.

understand that the Jewish community, with a few notable exceptions, like Rabbi [Jacob] Rothschild²⁷ at The Temple,²⁸ and a few other courageous people, was essentially silent during this period. Indeed, I have to say, as much as I love my father and my Uncle Berry, they had, themselves, very racist views of the blacks who worked in their store where I used to work. On Pryor Street, there were Jewish merchants, Shirley's, Mendel's, and Burl Shoe Company [sp], right next to the Fulton County Courthouse. I used to, indeed, go over when I worked in the summers. I would listen to the trials during the break. We had black workers with whom I worked. My uncle and father really had typical Southern views. The important thing is to understand that Jews did not speak up. If anything, their collective memory was of the Leo Frank trial,²⁹ not of the Holocaust, which later in my adult life [I] became extraordinarily involved in it in terms of restitutorial recovery for victims. They did not want to raise their head. Their own status was not secure enough for them to feel that they should. Plus, many, including my beloved father and beloved uncle, simply held traditional, racial views. These people were one rung lower on the ladder than Jews. I learned that it is very easy to accept an unjust system when you grow up in it and not challenge it and not think about it. I played basketball at Grady. I was an All-City basketball player. I was second or third Honorable Mention All American in the city. I was Honorable Mention All American. It never occurred to me there was something wrong with the fact we never played a team with any black players. Or that the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* the next morning and afternoon about the game, that there was never any reporting about the black schools. That is to say, you simply grew up in a particular legal context environment and never questioned it. This became a sort of important antidote for me during the Clinton administration when I took up the Holocaust issues. I don't mean to compare, and it would be inappropriate to compare segregation with the Holocaust. The blacks were not being systematically

²⁷ Rabbi Jacob Rothschild was rabbi of the city's oldest Reform congregation, The Temple, in Atlanta, Georgia from 1946 until his death in 1973 from a heart attack. He forged close relationships with the city's Christian clergy and distinguished himself as a charismatic spokesperson for civil rights.

²⁸ The Temple, or 'Hebrew Benevolent Congregation,' is Atlanta's oldest Jewish congregation. The cornerstone was laid on the Temple on Garnett Street in 1875. The dedication was held in 1877 and the Temple was located there until 1902. The Temple's next location on Pryor Street was dedicated in 1902. The Temple's current location in Midtown on Peachtree Street was dedicated in 1931. The main sanctuary is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Reform congregation now totals approximately 1,500 families (2015).

²⁹ Leo Frank (1884-1915) was a Jewish factory superintendent in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1913, he was accused of raping and murdering one of his employees, a 13-year-old girl named Mary Phagan, whose body was found on the premises of the National Pencil Company. Frank was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to death for her murder. The trial was the catalyst for a great outburst of antisemitism led by the populist Tom Watson and the center of powerful class and political interests. Frank was sent to Milledgeville State Penitentiary to await his execution. Governor John M. Slaton, believing there had been a miscarriage of justice, commuted Frank's sentence to life in prison. This enraged a group of men who styled themselves the "Knights of Mary Phagan." They drove to the prison, kidnapped Frank from his cell and drove him to Marietta, Georgia where they lynched him. Many years later, the murderer was revealed to be Jim Conley, who had lied in the trial, pinning it on Frank instead. Frank was pardoned on March 11, 1986, although they stopped short of exonerating him.

<unintelligible>, but the one thread that does connect it, is people say why didn't the German people do more? Obviously, there was a tremendous amount of antisemitism, but it's also because you can accept a given social structure as long as it doesn't involve you. Very few people have the courage to stand up to it.

BERMAN: What do you think makes the difference, though? What do you think separates the Rothschilds, the Cecil Alexanders,³⁰ the Joseph Haases,³¹ the people who did speak out during that area.

EIZENSTAT: First of all, it's not coincidental that all of them were Reform Jews. I was, of course, in the Conservative movement. I grew up with the Conservative movement, remained in the Conservative movement. But the Reform movement, which was based more on the ethical values of religion, I think had suffused that movement with a greater sense of social justice. The Joseph Haases, the Rabbi Rothschilds, and others, came out of that movement. There were preciously a few people in the Orthodox or Conservative movement in Atlanta who joined in those sorts of demonstrations. Of course, we know the bombing of The Temple³² and the *Driving Miss Daisy*³³ episode. I went to The Temple occasionally if I had some friends who were being confirmed. In those days, you didn't wear a *kippah*.³⁴ You didn't wear a *tallit*.³⁵ You didn't have a *bar mitzvah*. You could count the number of words in a prayer book in Hebrew on the fingers of both hands. But that sense of social justice, was a very, very deep sense. I want to continue, if I may, just to conclude this one episode on the Civil Rights issue and my Atlanta upbringing. I went to the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, which was segregated at the time, after graduating

³⁰ Cecil Alexander (1918-2013) was a prominent Atlanta architect and civic leader. As a partner in the architectural firm FABRAP, he was responsible for some of the city's most notable public buildings. During the civil rights movement of the 1960's and 1970's, he was a leader in the movement to peacefully desegregate the city's public housing and local businesses.

³¹ Joseph Haas (1911-2000) was a community leader, prominent Atlanta attorney, and graduate of Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

³² The Temple on Peachtree Street in Atlanta, Georgia was bombed in the early morning hours of October 12, 1958. About 50 sticks of dynamite were planted near the building and tore a huge hole in the wall. No one was injured in the bombing as it was during the night. Rabbi Jacob Rothschild was an outspoken advocate of civil rights and integration and friend of Martin Luther King Jr. Five men associated with the National States' Rights Party, a white separatist group, were tried and acquitted in the bombing.

³³ *Driving Miss Daisy* (1987) is the first in what is known as Alfred Uhry's 'Atlanta Trilogy' of plays which earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Uhry adapted it into the screenplay for the 1989 Academy Award winning film of the same name. The film starred Jessica Tandy (Daisy Werthan), Morgan Freeman (Hoke Colburn), and Dan Aykroyd (Boolie Werthan). The story of 'Miss Daisy,' a Southern Jewish widow and Hoke, her black chauffeur, is set in Atlanta between 1948 and 1973 as their 25-year friendship reflects the social changes in the American South.

³⁴ Jewish men cover their heads during prayer with a small skull-cap called a 'yarmulke' or 'kippah.' Orthodox Jewish men wear it at all times to remind themselves of G-d's presence.

³⁵ A prayer shawl fringed at each of the four corners in accordance with biblical law. The wearing of *tallit* at worship is obligatory only for married men, but it is customarily worn also by males of *bar mitzvah* age and older.

from Grady in Atlanta. I belonged to the Jewish fraternity, ZBT [Zeta Beta Tau]. The kitchen closed on Sundays, so there were no meals. We used to go often to the Howard Johnson's between Durham and Chapel Hill between Duke [University] and UNC. This particular . . . I would have been a sophomore. This would have been probably 1962. We went. One of the fraternity brothers I was with was from New York. We parked the car to go in Howard Johnson's [Restaurant]. A group of black students from North Carolina Central [University] in Durham were sitting in, blocking access. I said to my fraternity brothers, "Why are they doing that?" He said, "How can you ask that question? They are doing it to protest that they can't be served here." It was like somebody lifted a veil. Here I had grown up in what was then a progressive city in a Jewish community. I simply accepted a given system without looking at how it related to my own religion, which was preaching love strangers as self and the oneness of humanity. When it hit me, it hit me very, very hard. I ended up participating in boycotts of restaurants in downtown Chapel Hill that had not voluntarily desegregated. Of course, Atlanta did begin to do that under Ivan Allen.³⁶ In the Carter years when I was the Chief Domestic Advisor, one of the most difficult decisions we made in the domestic area was an affirmative action case brought by a white medical student applicant named [Allan] Bakke.³⁷ B-A-K-K-E. It became a very famous . . . it is still a very famous decision, in which he alleged that he was denied entry to medical school in California because he was white. The school had put in an affirmative action program he said was the cause. The attorney general at the time was Judge [Griffin] Bell.³⁸ He recused himself from this particular case because he had been a federal judge and had heard similar cases. The Solicitor General, Wade McCree,³⁹ who was black, was the one who drafted the bill. Griffin brought it over to the president. The president gave it to me to look at. I went over it with Vice President [Walter] Mondale⁴⁰ and Joe Califano,⁴¹ who was Secretary of Health. I was horrified that we were going to come down against the affirmative action plan and in favor of Bakke, effect a reverse discrimination.

³⁶ Ivan Allen, Jr. (1911-2003) was an American businessman who served two terms as the 52nd Mayor of Atlanta from 1962 to 1970 during the turbulent civil rights era of the 1960s. He presided over the city's peaceful desegregation. He ended segregation at City Hall, testified before Congress in favor of civil rights laws, and forged friendships with Dr. Martin Luther King.

³⁷ *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* 438 U.S. 265 (1978) was a landmark decision by the Supreme Court of the United States. It upheld affirmative action, allowing race to be one of the several factors in college admission policy.

³⁸ Griffin Bell (1918-2009) was an American Lawyer. He served as United States Attorney General during the Carter Administration. He was the 72nd United States Attorney General, serving from 1977 to 1979.

³⁹ Wade H. McCree, Jr. (1920-1987) served as Solicitor General of the United States during the Carter Administration from 1977 to 1981. He was an attorney, judge, public official and law professor. He was the second African American to serve as Solicitor General.

⁴⁰ Walter Mondale (1928-) served as 42nd Vice President in the Carter Administration from 1977 to 1981.

⁴¹ Joseph Anthony Califano, Jr. (1931-) served in the Carter Administration as United States Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare from 1977 to 1979.

I said to the president, “We can’t do this. We have to be in favor. There are flaws to this program for sure, but it should be at least sent back to the lower court. We should come out in favor of affirmative action, which is what did happen, and it became a landmark case. The Supreme Court [of the United States] followed our decision and proposal. I use that as an example that having gone through that process, it had a real impact. While I was at UNC, I attended a lecture. This was before the 1964 Public Accommodations Act.⁴² The former president of UNC, Frank P. Graham, a great man, who had become Under Secretary of the U.N. [United Nations], came back to the campus to speak. He spoke on a variety of topics, including the emerging civil rights issue. One of the students raised his hand and said, “Isn’t it true, President Graham, that these demonstrations emanate in Russia, in Moscow? That the Russians are stirring this up.” He said, “Young man, these demonstrations didn’t start in Moscow. They started in Greensboro [North Carolina].” When [President John F.] Kennedy⁴³ was assassinated, I remember, as so many of my generation, exactly where I was - outside the Political Science Building at UNC. There were actually fraternities that were celebrating the assassination because he had become very unpopular in the South because of the civil rights issue he was pushing. One last civil rights connection is that I applied for and was accepted to a congressional intern program that placed students selected, of whom I was one of five from UNC, at various Members of Congress’ offices for the summer. It was summer 1963. We were with our professor, Professor Dawson, who was in charge of the program. He asked each of us with whom we would like to be placed. He said, “We have almost 100 percent success rate placing people because we pick all the costs up, so it is free for members of congress.” When it came my turn, “I would like to be placed with Claude Pepper⁴⁴ from Miami.” He said, “Why?” I said, “Well, he had lost the infamous senate race to George Smathers.⁴⁵ Smathers called him “Red Pepper.” He said that his sister was a thespian and that Culpepper had matriculated at Harvard, as if those were terrible words. He had lost and then won for the [United States] House [of Representatives] and then elected. I said, “He is probably going to be the only deep South congressman”. . . as it turned out Charlie Walker⁴⁶ became the other . . . “who would vote for the

⁴² Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in places of public accommodation because of race, color, religion, or national origin.

⁴³ John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), commonly known as ‘JFK,’ was the 35th President of the United States, serving from 1961 until November 22, 1963 when he was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. He was a Democrat.

⁴⁴ Claude Denson Pepper (1900-1989) represented the state of Florida in the United States Senate from 1936 to 1951. He was in the United States House of Representatives, representing the Miami area, from 1963 to 1989. He was a Democrat.

⁴⁵ George Smathers (1913-2007) represented the state of Florida in the United States Senate from 1951 to 1969. He was a Democrat.

⁴⁶ Charles W. Walker, Sr. (1947-) was elected in 1990 to serve as State Senator for the state of Georgia. In 1996, he became Georgia’s first African American Senate Majority Leader. He was a Democrat.

Civil Rights Act.” I said, “This is the summer of ’63. There is going to be the big march in Washington. I don’t want to be with a Southern conservative. I want to be with someone . . .” He went to his congressional almanac. He said, “I can accept everyone else’s recommendations for their member but not Stu’s.” I said, “What is wrong with mine? What’s wrong with Pepper?” He said, “He’s already in his early 60s. He is not going to be around for very long.” He lasted into his 90s. They ended up placing me with [Congressman] G. Elliot Hagan.⁴⁷

<End Disk 3>

<Begin Disk 4>

EIZENSTAT: He was from Sylvania [Georgia], who was an arch conservative on the civil rights issues. It was actually an uncomfortable period during those couple of months on the civil rights issue. In that way, the whole civil rights issue came to me as a young person but not when I was in my formative years in Atlanta.

BERMAN: Did you go back and speak about it with your parents, how you had changed and how it had affected you?

EIZENSTAT: I did. My mother was from Chicago. She had grown up in an integrated society. I think my father did accept it. He accepted the change, but I don’t think his basic underlying attitudes really changed. I suspect his attitude was similar to that of the overwhelming majority of Jews of his era in Atlanta.

BERMAN: Probably very true. Another question I had was, you had mentioned and you kind of touched upon it earlier. You had a couple of family members who, unfortunately, perished in the Holocaust. Was the Holocaust discussed in your home? Did you know what was happening to your relatives, to the Jews of Europe, as a young man?

EIZENSTAT: The remarkable thing is, although the Holocaust became a central preoccupation of my public career, not only in the Clinton era when I negotiated some \$8 billion compensation from the Swiss, Germans, Austrians, and French. I got thousands pieces of property back from Central Europeans in artwork and insurance policies paid. But when I was President Carter’s domestic advisor in April, 1978, I recommended a presidential commission for an appropriate Holocaust memorial in Washington chaired by Elie Wiesel,⁴⁸ which became the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.⁴⁹ In addition, another example how the Holocaust was important later but

⁴⁷ George Elliott Hagan (1916-1990) served in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1939 to 1944. He resigned from office to join the United States Army. He returned to office and served from 1946 to 1953. He was a Democrat.

⁴⁸ Elie Wiesel (1928-2016) was a Romanian-born American Jewish writer, professor, political activist, Nobel Laureate, and Holocaust survivor.

⁴⁹ The museum is the United States’ official memorial to the Holocaust. It was dedicated in 1993 in

not, as I'll explain, when I grew up. In 1979, a revolution we still live with to this very day and will for a very long time, unfortunately, the Khomeini radical Islamic Revolution. When Ayatollah Khomeini⁵⁰ came out of exile in Paris, went back to Iran, the *Shah* [of Iran]⁵¹ had to abdicate and leave. The first radical Islamic revolution occurred. Jews had lived in Iran from the time of the destruction of the first temple, in peace, as an accepted part of the community of what was then the Persian Empire. A number of Iranians came to me in the White House, who were studying in the U.S., so they were already in the U.S. They said, "We've got a disastrous situation on our hands. Tens of thousands of Iranian Jews are fleeing the Khomeini Revolution. They are coming to U.S. consulates and embassies throughout Europe to try to get a visa to the United States, and they are being turned down. We need for you to do something. They are being told to go back to Iran." This would, obviously, be extraordinarily difficult and dangerous for them. This was at the height of the revolution when the hostage crisis and radicalism was ferocious. I remembered an incident that occurred to me in 1968. I worked for a year in the [Lyndon B.] Johnson⁵² White House after Harvard Law School. When Johnson decided not to run for re-election, I worked in the [Hubert] Humphrey⁵³ campaign for president. I was his research director. One of my staff aids, was a fellow named Arthur Morse, M-O-R-S-E, who had just published a famous book, called *While Six Million Died*. It was the first exposé of what [President] Franklin Roosevelt⁵⁴ and his top aides knew about the genocide of the Jews and failed to act on. It was not only eye opening, it was shocking because

Washington, D.C. It provides for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history. Dedication ceremonies for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. were held on Thursday, April 22, 1993. At the dedication, speeches were made by United States President William Clinton; Chaim Herzog, President of Israel; Harvey Meyerhoff, Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council; and Elie Wiesel, professor, author, and Holocaust survivor.

⁵⁰ Sayyid Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini (1902-1989), known in the Western world as Ayatollah Khomeini, was an Iranian Shia Muslim religious leader and politician. He was the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Following the revolution, Khomeini became the country's Supreme Leader, a position created in the constitution of the Islamic Republic, which he held until his death. 'Ayatollah' is a high-ranking title given to Shia clerics. Those who carry the title, are experts in Islamic studies.

⁵¹ '*Shah*' is the Persian word for "king" or "sovereign." Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980), also known as the *Shah* of Iran, reigned from 1941 to 1979 until his overthrow by the Iranian Revolution. He is known for his policies of modernization and secularism. He died in exile in Egypt, whose president, Anwar Sadat, had granted him asylum. He is buried in Al-Rifa'i Mosque in Cairo, Egypt.

⁵² Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973), often called 'LBJ,' was the 36th President of the United States from 1963 to 1968. He came into the office with the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. He was a Democrat.

⁵³ Hubert Humphrey (1911-1978) was the 38th Vice President of the United States under President Lyndon B. Johnson from 1965 to 1969.

⁵⁴ Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) was the 32nd President of the United States and a central figure in world events during the mid-twentieth century, leading the United States through a time of worldwide economic crisis and war. Popularly known as 'FDR,' he collapsed and died in his home in Warm Springs, Georgia just a few months before the end of the war. He was a Democrat. FDR was an avid horse rider and enjoyed an active early life. He was diagnosed with infantile paralysis, better known as polio, in 1921, at the age of 39. Despite permanent paralysis from the waist down, he was careful never to be seen using his wheelchair in public, and great care was taken to prevent any portrayal in the press that would highlight his disability.

Roosevelt was an icon in the Jewish community. I used to joke that Jews believed in three things. *Di Velt* (this world), *Yennen Velt* (the world to come), and Roosevelt [Yiddish expression]. So how could this have happened? Now going back to 1979 when they came to me, is precisely what happened to the Jews in Europe. They were trying to get out, and there was no room for them. We had a difficult time dealing with this because there was no visa status for these Jews from Iran. They weren't visitors, where you have to return in 60 days. They didn't have a green card [Permanent Resident Card] to work. They weren't students. I had my staff and justice department, legal counsel's office at the White House do a lot of legal research. We came up with a sort of fiction that President Carter willingly bought into and put into an Executive Order.⁵⁵ It was a special visitor's visa that would not expire until the *shah* was returned to power. Tens of thousands, if you include Christians and Bahai's, 50,000 came in on this program. I still get, when people like Sam <unintelligible> in Los Angeles [California] and the Jewish community in Los Angeles, where many of them moved, I still get Jewish New Year greetings and thanks. I've spoken out there. They've given me awards and so forth. Having said all of that, what is remarkable in Atlanta, Georgia, and growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, the Holocaust in my own home amongst my own family, was not an issue. I can't remember. I'm not prepared to say there was never a conversation. I don't remember there being a conversation. I don't remember meeting a survivor and talking about it. It was not an issue. There were no courses on the Holocaust in high school. There were no courses on the Holocaust in college. There were no courses on the Holocaust in any university. One of my friends who later became head of the Holocaust Museum, Rabbi [Irving] Greenberg from New York, recounted a story to me that he had, when he was young and getting his degree, he spent a year at Yad Vashem.⁵⁶ The connection here is an Atlanta connection. In 1973, Fran and I went on a UJA⁵⁷ Atlanta retreat at Camp Barney Medintz, at which Rabbi Greenberg spoke. He had just come from Yad Vashem. That ended up being a very seminal event for us for two reasons. First, it was my first really deep exposure beside the Arthur Morse book on the Holocaust but here in a really systematic scholarly way. He told a story that in 1962 when he was joining the faculty at Yeshiva University, he wanted to

⁵⁵ Executive Order 12172 – Iranian Aliens. Delegation of authority with respect to entry of certain aliens into the United States issued November 26, 1979.

⁵⁶ Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, was established in 1953 by an act of the Israeli Knesset. Since its inception, Yad Vashem has become a leading center for documentation, research, education, and commemoration of the Holocaust.

⁵⁷ The United Jewish Appeal (UJA) was a Jewish philanthropic umbrella organization that collected and distributed funds to Jewish organizations in their community and around the country. UJA existed from 1939 until it was folded into the United Jewish Communities, which was formed from the 1999 merger of United Jewish Appeal (UJA), Council of Jewish Federations and United Israel Appeal, Inc.

teach a course in the Holocaust. He was told at Yeshiva University it was not an appropriate course for study. He ended up having to re-title the course *Totalitarian Systems of the Twentieth Century* in order to do it. There was another reason that the retreat at the UJA Atlanta that was important to us. He talked about the difficulty of assimilation and the need for day school education as an antidote. Both Fran, who grew up in the Boston area, and myself in Morningside and Grady, we were products of the public school. We had every intention of sending our kids to public school. That transformed our life. We sent our son to The Epstein School at the AA preschool. And when I went with President Carter in Washington, they went to Jewish day schools. My oldest son, for personal reasons, had to finish that after first grade with special help. Now he is involved with <unintelligible> very Orthodox. Our younger son went to Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School from kindergarten to 12th grade. So that retreat was very important. Again, the point of the Holocaust, it was not a topic of discussion growing up in Atlanta, Georgia, even though it became a central feature in my public career.

BERMAN: It's interesting because there was a large Holocaust community here. I think they were in the shadows. They didn't talk about it either.

EIZENSTAT: There was one person who, I think, was a survivor. Mr. Morse, but it was not something that was conveyed. They didn't talk about it then. The stories were too fresh, too raw, too painful. It is only in later years when this evolution . . .

BERMAN: There was no mention of the two sisters who went back?

EIZENSTAT: No mention whatsoever. In fact, there turned out to be a third sister. We found, as I mentioned, the two additional names who had not moved to Chicago, who my elderly relatives recounted the story about going in the boat in 1938. But in further research, done in Lithuania by <name unintelligible> who was the researcher who helped us, she found, remarkably, a 1932 marriage invitation in the archives in Lithuania from my grandfather Orel Medintz and his wife Simcha. The club in Chicago was called the Orel Club, inviting people to the wedding of his daughter, Sonya, in 1932. I said, "Wait a moment." Sonya doesn't appear on this 1897 census. This is a ninth child and a third who we don't know about. I said, "How did this happen?" It was quite simple. It listed her age. She was 30 at the time. She would not have been born. She was 30 or 32. She had not been born in the 1897 census, so she wasn't listed. She was married to a fellow named <unintelligible> in Lithuania. So we did research at Yad Vashem, both for the Medintz sisters in 1938, and for Sonya and <unintelligible>. Nothing. We looked at every catalog archive we could find. It

only occurred to me, I would say, two or three years ago when I went to the annual dinner in Washington of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, which I helped create, and I later had been its counsel, they honored a remarkable Catholic priest named Father Benoit, spelled B-E-N-O-I-T, who had spent years in Ukraine . . . he is now working in Belarus . . . uncovering mass graves. He had a camera. Because he was dressed as a priest, which he is, he was able to get the townspeople, the elderly people, to recount stories they wouldn't have if they had come, perhaps, from Jews. The story that they recounted, was Jews were taken out in mass graves and shot. As he recounted, in the concentration camps, there were names. The people who were killed in these mass graves, of whom of the 6 million, 1.5 million had no identities. I believe that is why we couldn't find these three siblings of my grandfather, my great aunts.

BERMAN: What town was it that they were in in Lithuania?

EIZENSTAT: They were in a town called Ukmergé or . . . it went by its Polish name.

BERMAN: Can you spell that?

EIZENSTAT: It's Vilkomir. Vilkomir was one name. Ukmergé is the other.

BERMAN: Where they closer to Kovna or Vilna?

EIZENSTAT: To Vilna.

<Recording Ends>

INTERVIEW ENDS

<End Disk 4>