INTERVIEW WITH JEANETTE LOWEN
DORIS STIEFEL, INTERVIEWER

August 27, 2001

DS: This is an interview with Jeanette Lowen on August the 27th in the year 2001 in Jeanette's beautiful home overlooking Lake Washington. The interviewer is Doris Stiefel. Jeanette, it's a pleasure to interview you. I know that you are one of the natives of Seattle, that not many are here that can really talk about some of the earlier days in Seattle history and Seattle Jewish community and the general community. And I know that you've been active in both areas. So, why don't we get started. Tell us a little bit about—

JL: Now does this have any special format? Do you go by subject matter? Or what.

DS: A little bit. What I wanted to do is to [tape cuts out]. That would be very nice.

JL: Okay.

DS: So why don't you tell us a little bit about your family background, how they came to Seattle , or were they born here?

JL: No. I'm the youngest of four siblings, three of whom are deceased. I was born in, I just have this from speaking knowledge, down in an area called Remington Court, which was an early Jewish section of Seattle.

DS: Remington Court?

JL: Remington Court. It is now located someplace near the present juvenile court, probably between 16th and 12th and Jackson. We lived there for a short while and then moved to 23rd and Cherry, which at that time was still somewhat of a Jewish neighborhood, but more integrated. I lived there from age five [to] about my entrance into high school, which was Garfield High, just several blocks distant. At that time my father's circumstances were better and we moved to the Denny Blaine area which was almost I'd say, practically 100 percent non-Jewish.

DS: Could you tell me your family name, your maiden name?

JL: My maiden name was Milstein.

DS: Milstein.

JL: My parents were Morris and Sarah Milstein, who had met in New York. I don't know the age my father emigrated to this country but my mother was fourteen, from a small village called Skoptic, which at that time was Russia and after the war Lithuania. She came here alone and went to work in the garment industry in New York City. I think my father was also associated with business in that area. I remember her telling me that she had fallen in love with a young Italian man but knew that she should not marry outside her faith. So she ended up marrying my father and one of the things I thought rather interesting was neither of them had any resources at the time, nor did the circle of friends with whom they associated. So they rented a hall, didn't have the money to pay for it, but any guest who came dropped money in the cap and that helped pay for the rental of the hall and the celebration of their marriage. My mother's elder brother and a younger brother had come to Seattle prior to that. I don't know what circumstances ended in that, but her younger brother, who was a bachelor, was one of Seattle's best custom-made tailors with a very fine shop at Third and Union right near the Post Office. I still remember visiting them.

DS: Do you know remember his name?

JL: Yes. His name was Harry Thal, T-h-a-l, my mother's maiden name was Thal. Her elder brother Abe Thal had established a garment factory manufacturing a very fine quality of women's cloaks and suits, together with two other men, one of whom was not Jewish and the other an early Seattle resident by the name of Max Tat, T-a-t. My father and mother came to Seattle to improve their economic conditions and my father went to work in the factory which his brother-in-law had established. My father was never without employment. And that was, of course, important during the Depression years. We had a modest middle class upbringing. I never knew what it was like to be hungry. Although my first siblings had been offered attendance at the university, for some reason or other they chose not to go, or other conditions might have prevailed, and so they didn't go, but I was the only one in the family that attended and graduated and got an advanced degree.

DS: Was that not unheard of then, though—

JL: No.

DS: I mean your family was supportive of your going into higher education?

JL: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Oh, yes. No question about that. That was one of the messages that I think most young Jewish people got from their families in those years. And that was prepare yourself to earn a livelihood because there's nobody going to be out there to help you unless you help yourself. So all of my peers who attended the university had the same goal in mind—prepare yourself to earn a livelihood. At that time there were many occupations not available to women; teaching and social work were among those that were, and because the elder sister of a close friend, whom I admired deeply was a social worker, I wanted to be just like her.

DS: So you went into—

JL: Yes, _____ at the University of Washington. I was a soc. major and was then accepted to the Graduate School of Social Work.

DS: Now, you are going very fast here.

JL: Well, I might pick up some other threads at another time.

DS: Okay. Okay.

JL: I had no problem getting employment as a social worker and it just so happened that war broke out while I was working with Family Society of Seattle. And because the Social Work School administrator had strongly urged that class to take the Administrative Assistant Civil Service exam when the government started recruiting people, I was employed as a recruiter. I interviewed applicants for CAF 14 and above positions. Those are higher administrative jobs in the federal government to recruit people for the war effort.

There was no Hillel when I was on campus. I had a very closely knit circle of friends—all of whom were Jewish. I might have had a few non-Jewish friends as I grew up, but primarily they were Jewish.

DS: Did they have Jewish fraternities, sororities at that time already?

JL: There was one Jewish sorority on campus. However, not only because, I say primarily because I didn't have the money to join; but even had I had the money, it was unlikely that I would have been able to pledge because my first cousin, who was the same age as I, was eager to join but was not accepted by Alpha Epsilon Phi, quote, "You had to have blue blood, blue Jewish blood to get in." It was quite discriminatory. If your family wasn't associated with Temple De Hirsch or some of the early pioneers—there was definitely discrimination in the Jewish community itself among Jews. So far as being active in Jewish organizations, AZA was an active group of young high school to the first couple years of college young men. It was sponsored by B'nai B'rith. Some of my friends were very active in it.

DS: Can you name some of your friends that you are referring to?

JL: Yes, Dr. Harry Pass, Carl Pruzan, and Dr. Russell Tat, Dr. Hy Cohen, many of them high achievers later on in life, were close friends who belonged to AZA. At that time, they were having a West Coast convention in Seattle. There had never been a sweetheart of AZA necessary before that in the local chapter. I always think I was railroaded through by my friends, but that may not be for me to judge. [Laugh] Anyway, I was elected the first sweetheart of AZA.

DS: Wonderful.

JL: And my job was to fix up the dates for the out-of-town boys.

DS: Oh, my goodness!

JL: Anyway, I had a great time.

DS: Do you remember what year that was, or about?

JL: I can't remember whether—I can't—

DS: You were in high school?

JL: I can't remember whether I was a senior in high school or a freshman in college.

DS: Okay. All right.

JL: But it was great fun. And we had some very elaborate parties and I made some lasting friendships with the young men.

DS: So they came from _____.

JL: Yes, Portland, Vancouver. I can't remember whether California was included or not. But, it's one of my more pleasant childhood memories. Insofar as unpleasant childhood memories, I can only remember one childhood incidence which involved anti-Semitism, but other than that I really was spared that throughout my life. Whether it was because my associations were primarily Jewish with less opportunity for anti-Semitism to be directed to me, but in this one instance I couldn't have been more than about eight or nine-years-old and our neighborhood was totally non-Jewish except for my immediate family. In fact, I have to smile because when we eventually moved to Denny Blaine. There were five or six Democratic votes in the precinct, because in those years all the newspapers published how many Democratic and how many Republican votes originated there. There were always five or six in this particular Denny Blaine precinct and we knew darn well that it was the Milstein family, which had always been Democrat. [Laugh] At any rate, to get back to this one incident which has always remained with me, anti-Semitism. I had close playmates in the two girls who lived next door to us, and they were this non-Jewish family. One time we were playing and whether it was hide-and-go-seek or what, I went into my neighbor's garage. When I wanted to get out, I realized that I had been in there an unduly long time, I couldn't get out. I started yelling and eventually my cries were heard. What had happened is that the father of the two girls with whom I played was around at the time, and he had obviously locked me into the garage.

DS: Oh for heaven's sake.

JL: Yes. Here my mother and my father heard me and rescued me. Even though it's a strong memory, it's the only memory like that that I can remember having such strong anti-Semitism. That was the root of it. The other instance that was discussed with my family is when my sister who was a trained stenographer, knowing shorthand and whatever else you had to know at the time to be a qualified stenographer, had trouble getting a job. One of the local automobile agencies had advertised for a

secretary, there were no legal restrictions at the time and no laws that would have covered discrimination. [The auto dealer did not hire her]. She had some trouble finding a job and finally went to the Anti-Defamation League and they did take up the issue. She eventually found a job, whether it was on her own or not I don't know, but I remember the issue was brought to the Anti-Defamation League. This has to be when I was in high school, because she was about six years older than I.

DS: There was no discrimination in housing in that area in Denny Blaine and you had no problem?

JL: No, we were in Denny Blaine but on the perimeter. I can't remember back, but Jews didn't move into that area also because the house we bought was a very nice one and it probably didn't require a tremendous income by any means, but middle class, and it was more costly to live there than it was on Cherry Street or Columbia or Spring Street or wherever it was most Jews resided.

DS: Do you remember anything of the Cherry Street area? How old were you when you lived there?

JL: I couldn't have been more than six or seven. I remember playing at Garfield playfield. I still remember that every Halloween the city would put up huge bonfires and it was very different from the way it's celebrated today; a very neighborly coming together of people. Anyway—

DS: Who were some of your neighbors? Do you remember any of the neighbors in the old neighborhood there, or—

JL: Well, even at 23rd and Cherry, on the site of the house we lived is now a gas station, I know that. It was an old several story house and I lived there during World War I. Because the memory is still vivid to me of an itinerant bookseller who came to our house to sell, the war was over at this time, large books with pictures of troops at the front and it said, "World War I." My family's needs were minimal at the time. My mother had a boarder, in addition to four kids, and my memory at the time was her working all the time.

DS: Do you remember any specific neighbors or families that were your friends at that time?

JL: We had a German family immediately next to us by the name of Kloenig, who were, I think, self-isolated because there wasn't that kind of community neighborliness in that area at the time. But I just remember that they were of German origin during the war and there might have been some discrimination.

DS: There had been Jewish families who were the family's _____ friends, or—

JL: Yes, yes, I now recall a doorway from us was a flat which had several apartments in it. The Aarons, Gene and his family lived in that building, as did a couple of other families whom I knew and who had girls the same ages as me but who are now deceased. So there were Jews in the area. And when I—

DS: This was on Cherry. Yes.

JL: When I went to Garfield High, although we were not the majority of students, there was a strong Jewish element at Garfield High. The black element was minimal, even though it's maximum today, but blacks didn't come into this community to any great degree until World War II, and moved into areas that Jews gradually moved out of.

DS: Tell me, were your parents involved in a congregation then at all, as you were growing up?

JL: I don't remember. To get back to my early days, I recall when I was probably between four and six or seven, when we still lived in a reasonable distance from what was then the Settlement House started by a women's organization at Temple De Hirsch to help integrate newcomers, especially early immigrants into the community. When I was about eight and we moved over to Cherry and then 26th and Spring, further north, we were too far away from the Settlement House for me to use the benefits of that social organization. When we were still in the relative immediate community, I remember going there for dancing lessons. So I couldn't have probably been more than five to six years of age.

DS: Were you involved with that facility later at all?

JL: My only involvement later on was when I was a member of the National Council of Jewish Women and active for many years. At that time the Settlement House had been sponsors of the organization after the management through Temple De Hirsch changed. There was involvement, of course, of the Council of Jewish Women members. Well, that went on for some years.

DS: Were your parents involved in any Jewish organizations that you remember?

JL: My father, I remember, although he regarded it with much disdain because of the politics, was a member of the Workmen's Circle also called the Arbeiter Ring, which is I think a German Jewish way of saying a "Workmen's Circle." This was a nationwide organization that people who had socialist tendencies, or were active socialists were members. My father had contempt for basic socialism, thinking that democracy was by far the best system of government. He had friends who were members and the reason he joined was the $200 death benefit, which was one of the benefits of membership. He thought that would help his family in the event that he met with an untimely death. However, he did belong for many years, probably at the end the $200 weren't worth very much [laugh] but it was just one of those things. My mother was much too busy in her home with the children and the boarders and everything else and never took an active part in anything. It just wasn't one of those things that many immigrant women did, unless they had more vision than she had.

Their orientation was to their home and to their children and I was lucky to say that I had a very secure loving home and certainly benefited from the luxury of having that kind of an atmosphere around me.

DS: And yet you associated with Jewish friends. What would you say kind of shaped your life, later on you yourself became quite involved and active; you're certainly a committed member of the community I would say.

JL: Well, I had many good role models to follow. I remember that one of the things my parents were active in because they regularly met for potluck dinners at our home was an organization called [tape cuts out]. Skoptic was a small village in Lithuania from where my mother had come, as had a number of other people in this community. They met monthly for potluck and fundraising and this is all before World War II and Hitler. Money was regularly sent to the small village which, of course, was under Russian domination by that time.

DS: Who were some of the other families, do you remember?

JL: I'm sorry to say I don't. I was too young at the time to pay much attention. I only knew about the food and _____ that went on. I'm probably leaving out some of the other things that my parents were active in. I just don't recall. In those days one's parents weren't that active in PTA. After all, this was seventy-five to eighty years ago. And you didn't have as many social resources available. My father never had a—

DS: I'm sure your father worked long hours too and—

JL: Well, until the law changed. My father never had a car and because he felt that with two boys in the family there would always be arguments and he didn't think that was necessary. However, my wonderful bachelor uncle, with whom I had a very close relationship and who always expected me to bring home a laundry slip of "A's" from school for which I was compensated at a nickel an "A" or something like that. As money became more available, [he] had a touring Oldsmobile and I can still remember his taking the family out on the Sunday afternoons. I can remember in the autumn, there was no bridge across Lake Washington so in order to get to the eastside of the lake, which was all farmland, you had to circumvent the lake which was a considerable distance to drive in those days. And in the autumn my mother would go—

DS: It still is.

JL: Would go over, well the roads are better today. My father would buy concorde grapes to make his own wine, which not too infrequently turned to vinegar. He would use them as sacramental wines for the High Holidays. We would get apples and pears and fresh corn. So, I was lucky enough to know what farm life was like even though I was a city slicker. So far as religion is concerned, in my immediate home, my parents were Orthodox and attended Bikur Cholim synagogue. And since on holidays you didn't drive to the synagogue, by the time we got to Denny Blaine it

was many miles of walking back and forth for them. I don't ever recall my father going Saturday mornings for services. And interestingly enough, we four children never had religion pressed on us. I can't ever remember having discussions. My mother lit the candles on Friday night and baked the challah and made the chicken soup and the chicken—it was always a traditional Friday night. But for some reason we did not get the schooling on the meaning of those holidays. I think by the time she finished the day's work, her sense of organization lacked something because she left everything for Friday—washing the kitchen floor, baking the Sabbath challah, making the gefilte fish, cleaning the house, and, of course, always the bath at 5:00 to be ready for the Sabbath. By that time she was probably so exhausted that all she could do was just sit down in a chair when it was all over. One of my early memories; my mother reserved Saturday for herself. She absolutely refused to do any work. She'd get up in the morning and go visit her sister, who lived a couple miles away and she'd walk there, and have lunch with her sister and spend the day and then would come home in the evening. That was something she obviously looked forward to every week because it was her day of rest. And so far as my sister and I were concerned, when mom left we went down to the refrigerator and got all the chicken legs and bones that were left over, took them up to bed with us and we'd sit there and read for a few hours. It was great. [Laugh] And, Sunday School. I remember when I was very young, that had to be before we moved to Denny Blaine because that was so far and my father didn't have a car, going for a few years to the totally unorganized Sunday School at Bikur Cholim. Aaron Maslan, who was an early attorney in this town, a well known family, was my Sunday School teacher for several successive years. How my family got me there, there was a street car that ran straight down Union Street from Denny Blaine and that may have had something to do with it unless there might have been somebody around to give me a ride to get there. But I went for a year or two. The only memory I have is repeatedly hearing about how Moses was found in the bulrushes. That's about as much as I learned formally. We always had special dinners to commemorate the various Jewish holidays, together with relatives because my mother was the eldest sister, so we always had her younger sisters and their families with us. And there again I can't remember receiving, I remember hearing the service, our services were primarily in Hebrew.

DS: At your house? [End of side 1]

JL: My father being oblivious to that, but I think there's a consequence since they had failed actually, and I say that reservedly, that actually failed to convey the beauty and the meaning of their faith to us children. But none of us have strong feelings about our Judaism. My feelings weaken as the years go by, as I see more tragedy in this world and think less of religion as a whole, although it might be a worse world if we didn't have it.

DS: But your friends, were they from Bikur Cholim, or were they, or you had friends _____, or?

JL: No, they were primarily from school. I remember we had a circle of immediate friends in high school and we were so close that we'd meet before school began. We'd meet between classes in the hall, and our lives revolved around this little circle of friends. I can remember when boys started to mean more to us than they had in the past. If we ever wanted to have an engagement with boys, girls had to give a party. So, we'd have a series of parties—the girl would fill in the dance programs and we'd get dressed in long dresses, the boys didn't get dressed up, however.

DS: Where were these parties?

JL: In our respective homes. There never was such a thing as wine or liquor, of course there was Prohibition during much of that time, but we were all very law abiding and the social mores, unconsciously you just didn't do things.

DS: Right.

JL: I didn't know anybody who was a delinquent. We all did what our parents expected of us and the one thing that's vivid in my mind is that invariably at these parties the refreshments were cake and milk. I can remember many times going bicycling or something with the boys and we always came back and had cake and milk. My mother always had chocolate cake on the weekends. Another vivid memory is during the Depression, Harry Pass, who later became a practicing physician in Seattle, would occasionally get his father's car. We were all in high school, nobody had any money. I can remember Harry's driving up, maybe six of us would pile into Harry's father's car and he'd drive up to the gas station and hold his hand up, "Fill'er up!" And hold up one finger. Gas was 20¢ a gallon. If the boys had as much as 25¢ and it was a summer evening, we used to go down to Leschi and rent canoes. That was a big night. When I went off to college, the same circle of boys who were our friends in high school came here to the University of Washington. These friendships continued, very closely, very stable group, everybody knew they had to study, but socially we still went out but still nobody had any money in those days. And so we'd meet—

DS: Where did you live? At home, or?

JL: I lived at home. I can remember Merle Cohen, who's been active in Anti-Defamation League and a practicing attorney, and I, the only one I knew who owned his own car, was Billy Topp, who later became Dr. Topp. His mother had bought him a Model T. Billy lived over on Cherry on 32nd or so. He would pick up Merle Cohen, who was also an active practicing attorney these past years in Seattle, and then he'd come down and he'd pick me up and we'd go through the Arboretum to the university. We'd pay Billy 25¢ a week, each of us, to drive us to campus, because the streetcar fare where I had to transfer twice to get to campus, was a nickel at that time. When I went to high school the streetcar fare was 2 1/2¢. However, Billy got the two bits and then I'd have to come home transferring several times to get to Denny Blaine from the university campus. But other people did it, so today I regard it as a horrible hardship, but at that time you just accepted it.

DS: [Laugh] Sure, sure. Times were different.

JL: Right. Well, to continue about my own immediate family, at any rate when I worked at the Civil Service Administration during the war, several early newcomers to Seattle, who had the foresight to leave Germany before concentration camps, and my eventual husband was among those who came. I think he and Dr. Hans Lehman were the two earliest, coming in 1936. A friend of mine asked me to have a blind date with him and as a favor to him, I did go. He was so different from the American boys with whom I went; very gallant, as most Europeans were.

DS: And this was Walter of course.

JL: This was Walter.

DS: What was his name at that time? Was it Lowen already?

JL: He came here with a passport that said Lowenthal, L-o-w-e-n-t-h-a-l. But he wanted to Anglicize it, and went to court and had it changed to Lowen, L-o-w-e-n, by which we've since been known. At any rate, he was much older than I, since he was not a contemporary, twelve-years-older to be exact. My parents objected to the age difference and particularly because he was of German extraction. One of the prejudices that they had, and it was quite general among Europeans who came to this country from Eastern Europe as compared to those Europeans who came to this country from Germany. Temple De Hirsch had been established by a strong, German, educated element, and regarded themselves socially and, of course, they were economically superior to those Jews who came from Eastern Europe. Walter, my date at that time, represented the German cultured Jew. At any rate, they objected strenuously to him but I guess being a strong willed young woman, after turning him down a number of times, he always knew how to make a very nice date and because he worked for a living he didn't have much money, but he had more than the other boys and he skied and he started me skiing and Sunday night always meant dinner out. So, I got used to that, and eventually learned to care for him deeply and had a very satisfying and good marriage. At the time most women did not continue—

DS: When did you get married then?

JL: We got married in 1939. My parents strongly objected, so my sister accompanied us and we went to California. We got married in California and were married by a very charming conservative rabbi, Dr. Rabbi Saul White.

DS: Oh, yeah.

JL: Uh huh. I must admit my parents didn't harbor any negative feelings. When we came home they accepted Walter and learned to love him. He was more considerate and kinder to them than their own relatives were.

DS: Wonderful.

JL: Yes, he really was such a decent human being.

DS: And you've got two children.

JL: We had two children. At that time when you had kids you stayed home with them, you didn't go off to work. So, my life revolved around the children. When Howard was about eight-years-old, we went to Temple De Hirsch. We never felt any warmth and since I would have to admit my lukewarm feelings about the religious aspect of Judaism even though I felt ethnically Jewish, I felt my Jewishness strongly, but less so from a religious point of view.

DS: I'm digressing a little bit, but how does your family feel about Zionism, or how did you feel about it?

JL: Well, at that time Israel did not exist, nor had the Holocaust become as horrible as it had later it was just the first few years. Hitler had not yet come into the driver's seat, or had the final solution been mapped out. So, my parents were Zionists. My mother always had the blue "puschka," the little box where you put your extra coins, so that land could be acquired in Israel. They were very sympathetic and supportive of Israel. But in those times, at least until the end of World War II, nobody every dreamed that the land would ever be restored to Jews. Let's see, where was I before that—

DS: I'm sorry, I interrupted you.

JL: No, no. No. I'm glad you did.

DS: You were talking about you joined, or you sent your son to Temple.

JL: Oh, yes, yes. We had a very tight nucleus of Jewish friends in the View Ridge neighborhood, namely Professor Albert Schreiber, whose children were exactly the same age as mine, who taught in business administration on campus; Dr. Charles Kaplan, who was our pediatrician, lived two blocks away; Ludwig Lobe, who was a leader in the community, lived a block away. It sounds as though there were a lot of Jews in the neighborhood, but actually there were about a half a dozen families who were very close, socially and otherwise, and we felt dissatisfied with the services at Temple De Hirsch. It was a very large kind of cold congregation at the time, there again dominated by the German element. We weren't interested in Orthodoxy and Bikur Cholim was a long way away. And Herzl was a long way away. Anyway, we started meeting in each other's homes on Friday nights and it was a very satisfying experiences, primarily because we were giving of ourselves. As more people became interested in it, we eventually rented a house for temporary quarters and raised enough money so that we could have a part-time rabbi who held down a job as a chaplain at Ft. Lewis at the time. Howard became thirteen and he was the first bar mitzvah and we called our congregation Temple Beth Am.

DS: And this was when, again?

JL: Oh, what year it was you mean?

DS: Yeah.

JL: Well, Howard is now fifty-six and he was thirteen at the time, so we'd have to go back with a calculator, I'm sorry, my figures aren't very good.

DS: All right. Okay.

JL: We didn't have a building to have it. Rabbi Messing, the chaplain, trained him and our service was held at the lovely little English-style University Unitarian Church.

DS: Unitarian Church.

JL: Unitarian Church on 15th NE, around NE 50th. It's small, there's a lovely small stone building. That was the first bar mitzvah at our congregation and the congregation has continued to thrive. It was very satisfying for many years until it became so big that I don't know anybody anymore. Although I still maintain my membership as being a charter member, I think it took around twenty families to do that, I never go. Period. Nor do I miss it.

DS: Let's just—

JL: I don't know anybody there anymore.

DS: Well, I think that goes with getting on in years.

JL: Right, right. And not having any kids to get the message to us.

DS: Right, right.

JL: Because both of my children graduated the high school classes at Beth Am, I sort of feel I did my duty. I still feel I'm doing it because I'm still supporting it.

DS: Jeanette, I know you've been active in various other organizations, Council of Jewish Women and I don't know, I know you've also been active in the general community and I know that you were a docent, for example, at Seattle Art Museum.

JL: Well, some of, some of my early volunteer interests were through the National Council of Jewish Women. At that time we had a number of programs at Neighborhood House, which was the renaming of Settlement House, which had its early immigrant origins and its orientation had changed. There were any number of programs that I participated in. Among community programs I remember volunteering in the psychiatric wards at King County Hospital, now called Harborview Hospital; working with people who were emotionally disturbed in a recreational sort of way. And—

DS: Did you hold any office in the National Council?

JL: Yes, yes, I was secretary of Council and on the board for a number of years; did the usual things that one does in an organization that's devoted to social causes in the community. I became a docent at the Seattle Art Museum about twenty-seven years ago and continued touring—

DS: How did the come about? Do you remember?

JL: Somebody I knew whose name escapes me was a docent and thought that I might enjoy the avocation and might have something to contribute. That is what started it and that was long ago when the only building the Art Museum had was at Volunteer Park. I was fortunate enough to travel widely, been many places in this world and thought I had something to bring from the cultural point of view to art. It's probably been one of the most enriching experiences of my life. I continue going to the classes, although I stopped touring a couple years ago when I was having a problem with a brain tumor and couldn't write any more and had to have major surgery. But I still go!

DS: Wonderful. Were there other Jewish docents at the time, or?

JL: A Mrs. Lackman, whose family ran a large wholesale jewelry, was one of the active Jewish docents. They were definitely in a minority. One of the other leaders in the group was the daughter of the man who ran Eckstein, Joanna Eckstein—

DS: Joanna.

JL: Yes. Who was not strongly identified with Jewish people, although through her father Nathan Eckstein, a civic leader in the state as well as the Seattle community, was a pillar at Temple De Hirsch. But Joanna did mix broadly with a wider community and took a lot of responsibility with the docents at that time. I can't remember any other Jewish docents until a few years later when more Jewish women volunteered to become docents.

DS: Were you conscious of it, that there were not a lot of people?

JL: I never felt any emphasis on being Jewish among that circle of people. I had to admire the women who consistently give their services in that capacity. They were an unusual group of women, highly intelligent, very dedicated, well educated. I still think it's a terrific group of people.

DS: Um hum. You socialize freely with them?

JL: Well, not—

DS: I mean their activities.

JL: Yes, oh yes, never felt any discrimination in the group.

DS: Yeah, yeah.

JL: I've rambled on for a long time.

DS: Well, I won't—

JL: When do you want to quit?

DS: Pretty soon. [Laugh] Until you've had enough. I know also that you are an avid golfer, you played golf for many years.

JL: It just so happened that my husband and one of our closest couple friends, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Ries; Otto, as well as my husband Walter, traveled a great deal in their respective businesses. The two men were very generous and decided their wives would be better off if they golfed than they would be patronizing a psychiatrist because both of them were gone—although not continuously, but over the years maybe as much as six months out of the year, at which time all the problems of running a household and children fell upon both of us. So, a very good outlet turned out to be golf. They joined the membership at Glendale, although they never used the golf courses themselves. I've been a member of Glendale for probably forty years and enjoyed golf. The Club's character at that time, and for many years thereafter, was 100 percent Jewish because non-Jews didn't care on the whole to be associated with a Jewish country club. However, Dr. Brown, who was a plastic surgeon in Seattle and who was black, was admitted to membership. I daresay anyone else who was non-Jewish probably would have been had he chosen to be identified with the club. However, because it took a whole day off to play golf, young Jewish people turned instead to tennis, which took only a few hours and was much less costly. They would still have weekends for their family. As a consequence, some years ago the country club attracted non-Jewish members and now the Jewish members are in the minority.

DS: How do you feel about it?

JL: Fine. Everything else has become integrated. Why shouldn't a social club?

DS: Okay.

JL: I have no strong feelings at all. If the leadership isn't there, and you have a costly institution to maintain, you didn't have any choice.

DS: Were you actively involved in the operation of the club, or?

JL: Only so far as the women's group had their own organization. I was active in participating in the meetings and all, but there again, until relatively recently women's voices didn't have much to say about it. It was a man's world at the time. But interestingly enough, women citywide in the private clubs were not allowed to play on Saturdays and Sundays because those were men's days. But the Jewish women at Glendale broke their husbands down on that before anybody else in the community and women were allowed to play at Glendale at times that they weren't

allowed to play in non-Jewish clubs. So we were sort of forerunners on that and now I think it's changed in to other clubs too. .

DS: Did you play in tournaments, or win trophies?

JL: I won a few things but was never a great golfer.

DS: Oh, but you enjoyed it. [Laugh]

JL: Oh, it's great. Good escapism and good exercise, being outdoors has always been one of my favorites.

DS: Right. I'm just curious if you just want to touch a little bit on Walter's business?

JL: Yes. My husband had—

DS: And his business in Alaska. Where did he start off with?

JL: Walter was brought to this country by a distant relative. You had to have someone who gave you what's called an affidavit. It assured Uncle Sam that this individual would not become a public charge. And the person who gave him the affidavit was a leader in the Jewish community, a really wonderful man by the name of Max Silver. Walter was put in charge of the souvenir department. It was called originally the Hudson's Bay Fur Company and had a prime location on Fifth Avenue between Pike and Pine, very well known store that had been started by Max Silver's father-in-law at the turn of the century who actually traded the Indians for furs.

DS: Who was Max Silver's father-in-law?

JL: His father-in-law was Gutmann, Addis Gutmann, Sr. I'm not sure Addis was his first name. His son was Addis Gutmann, but I don't know what the father's first name was. And in encountering Indians and purchasing furs, he bought Indian baskets and Indian carvings like totem poles and potlatch bowls and that kind of thing. On the second floor of the business, he started a museum in connection with that. Eventually he built up a fine collection and word got around. Some American museum curators came to him and bought baskets and totem poles and stuff. As the years went by, there was less of this kind of item; fewer Indians knew how to carve. Our government, unlike the Canadian government, didn't foster classes for young North Coast Indians promoting their handcraft, and it eventually became a dying art. At any rate, Mr. Silver and his brother-in-law, Addis Gutmann, had a couple of sons each. Walter and another employee, who had left the firm, had an eye to the future and realized that when the war was over—the company I might add at that time had contracts to make arctic parkas for our troops that had been trained for warfare in arctic regions. These parkas were lined I remember with arctic wolf, and Walter worked on those garments during the war.

The man who had left the company, about the time of Walter's arrival, thought that there would be a market for North Coast souvenirs. He and his wife had started a home industry. Bert Mayers was his name, making Indian garments and Eskimo garments. There was a ready market among the tourist trade, so they both started the company and called it Indian Arts and Crafts, and originally went in primarily for genuine Indian artifacts. But there was not sufficient volume for that. So they branched into other aspects of the souvenir trade, like photograph albums, souvenir spoons, and on and on and on and on—almost anything that had the state of Washington or Seattle or some other identification on it. And they actually developed into a large business.

DS: And Walter spent _____.

JL: When my son graduated University of Michigan, he knew that he would always go into his father's business. I can remember my son who was over in Vietnam for fourteen months, met his father in Hong Kong on one of his R&R's, and went around with him to media suppliers, with an eye to knowing that if he were able, if he did get back from the war, which fortunately he did, he would someday be meeting on a business-like basis. He continued running the business after his father's death, expanding it and finally sold it to a NASDAQ company.

DS: So I know Walter spent quite a bit of time then, I imagine Howard too, in traveling to Alaska and—

JL: Alaska was a major source of our livelihood. He was a pioneer in traveling that area. Had tremendous loyalty on the part of his clients because he was such a fair businessman and everyone knew that reputation. I can remember in the years when Walter went up there there were no waiting rooms, especially in the Arctic area, for the passengers, but they would have fans out on the field to keep the engines from icing up and temperatures, especially around Fairbanks, were forty-five below. He really was a pioneer in traveling Alaska in those years. That was immediately after World War II.

DS: Did you ever go up on any of those trips?

JL: Yes, when Howard was in college and before he came back to take his share of the load after the Vietnamese war, I went up several times with Walter to see the countryside and help him with his customers.

DS: Do you still have any connections with the, some of your suppliers up there, or the artists?

JL: They would have, they would have all expired. Howard still does, because after all he left the business now probably about six years ago. Although I would have to say [end of side 2]

END OF INTERVIEW

Addendum:

Page 6: "Settlement House became Neighborhood House when Jews moved out of the area and the black community moved in."