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Silverstein, Helen "Lyn"

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Reyna Stovall (RS): Okay. My first question for you is if you could just tell me a little bit about yourself and your family, and how they ended up in the Bronx.

Lyn Silverstein (LS): How they ended up in the Bronx I don't know. My father's family ended up in the Bronx. I think when my mother got married that's when she moved to the Bronx. I know hardly anything about my grandparents because nobody ever talked about them or answered questions. So how they ended up in the Bronx I really don't know. I have a feeling that they probably moved there in the I would say mid-early to late forties. They were on the 1950 census, and they weren't on the 1940 one. Not for living in the Bronx. I think they must have leased the apartment. I'm not quite sure but they always paid their rent, and it was always for a family called Lam. Now I don't know if that was a joke, because somebody was "on the lam", or, you know, running away from something. But it went to Lam. I grew up there. I was an only child, and most of the people in my building as I came to find out after looking at the 1950 census, a lot of them were either immigrants or first-generation people. I would say, mostly immigrants themselves. My mother was born in what's now Lithuania. But at the time it was the Russian Empire. The Pale of Settlement is where her family was from, and she never said anything. I think because when I was young Joe McCarthy and all these antisemites were virulent, and so I think she was afraid that if I said I was— and in school they would ask things that are now I guess pretty invasive about your family. So I was never to tell anybody that my mother was born in Russia, and I think that was really probably the reason. But she didn't talk about it anyway. Most of the kids in my building were only children also.

RS: Okay. Tell me a little bit more about your neighborhood growing up. What was that like? What was the neighborhood's name and more about it?

LS: I think it was the Melrose area. Our phone number was Melrose, and I remember there was Mott Haven. But that was a little distance from us. There were 3 big apartment buildings. They were all pretty much the same. 6 stories, sort of a square U-shaped building with a courtyard in the front, and they had elevators. When I was young we had an elevator operator. So all 3 buildings were pretty much the same, and then there was some sort of a laboratory, I think, on the corner. They tore it down while I was living there and they built a fancier building. That was 800 Grand Concourse, I was at 780. Starting at the corner was 800, 790, 780, and I'm not even sure what the one to the right of us was. We were on a hill. We lived diagonally from the Bronx County Courthouse. We lived across the street from Franz Sigel Park. I happen to have read a book about the Bronx and apparently they built the Grand Concourse on a flat area, but it was on a hill. It was on top of a hill, so if you went down the hill, there were hills on your two sides.

Across the street where the park was. It was flat, but then you had to take a long walk into the park on a hilly area, so none of us roller skated or had bikes because it was too dangerous. So I never learned how to do any of them to this day. We didn't really live on a street. It was the Grand Concourse. So on one side, I believe, was 158th Street. On the other side. I'm not even sure what street it was. But there was no street that went in where my building was so it was between two streets that weren't chronological, except maybe on the other side. I remember we had two bus stops on our street, one on either side and in the summer the *yentas* [busybodies, gossips] would sit outside either in front of the building, on lawn chairs or across the street at the base of the park, where they were park benches. They would know who you, if you were old who you were going out with, you know? They know all your business. Because there were city blocks with the concrete squares of I don't know how many feet each, we'd play hit the penny, that was one of our games. We'd play- it was called Potsy- but I don't think anybody, not in New York, knew what Potsy was. They said it was hopscotch, but it was a little bit of a variation from hopscotch. Have you heard anything about Potsy?

RS: I had an interviewee who mentioned it one time. So yeah, I've I've heard of it before.

LS: We used to play this game against the building. I think it was. We called it something like Jack Queen King, where you stood in a row and you bounce the ball and then it would hit the side of the building. Then if it landed in somebody else's little spot, they would have to hit it back to you. So that was one of our games. We played them with the little pink balls that if you're outside New York they call them Spaldings because that was the company, but they were always Spaldeens to us. I'm sure you heard that too.

RS: Yeah, many times. [Laughs]

LS: You played jump rope. We walked a lot because we didn't have a car. Some of my neighbors had cars, but we never had one. We functioned without it. They didn't have school buses when I was going—I don't believe they had school buses. Maybe you had to pay for a school bus, cause nobody on my street ever went on a school bus. I used to walk. I went to P.S. 35, and I'm not really sure now what street it is. I don't even know if it's still there. So that's where I went to elementary school. As I said, we would walk, sometimes you could take a bus a few stops over, but you still had to walk a bit of a distance. I went to junior high. I don't remember where that was, either. Jordan L. Mott. I think it was P.S. 22. That was Jordan L. Mott, Junior High School. If I went to a local high school I would have had to go to either Morris, which wasn't really great at the time. And then there was an all-girls school. I don't remember, Walton, I think it was. I lived on the wrong side of 161st Street to get to go to a better high school. I was on the lower side, so some of my friends who had family members who lived in the Taft High School region would use their family's names and make believe they lived there. But we didn't have that.

Fortunately I passed the test for Hunter High School, so that really took care of everything as far as not going to a bad high school.

RS: Tell me more about your school experience. What was it like? What kind of extracurricular activities were you involved with? What kind of student were you?

LS: I was always a good student. I was an only child, as I said. Neither of my parents went to college. Well, my father started, but then he had to leave because he had to help support his family and he was interested in everything. He worked for the post office. Not in the Bronx. He worked at Planetarium Station Post Office, so that must have been on the West Side. He just had this quest for knowledge. And so, both my parents read a lot, and I read a lot. My friends at home, I didn't have that much in common with them except for how we grew up. I always felt like an outsider. So in school I always did well and I liked school. We had okay teachers, I guess. In Junior high I was in the SPS. That was good. So I ended up not being in the same classes with my other neighborhood friends. And what did you ask about?

RS: Extracurricular activities.

LS: Oh, extracurricular, extracurricular! I can't say I had any. I think I'd just go home and go to the library and read. I read a lot. I don't know if school had anything. I found this little pin, and it was from some kind of girl's basketball. Now I know I never played on my own, so maybe there was some kind of basketball team that I might have stayed later at school. That probably would be more of a junior-high thing. But I didn't really do anything. Besides go to school really and come back.

RS: No, that's fair. Did you graduate early because you were in the PS Classes?

LS: I did. I skipped the eighth grade essentially. So I did 3. Then when I went to high school, I started as a sophomore.

RS: What was your home life like outside of school? Was your family super close-knit? Were you involved in Jewish cultural life at all?

LS: No, we didn't have any kind of affiliation. I knew we were Jewish. There were certain things that you weren't allowed to do. Like you couldn't put butter on bread or drink milk and meat, but aside from that, we weren't kosher. We didn't go to synagogue. My parents never did as far as I knew and they never did even after I moved out. We didn't have that. We didn't have bat mitzvahs at the time. Maybe if that was something I was gonna have I might have gone to some sort of a religious school, but that didn't happen, and none of my friends did either. My family. They were not close-knit at all, and everybody was secretive about things. So when I started

doing genealogy I learned a lot of different things that of course they never told me about. My parents didn't really have parties. I don't remember having family members around. My mother had a brother and sister who, she lived on Audubon Avenue in Washington Heights and I don't know where my uncle lived. I don't remember. Maybe they lived together. I don't think my father really cared for my mother's family. Looking back maybe that's because my father's family was from— I thought they were from Austria-Hungary, and my mother's family was from Russia. I know they had this thing [Nods head] going on. We never had either family over. My aunt would come over sometimes, my Aunt Sophie. The one who lived on Audubon Avenue. But mostly my mother would meet her downtown, or they would take the train together. But they didn't come over. We didn't have family things. Yeah. I remember once my grandfather, my father's father. I guess he was in some kind of a cousin's club. So they had one meeting. The kids came who I don't think I knew any of. Maybe one of my cousins I knew, and it never happened again. So very, very few family things.

RS: Did your parents by any chance speak Yiddish? Was that a part of your life at all?

LS: My father, I don't believe, did. He was born here. My mother and her sister would talk Yiddish when they didn't want me to know what they were talking about. So I learned a couple of phrases *zi vil nit geyn [she doesn't want to go]*. So when my mother and her sister wanted to go to antique stores, and I would protest, my mother would call my aunt *zi vil nit geyn [she doesn't want to go]*. So I learned what that was but no, they never spoke Yiddish.

RS: What did your [crosstalk]—

LS: Kind of boring!

RS: No, not at all. Not at all. What did your parents do for a living? Did your mom work at all?

LS: She had. She didn't have what I would say was a career. When I was in high school she did some stenography or some sort of secretarial work. I think it was a part-time job and my father worked for the post office. He wasn't a letter carrier, I think he sorted mail. He used to sleep during the day. So that wasn't really great for having friends because you couldn't ring the bell, and I was kind of noisy sometimes. I had piano and I would practice, and then I then my father would wanna take a nap, and so I couldn't practice. So that was one of the things I did. I took piano lessons. I had forgotten about that. So that was kind of an extracurricular activity.

RS: Was music a big part of your life? You mentioned playing the piano. Would you listen to pop music at the time?

LS: No, we listened to classical music. WQXR. My father would give me, I don't know, maybe a nickel if I could identify certain composers. So that was one component. And then, from an early age we used to go to Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Are you familiar with Gilbert and Sullivan at all?

RS: I'm not so you can, you know, explain if you'd like.

LS: Well, they were these 2 men from Britain, and they composed. Sullivan wrote the music, and Gilbert wrote the lyrics, and they were these funny, funny— it's known as light opera. Some of the stories were quite funny, and the music was a lot of fun. One of them was about this man who was with a group of pirates. He was celebrating his 21st birthday, and he found that his nursemaid had apprenticed him instead of to a pilot, she had apprenticed him to be a pirate. It turned out that he was born on Leap Year. So, instead of being one and 20, he was only a little boy of 5. So that story kind of unwinds. So they were a lot of fun, and we had records, and we used to sing around the house. I got my love of Broadway from my parents. We used to go to all the Broadway shows, they were affordable back then though. I saw a lot of the Broadway shows when they were first—Now I see them again, and they are, of course, rechoreographed and updated. But I saw the original King and I and South Pacific and a lot of the originals. King and I, South Pacific, Carousel, Oklahoma. So we did have that. A lot of times my father and I would just go downtown, and we'd go to a show, or we'd go to the Museum. He loved, as I said, he loved learning, and we'd walk around Manhattan and he'd point out some of the architecture. So that was always fun. I was 13 when I started high school. and I had to take the train, so of course I was a whiz on taking the train. So I would just go to the MET and sit on the steps and look at people, and I'd go in with a sketch pad, cause I always thought I wanted to be an artist. But that wasn't in the stars for me, because my parents— You could only do one of 3 things if you were a girl. Of course I was going to go to college. That was when I was born, they already had me going to college. But I uhm—what was I gonna say?

RS: Oh, the 3 things that women—

LS: Oh, teacher, nurse, or secretary. My cousin, she was my mother's niece. She was my mother's sister's daughter. She was I think maybe 14 years older than I was, and she had gone to Hunter High School, and then she went to Hunter College, and she became a teacher. So that was my path.

RS: Did you continue like drawing and stuff even during that time, or did that dream kind of die?

LS: It died. The other thing I wanted to do was I wanted to be in musicals, and that died faster, because I just you know, there was just no way for me to do that. We did have a little acting

thing in the high school, and so I participated in that. But that was the end of my career as a performing artist.

RS: You could tell me a little bit more about that! What roles were you a part of? As a Broadway lover myself, you know. Selfishly I would love to hear about it.

LS: In my high school they had this program, and it was called Integrated Arts. They did a lot of experimental things in Hunter in those days. What they did was they would take a period of time such as Early Rome. So the Drama Club, the drama people would perform maybe in some play from the Roman period. Then there was a dance group, a writing group, a music group. So that's where I did my acting. So we did commedia dell'arte, where everybody has a role, and they would go around as a troop, which of course, we didn't do, and a lot of it was improvisational, because if you had a certain part, that was the part you would play. So I was the Flirt Columbine, Columbina, which I did like doing that. But I never did anything like that in college. So I didn't continue that either, although now I have a group of friends and we buy these murder mysteries and we act them out.

RS: Oh, that's so fun! Cool. Yeah, so you mentioned that, you felt that sort of gender expectation. Did you feel that in other areas of your life as well, not just in terms of career, but in other areas?

LS: I don't think I really thought about it that much. Well, because I was supposed to go to college, get married, have a child, go back to teaching. Well, substitute teach, have another child, substitute teach. That didn't really work out like that for my life. I think when we were in high school, that was what my friends and I grew up thinking we had to do. We had some of the girls in my class who were going to MIT and some of these science-based schools. And we decided that was the only way — this is the way we thought —It's the only way they were gonna find a boyfriend because they were that kind of people. So I can't say I did. I don't think I ever wanted to do something in those days that I wasn't doing. You know, I didn't think if I could only be something else.

RS: Yeah.

LS: I didn't get that.

RS: And what were the racial and ethnic dynamics of your neighborhood and of your school as well? Did you experience kind of any antisemitic hostilities? What was that like?

LS: Most of the people in my building and the ones who were the friendliest were Jewish. There was one family, an Irish family and I remember one day Agnes came home from school and

when we were all outside, she told us that we killed Christ. Which, of course, nobody knew what she was talking about. Then, when we asked our parents they weren't really happy about the whole situation. But other than that —I think I don't even know if there were any— I think we were all mostly Jewish in school. Maybe a few Italian people, a few Polish, I think we were pretty much all white.

RS: I forgot to ask earlier, what year were you born in?

LS: 1944.

RS: Okay, just for the record, you know, establishing a timeline and everything. So did you have any experiences outside of New York City? Would your family ever go on vacations or I know a lot of people stayed in bungalow colonies?

LS: I was gonna say, we didn't. We stayed in this place. It was kind of like a bungalow colony, and they called it a kuchalein. I think the women had this big kitchen, and the women would cook, cause God forbid they shouldn't do something like that when they were on vacation. So we did that. But we didn't do it for the whole summer. Maybe we went for a week to this place, and it was somewhere in the Catskills. Kuchalein. We didn't go to Grossinger's or any of those places. Those were the vacations. I had a friend who had a place in the Catskills and we'd go with her for a couple of days. Then in high school, one of my friends her family rented a bungalow in Rockaway or Far Rockaway, and I'd go there. But not as a family. I would just go there.

RS: Yeah, what was what was that experience like being outside of New York especially it being such a big, busy city? What were your experiences with that?

LS: Well. I don't really remember specifically, but I remember liking it. I was a real New Yorker. I loved being in New York in the summer. I didn't even care if it was hot, cause I used to be able to do all sorts. I'd go to museums as I'd mentioned. I'd read a lot. So being home didn't bother me. Neither of my parents were particularly adventurous. And I couldn't swim. Neither of my parents could swim, and my mother worried about everything. I guess, cause I was an only child. I tell people she would have carried me around for most of my life if she could have. Once I got into high school that's when I went to Rockaway with the friend and the other friend who had a place in the mountains somewhere. But again as a family. No, we didn't really do anything. I didn't even travel. I was so used to New York that when I got married I lived in New York. I taught there my first year. That was in 1964, through 5. My husband at the time was an engineer. He got a job in a food company, General Foods. He got a draft deferment because he was working in the food industry. We had moved to Dover, Delaware. When we went down to look at it the first time I thought I was in a movie because there were a lot of Amish people who lived

there, and they brought their buggies to town on one day a week. I thought, Oh, my God, I this is an anachronism. I shouldn't be there, so I did have city— what would you call it? I just couldn't believe I was living—

RS: Cultural shock?

LS: Complete culture shock. But we did find some other people who were, you know, from the city who lived there. So that helped me out a little bit. I was telling somebody that I used to go to the 42nd Street Library when I needed to do research. Then I moved to Dover and there's this little library, and I remember thinking of things as being cute. Which probably didn't endear me to people, but they were. Everything seems so small in comparison. Even though I'm living here in a little suburb. I was thinking how just about everybody I know now who didn't grow up in New York. I know how they grew up. They had a house, they had a car. They might not have been wealthy, but they still had a car. They rode bikes. They did all these things, but they have no idea how I grew up, because it was just so different. They didn't have subways, you know? I think, in a way, having the subway and buses at your disposal. Really, I just think it broadened my scope of life a lot. Of course, going to school on the trains. There were always some perverts on the train, and so, you know you got to look around. I think I'm more careful than people who didn't grow up in New York. Cause you really do have to look around you and be aware.

RS: Yeah. When you moved outside of New York, did you experience any kind of antisemitism as a result?

LS: Well, somebody had asked me about where my horns were.

RS: Oh!

LS: So I guess that was kind of antisemitic. When I moved to Massachusetts I heard the expression from people I don't know if they were saying it because it was just something they said, and they didn't think about it. But if they were bargaining with somebody they would call it Jewing them down. At one point I just thought, I have to say something. So I said to this person who I liked “I don't know if you realize how that sounds” and I explained it, and she was mortified. I don't know if it was antisemitism, but I know that that's how it must have started through stereotypes.

RS: Did you ever return to the Bronx after you initially had left?

LS: Well, I went back home to visit my mother. My father died 2 years after I left. So I would visit my mother, and I would take the bus from Dover. When I moved to Massachusetts I would take the bus to see her, even though I had a car at the time. She would come out and see me.

When I saw my mother we used to do pretty much the same thing. One day we'd take the subway and we'd get off a few stops before where we were going. Then we'd walk down Madison Avenue, or we'd pick a street to walk down, a really nice street. We would go to the Lower East Side and go to some of these stores that sold great clothes for low prices. So that was one thing I did with my mother when I went back to New York. I didn't go to shows with her. I don't know why. I didn't really go to shows for quite a while after I'd moved. My husband at the time, his family was from the Bronx, so we'd go and see them also. But most of my friends moved out of the Bronx.

RS: When you were growing up what kind of shops and amenities do you remember visiting? You mentioned when you would go back, you and your mother would shop together. As a child, would you also shop with your mother? What do you remember of that?

LS: I remember my mother had beautiful taste in clothing, and she would get me some. Of course she'd wait for sales. When I was young she bought me these clothes that in retrospect were really pretty, but they weren't like the other kids. I felt so much like an outsider that I just wanted to make believe I blended in, so I'd make her buy me things that other kids had. But she really didn't want to do that. My aunt made clothes for me, too, so I don't really remember having a lot of clothing experiences. Except, when my mother would get me something, and I would think "Oh, my God! Nobody else has something that looks like this. I'm gonna look like I don't belong once again." Plus my mother. She was gray and she looked older than the other mothers. She told me it was because I was such an awful child. She didn't mean it in a bad way, —but maybe it was. [Laughs] My father slept during the day. My mother had gray hair, and she wasn't friendly with the other women. She was friendly with her sister. I think she just didn't want to talk about her past with anybody. Once I got married and and came back to visit we'd shop, but I don't remember a lot of it as a child. I remember we'd go to the Donnell Library in Manhattan together when I was a kid. We'd go with my Aunt Sophie to antique stores. And of course I was such a charmer. I said "Why do you buy dead people's junk?" You could see why my mother told me I was putting the gray in her hair.

RS: Were there any food stores or candy stores that you would visit?

LS: We had a candy store around the corner. Feldman's. It was a drug store with a soda fountain where we'd get egg creams and it had some telephone booths in it. There were a whole bunch of stores on— I guess it was 156th Street on the hill going down. There was the drug store, there was a dry cleaner. On 161st Street, which was a big interchange at the time there was a couple of good bakeries, and Yankee Stadium was down that street. There were 2 train stations, the East Side and the West Side were on 161st Street. So those were the stores. I was just used to walking to places to buy things, not really clothing. We'd go to Alexander's. I don't know if Alexander's is still there. Is there still an Alexander's on Fordham Road and the Concourse?

RS: I'm not entirely sure to be quite honest with you, but I've heard so much about Alexander's. I feel like everybody I talk to mentions it, it's such a staple.

LS: Oh, it was. I remember this, I was looking at bras and I must have put one on my arm for some reason, and I walked out of the store. Nobody stopped me. I didn't know I had it on my shoulder. I got on the bus. I was halfway home, and I noticed it. My mother had me go back and return it. I wasn't purposely taking it. That was one of my Alexander's experiences. That's where we went mostly. But then my mother did like the Lower East Side cause they had bargains. She would do a lot of the clothes shopping for me. I'd have to nag her to get me — I remember the poodle skirt. Felt skirt with a poodle on it. Sometimes we would go to the Bronx County Courthouse, and once you got up the steps there were these statues. Some kind of carvings. They had, a little niche inside, where there were benches. Granite benches, or whatever they were made out of. My friends and I would go there because nobody could see us, and we'd smoke. I remember that with the courthouse.

RS: That's funny. What kind of food do you remember growing up with? Were there any particularly Jewish foods? I know you mentioned that sometimes you had a bit of a kosher-style to your meals. What kind of dishes would your mother make?

LS: She wasn't a particularly great cook. She made good stuffed cabbage. She made mostly meat and potatoes because that was what my father ate. We used to get great hot dogs at the Deli around the corner and knishes. That was always a meal that I welcomed. She didn't buy kosher meat. There was a butcher shop she used to go to, and when the Yankees were in town they went to the Concourse Plaza, which was on 161st Street on the Concourse. I think they might have had some kind of rooms where there were some cooking facilities. So she went to the same butcher they went to. She thought that it was gonna be good. Because if the Yankees could go there, my mother could go there. We didn't like the Yankees, because whenever there was a Yankees game people would come and double-park. We didn't have a car, but they would still double-park and they were all over the streets. So my father was a Giants fan when they were at the Polo Grounds. We used to walk to the Polo Grounds sometimes. I used to go to Yankee Stadium when I was studying for Regents. Sometimes they would be playing and I'd take my book and maybe a friend. Somebody was always giving us free tickets. We'd spend a lot of time at the Yankees games. My father was a big Giants fan, he would watch it on TV and listen to the radio. I learned that my husband's father did the same thing with the Mets. What were we talking about?

RS: You were mentioning food and the Yankees, and then you'd go and do your homework—

LS: —Yankee Stadium. Sometimes during a doubleheader if we went there at the right time, people would not be able to stay for the second game and they'd give us tickets. Occasionally we

go after for Chinese food. I just thought there were two things in Chinese food because we would always get the same thing. Chicken chow mein and I think it was egg foo young, because that was what we used to get. But we didn't eat out all that often.

RS: Do you still consider yourself a Yankees fan?

LS: No, no. I'm not a sports-minded person.

RS: Springing forward in the timeline, I guess. After you left the Bronx, even though you would return, did you notice any changes to the Bronx and what was your response toward those?

LS: We changed in a bad way. I'm reading a book now about Robert Moses, the power broker. It's only 1,100 pages of small print. I think he was the person — that was what I always remember hearing— who ruined the Bronx by building this expressway right through the middle of it and taking houses. At one point I'm not even sure when it was, I didn't live in New York anymore. So it must have been in the 60s, or maybe the early 70s. The houses near the Cross Bronx Express, they were unoccupied. They were just gross looking, they were scary. So I remember that. People started moving to Riverdale or New Jersey and my parents stayed in the same building. Then, when my father died my mother didn't have any place to go except stay where she was. The whole neighborhood changed. There were a lot of Puerto Rican people living there. I went there, I don't know, maybe 15 years ago with my husband when we were in New York. I said, “Oh, let's see where I used to live!”. They had Bodegas, you know, it was just nothing the way it used to be. The side of my building had this really pretty ornamentation. It had a balustrade on either side of this courtyard that you could sit on. Of course it wasn't meant for that. Then I saw a picture of it on Google Maps, now it's a wrought iron, ugly fence that's there. So things changed a lot. It got to the point where for years there was no elevator operator, that probably ended when I was maybe 12. When I went back to visit my mother there was not only no elevator operator, but people were afraid to go in the elevator. The only people who lived there were the relics like my mother. Single women who just were fearful of being mugged, or something happening to them, being robbed. My mother was a reader. She would take a library book with her when she took the subway, and she'd keep her money in the library book. She said “Well if they steal something, probably the last thing they would care about stealing is a book”. But yeah, it changed a lot. It did. But I didn't live there then. I wouldn't have wanted to have lived there. It was rough.

RS: You mentioned with your first husband, experiences with Vietnam. What was that like? Were you part of the anti-war movement? What was that like for you?

LS: Well, when I was in college, I went to Hunter College in the Bronx. It's now Lehman College. I used to be big on demonstrations there, definitely anti-war. I remember going to some

demonstrations on my sweet sixteenth party. It was in Manhattan. It was called Headquarters, and it was — I don't know if it was started by— but there was this chef there who had been Eisenhower's chef. On the way out, my friends and I happened to see some people picketing Woolworth's because something had gone on in the South, and I think it was in North Carolina where they wouldn't let some black people sit at the lunch counter. So on the way home from my party we picketed Woolworth's along with some people who were there. So I guess I was a kind of an activist although I didn't really stay in New York long enough to do anything. Then when I moved there was nothing going on there. I just didn't do anything on my own. But we did protest the war.

RS: You mentioned being a teacher. Were you in any way involved with or remember the teacher strikes at the time in the late sixties?

LS: No, I wasn't there. I was only there for one year. I taught at P.S. 69 In the Bronx. I think that was when the Throgs Neck Bridge was being built. It was far, but it was still in the Bronx. But I wasn't familiar at all with that area.

RS: So I guess a final closing question. When you think back on your time in the Bronx now, what kind of memories and feelings do you associate with it?

LS: I think of it almost as a time of innocence. Because the things that are happening now and for the past many years. Maybe it was because I was a child, but it just didn't seem as extreme in so many ways, politically. Even though it might have been my memories of just growing up I just guess I felt carefree. As I said, I always felt like an outlier. But it was okay, I just think of them as kinder, gentler times. I loved having grown up in New York in retrospect, and I always missed it. I always missed being in New York. I still do, although I know it's not the same and I probably want to live elsewhere at this point. I could go anywhere I wanted by train. I had everything within walking distance or just a short ride. Now that I meet people who didn't have the New York growing up in Bronx experience, I just feel I have so much more experience and knowledge just because of of where I grew up.

RS: Well, thank you so much. I'll end the recording.

SECOND RECORDING

LS: So sometimes when I was going to high school. I would take the train and I would be walking down the street. I think it was 158th Street on one side of the Bronx County Courthouse and there would be a film crew. There was a show they were filming. Let me think if I could remember the name, I think E.G. Marshall was in it. I was so caught up in it. I would just stand there and watch, and then I'd be late for school. But it was just so exciting to be doing that. Then

on another side of our street that was off the Concourse going into the East Bronx. It was a hilly street, they were filming a movie. We were in love with one of the actors. His name was Danny Dennis. A couple of months ago I thought, I wonder what movie that was, because we kept looking for the movie. I don't remember the name it was supposed to be. But I looked up Danny Dennis, and sure enough he had been in a movie. The name of the movie was on Google. We couldn't wait to see it, and it just never happened. I'm wondering if it was so bad that it just never really made it. But that was a very exciting thing for all of us just watching this movie being made in our neighborhood. Every day they were there. Oh, I think it's called “The Defenders”. The TV show that they would film at the courthouse. Another thing I remember is the 161st Street Station was elevated and if you walked to one end of the station you would be able to see into Yankee Stadium. People would congregate there or on a roof nearby, they would have roof parties. My building wasn't close enough, and I really wasn't crazy about baseball, anyway. But Yankee Stadium built a scoreboard, and they built it so that it would block all the non-paying viewers. So that was another Bronx memory I just thought of.

RS: Thank you so much. It was lovely talking to you.

LS: Well, likewise, likewise. I think I'll be thinking about this for days to come. If I think of something else that I forgot that was a wonderful thing in certain regards, I will email it to you.