Transcription of
Dr. Minna F. Weinstein's
Interviews

Complete First Interview
From 26 March 2006--
And the Beginning of
The Second Interview
From 19 April 2006--
Totaling One Hour

Interviewed and Transcribed by
Nathan Starr
FIRST INTERVIEW

NS: Okay. What is your name?

MW: Minna F. Weinstein

NS: Okay. Do I have your permission to record and transcribe this interview?

MW: Yes you do.

NS: Okay, thank you. Alright, Dr. Weinstein, when and where were you born?

MF: I was born in Baltimore, Maryland, uh, in 1933 in August during what my father described to me years and then every year after that on my birthday during the worst hurricane Baltimore ever had.

NS: Really? Do you remember the name of it?

MW: No, they didn't name them then.

NS: They didn't?

MW: I don't think so, no, not in '33.

NS: Maybe not. I don't know. Huh.

MW: Maybe Hurricane "X."

NS: Yeah, something like that. Um, what was Baltimore like when you were growing up?

MW: Well, it was, uh, it was a comfortable place. It was, you know, it's still not all that big as cities go. It's about a million people and another million in the surrounding suburbs now. Um, I lived in a basically working class neighborhood.

NS: Okay.

MW: My parents were both deaf mutes.

NS: Oh really?

MW: Which the main impact that that had... [Minna Weinstein's guest Pat is leaving the room. She has an injured foot. Pat says goodbye although it is indiscernible on the recording.] Okay, take care Pat. You have to have a bad foot to come in here. [laughter]

NS: I... Good, I think I'm prepared. I have a bad foot as well. [Door shuts]
MW: Uh, it was, uh, hard in some ways but very good in other ways.

NS: Mmm-hmm

MW: The whole family was there, that is, aside from my imme diate family which was my mother and father and brother and me.

NS: Mmm-hmm

MW: Umm, my father had a lot of sisters and brothers and they were all there in Baltimore and, umm, we got to see a lot of the family. More than I wanted to then...

NS: Right.

MW: ...But now I'm glad I did.

NS: Right.

MW: My, umm, it was hard growing up because my father had so much trouble finding work.

NS: Oh, Okay.

MW: He was a printer...

NS: Alright.

MW: ...And uh, during World War II he got a job at the Baltimore News Post which was the one of the, uh, two daily newspapers there...

NS: OK.

MW: ...And then our lives changed. It became much more comfortable and much nicer. For example, before that we rented out umm, we just lived in a little three bedroom house. But we rented out one room to uh, a stranger and uh, it was always a hustle to try and make the money go as far as it had to.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: But, once the war broke out, my father then was in demand but couldn't be drafted...

NS: Right.

MW: ...That is, World War II...
NS: Right.

MW: ...He couldn't be drafted, uh, because he was deaf. Then things changed. He got a job at the Baltimore News Post and joined the union...

NS: Oh, Okay.

MW: ...And that changed everything. Then it was a much more comfortable, sort of, lower middle class family.

NS: Right.

MW: Lower middle class income.

NS: Okay. Umm, you answered my next question. Umm, what were your parents like? What are your memories of them?

MW: They're, uh, vague.

NS: Vague?

MW: Yeah, uh-huh, they are. Umm, they were-- My father was a much more uh, dominant person in my life than my mother was.

NS: Okay.

MW: My mother was very quiet and very, um, defined by her role, which was wife and mother.

NS: Right.

MW: And of course you remember she was also deaf...

NS: Right.

MW: ...So, uh, she lived in a very small world.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: So, she didn't have a lot of influence on me and actually thought it was strange that I wanted to go to college-- much less go to graduate school.

NS: Right.
MW: But, umm, she never said I shouldn't-- Well, she said I shouldn't,[Nathan chuckles] but she never said I couldn't. [Cough] And my, uh... But I had lovely friends and it was very much, umm, a neighborhood that was all Jewish.

NS: OK.

MW: And Baltimore is still like that. Now the neighborhood is all black now...

NS: Uh, huh.

MW: ...It's not all Jewish anymore, but Baltimore and suburban Baltimore [are] very, uh, defined, umm, by the differences of people.

NS: Oh, Okay.

MW: That is, there's still very strong Jewish neighborhoods, uh, Irish, umm, Italian, that sort of thing. And, fortunately I went to public school and I got to meet other kinds of kids, not just Jewish kids.

NS: That's nice.

MW: But that didn't happen until I was in junior high.

NS: Oh, really? It was--What was the--What were schools like before then? It was just-- Was it uh...

MW: All Jewish. It was just in that area...

NS: Oh, it was in just a neighborhood, like your grade school?

MW: Right, mm-hmm.

NS: Umm, let's see, umm...

MW: But I loved it! I loved Baltimore. I always loved it.

NS: Did ya?

MW: Yeah, it's a surprise to me still that I was so anxious to leave, you know the-- I wanted to leave and go out and do my own thing.

NS: I think most people are like that.

MW: Yeah.

NS: [laughter] Umm, what type of hobbies did you have while were growing up?
MW: I read a lot.

NS: Did ya?

MW: Yeah, uh huh. That was really it.

NS: What--Was it...

MW: I was sick as a child...

NS: Oh, were you?

MW: Yeah, I had rheumatic fever. And, uh, that really confined-- The way they treat rheumatic fever these days is they make you exercise, they make you play, they make you do stuff. In those days it was "Sit still." So, uh, which was probably all the wrong thing to do but that's the way it was. So, I read a lot. We didn't have television.

NS: What did you read? What kind of stuff did you read...

MW: Everything, everything. You know I started up by reading, um, Caroline Keene, you know, the Nancy Drew books...

NS: Yes.

MW: That sort of thing. And then, I got more sophisticated in my reading. So, by the time I got to high school, I was pretty, uh, [pause] knowledgeable about stuff.

NS: Well read. Umm...

MW: I went to high school at Western High School [which was?] a girls high school.

NS: Okay, you like it you said?

MW: Yeah, I did. I loved it.

NS: You said it was diverse?

MW: Very diverse. Very diverse. Every kind of girl there you can imagine. Just no boys. But Baltimore schools, the best schools were segregated, that is, I don't mean by race but by gender.

NS: Gender.

MW: And the two best, uh, high schools for girls were "Western" and "Eastern"...
NS: Right.

MW: In the western and eastern parts of the city.

NS: Right.

MW: And the best high schools for boys were "Poly," Polytechnic Institute and, uh, "City"...

NS: Okay.

MW: Called, uh, with much bravado "City College."

NS: City College.

MW: But it wasn't a college. It was a high school.

NS: Just by reputation? They...

MW: No, that was their name, "City College."

NS: Oh, was it? Okay, I thought it was just...

MW: Yeah, no. Uh-uh.

NS: Okay.

MW: That's where my brother went.

NS: Oh, really?

MW: Yeah. Uh-huh.

NS: Huh. Umm, did you always want to go to college?

MW: Mmm-hmm. Always. From the day that I could think about what I wanted to do and be. Yes, I always wanted to go to college.

NS: You said that your mom was, umm, hesitant about you... [Dr. Weinstein begins to answer while Nathan continues asking the question.] ...wanting to go college?

MW: Yeah, she didn't-- she thought it was silly--that it wasn't necessary. She had been a seamstress before she married my father...

NS: Right.
MW: ...And remember she had gone to the Maryland State Institute for the Deaf...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Which is where she met my father.

NS: Oh, really?

MW: So, they sort of grew up knowing that they would get married and they always lived in--in very confined and well defined, umm, setting and really totally dominated by their being deaf.

NS: Really? Did, uh--How did your father feel about you going...

MW: He was thrilled.

NS: Was he?

MW: Yeah, he really supported me a lot in terms of going to college. He really did.

NS: That's good.

MW: My brother had gone to college.

NS: Right,

MW: My brother was drafted into the army during the last year of World War II.

NS: Oh, Okay.

MW: Which ended in '45.

NS: '45. [said in unison with Dr. Weinstein]

MW: And, uh, in those days they had this fantastic GI Bill...

NS: Right. You could go back to school... [Dr. Weinstein begins to answer] The government pays for it.

MW: Right and it was absolutely free. Totally, One hundred percent free.

NS: Right.

MW: So he went to Maryland--The University of Maryland and, uh, that was all paid for. And so it meant that the money saved for his college was spent on me.
NS: Oh, Okay.

MW: Yeah, which worked fine.

NS: Yeah, it did. [pause] Umm, what made you want to go to the University of Maryland? Just 'cause it was so close to home or...?

MW: Yeah, because that's where people went.

NS: Oh.

MW: Yeah. [Chuckles]

NS: You didn't really have much of a choice or...

MW: Umm, I went to an academic girl's high school, Western...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And it was a tradition for girls from there to go to Goucher, which is a really first class women's college...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...In Towson, which is just outside of Baltimore.

NS: Right.

MW: But there never was any question of my going there. No one could possibly afford it.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah. So I went to the uh, state university and I was very comfortable there and I never left. I mean...

NS: Yeah.

MW...I got three degrees there.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Umm, did you go to the University of Maryland with the idea that you'd be studying History there....
MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: ...Or did it just---Oh. it did?

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: You were always interested in studying history?

MW: 'Always wanted to, and I always wanted to be a history teacher. And so I went, mostly as a coward, I went into the college of education instead of liberal arts...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Uh, to major in history so that I wouldn't have to take a language.

NS: [chuckle]

MW: Uh, because education didn't require that.

NS: Right.

MW: And so, I didn't take a language and then when I went into the doctoral program I had to pass two language tests.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah. How many do you have to take?

NS: Umm, I have to take-- I don’t know if we have to take one for our Masters. I graduated with a minor in French, though.

MW: Oh, then, so you're fine.

NS: Mmm-hmm, I--I believe so.

MW: Yeah, but at Maryland in those days, Maryland was struggling to make it's reputation.

NS: Right.

MW: And they were really on a lookout for good students, which I was...

NS: Right.

MW: And they, uh, [pause] they forgave me for not liking languages, but they didn't say I didn't have to take the tests.
NS: [laughter] Uh-huh, right. What did you like about--what did--I assume you liked the University of Maryland?

MW: I did! I kept staying, yeah.

NS: Yeah, what was it about them...

MW: You know, I grew with it. Umm, it--When I went there it really was just a little sch-- Not small in size, but small in mentality.

NS: Okay.

MW: And during the years that I was there it grew into a first class graduate school.

NS: Okay.

MW: And, so, I just stayed. It was easier to stay than to leave.

NS: Right.

MW: Because the minute that I graduated with a Bachelor's degree they offered me a fantastic fellowship to stay for the Master's program.

NS: Okay.

MW: And they kept supporting me all along.

NS: That's good.

MW: So, it was easier than applying some place else. I just stayed.

NS: Right.

MW: And this is, it was a growing school which meant that the faculty kept growing so that people that I had when I was a doctoral candidate...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...Were not the same people who were teaching me or...

NS: Oh, Okay.

MW: ...When I was an undergraduate.
NS: Right. [Pause] Was there anything about the University of Maryland that you didn't per-- like? That you didn't prefer? Or was it just...

MW: You know I didn't have anything to compare it to.

NS: Right, that's true.

MW: Now...[cough] University of Maryland is only eight miles from Washington...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And I went into Washington a lot...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...While I was a student. Umm, because of Folger there. You know I was a Renaissance scholar right away...

NS: Right, right.

MW: And Folger Library is there and all kinds of good stuff including the Library of Congress.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: So, I-- It seemed to me that it was a good place to be for graduate studies.

NS: Makes sense.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Okay.

MW: I was much happier as a graduate student than I was as an undergraduate.

NS: Were you?

MW: Yeah, uh-huh. The undergraduate girls that I would associate with were all sorority.

NS: Oh. You--You didn’t think you fit in?

MW: No, I didn’t--I didn't fit in.

NS: Oh, OK.[Laughter]
MW: I know I didn't.

NS: Oh, OK.

MW: And they knew it too...

NS: Right

MW: ...So, no one ever asked me to pledge.

NS: Right. Oh, oh well. Uh, so you always wanted to be a history teacher...

MW: Yeah.

NS: ...Did you always want to be a history teacher in college or...

MW: No, I learned that later...

NS: Did ya?

MW: ...You know, as I watched my professors and, umm--You know because I was in education...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...I did a semester of practice teaching, they called it then.

NS: Right.

MW: But you don't practice, you really teach. I mean you really do it and uh, [pause] the kind of teaching that was done in the school, which was a junior high school...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Uh, and what I saw my real professors doing, I knew I wanted to teach in college.

NS: Right. Well, you said your focus was-- I mean its England and you taught absolutism-- How did you get-- What made you interested in that?

MW: John Kennedy

NS: Really?

MW: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah. He was elected in 1960 and I was still in my long term...

NS: Right.
MW: ...Long term commitment to Maryland...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And, uh, one of the things that fascinated me about him is that he knew he wanted to be President. Which meant that he had the right ideas and that he could do things that would make a difference.

NS: Okay.

MW: And I realized very quickly that that's what a good leader does know.

NS: Knows that they can make a difference?

MW: That they can make a difference and I was very attracted that. Now what could somebody who knew a lot about being a good leader do in an absolutist government. That is, where you know who the next king is going to be. There are no choices for anybody...

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, how do you make yourself felt? How do you make yourself understood? And how do you get into a position of influence, if not power.

NS: Okay.

MW: And that very much fascinated me...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...Because of course it happened all the time.

NS: Right.

MW: So that my master's thesis was uh, on, uh [pause]-- Oh shit, you think you never forget. On John, uh, Selden...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...Who was a lawyer. Uh, an exceptionally well-educated lawyer for his time and he uh, and he had a lot of influence over those who had a lot of power.

NS: Really?

MW: So, I wanted to learn more about him because he did that.
NS: Right

MW: Not everybody was the brother of the President.

NS: That's true.

MW: And, uh, he was really, uh, a guy from humble background...

NS: Right.

MW: ...In England, of course...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Who really, uh, made himself felt.

NS: Right. Okay, umm. So after they offered you the fellowship...

MW: I grabbed it.

NS: You grabbed it? There's nothing-- There's no way you could turn that down.

MW: No, uh-uh. No. It also meant that I didn't have to bother-- You see my professors, by the time I was a senior...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...Were saying names of fancy schools...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And I still didn't have enough confidence to think that I could compete...

NS: Right.

MW: ...In that environment. Three of my professors, who were t-- To whom I was very close...

NS: Mmm-hmm

MW: ...Or with whom I was very close...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...Umm, had all gone to the University of Chicago and they...
NS: Right.

MW: ...said to me "You'll love it and you will do well." And I would say, "I'll love it and I won't do well."

NS: Right.

MW: And when Maryland came up with a really good fellowship-- You know, if I told you now what it was-- It was about 1500 dollars.

NS: Right, but...

MW: You know, it wouldn't keep you a day.

NS: No, I know what you're saying.

MW: But it was a good fellowship for the time. [Pause] I accepted it right away.

NS: There's nothing wrong with that. When you got to your Master's, is that when you started to realize that you wanted to be a, uh-- A history professor or were you still...

MW: Yes, I knew, I knew when I started my Master's Degree...

NS: Oh, OK.

MW: ...That what I really wanted was a, a Ph. D. in history.

NS: Okay. When did you-- First of all, when did you gradu-- When did you get-- receive your Master's Degree. Do you remember what year?

MW: Yeah. Two years after I graduated so '55...

NS: Right.

MW: ...'57.

NS: OK.

MW: And then I guess I did what maybe you're do-- Oh you're a Master's candidate...

NS: Mmm-hmm. Just a candidate, yeah.

MW: Umm, with the umm-- Once I got the Master's Degree I real-- And I can't tell you how much I loved being a graduate student. I really did.
NS: Right.

MW: Umm, in those days, you had to take fields. I'm sure you do now, too. And you could take one field outside the department.

NS: Right.

MW: So, I took one field outside in English Lit...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...Which I also loved. I was never was attracted enough to it to want to teach it...

NS: Right.

MW: ...I mean, history is my field.

NS: Right.

MW: But I really, uh, [pause] I turned my graduate, uh, years at Maryland into long years...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Always with the excuse that I needed to take more English.

NS: Right.

MW: But it's 'cause I didn't want to leave. I guess I just didn't have confidence in myself to leave and go out on my own.

NS: Is that where you like, uh, honed your, umm, poetry skills?

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: Or, had you always done that?

MW: Mmm-mmm, no.

NS: That was just...

MW: Yeah.

NS: ...From the English Literature.

MW: From English Lit. Uh-huh.
NS: How 'bout that.

MW: Yeah, and so, among the things that I really like to write...

NS: Mmm-hmm

MW: ...Umm, were sonnets.

NS: Oh, Okay.

MW: Because it really takes a lot of intellectual...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...Commitment to make the rhymes come out and for the, uh, iambic to be right and you know all that stuff so I-- And I really enjoyed doing that.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Umm, upon receiving your Master's Degree, what did you do next?

MW: I stayed.

NS: You stayed?

MW: I stayed and went right into the doctoral program.

NS: Well, how long was that? How long did that take?

MW: My doctorate?

NS: Yeah.

MW: Well, it took a long time but...

NS: Right

MW: ... That's because I left.

NS: Right.

MW: That is, when I finished my course work...
NS: Okay.

MW: I came to Philadelphia and went to teach at Temple.

NS: Okay. What-- What attracted you to Temple and Philadelphia?

MW: A job.

NS: A job? That's a good reason.

MW: Yeah, Uh-huh. Yeah.

NS: What did you think...

MS: There were not-- It was not, uh, an easy day to get jobs and, you know. I know its not today, either...

NS: Right.

MW: ...I know today's very tough.

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, and when, uh, [pause] I was interviewed by Temple at the AHA [pause] and they, uh, offered me the job right away so I took it.

NS: Okay. What-- What did you-- [Pause] Did you like Temple? Did you like being at Temple?

MW: I loved it the first two years and then after that I didn't love it anymore.

NS: What changed?

MW: Uh, Temple was very much a school, at that time, on the make...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...And they were hunting for people who were already stars...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...And I knew that I was not in that category, for them at least.

NS: Okay.
MW: I think I would have been, [Nathan begins to say something but it is indecipherable] but I was not for them.

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, but that meant a-- a very important difference in the courses they gave you to teach...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...And what I was continually assigned to was American History.

NS: Right.

MW: It's a course-- It was a bread and butter course for the history department...

NS: Right.

MW: ...'Cause everybody had to take it.

NS: Right.

MW: And I really didn't...

NS: You didn't enjoy teaching it?

MW: No, I didn't. I didn't. I did it and I did a good job and I taught Bill Cosby.

NS: Did ya?

MW: Uh-huh.

NS: That's a good story. [Chuckles]

MW: Yeah. [Chuckles]

NS: Do you remember him?

MW: Of course! Perfectly! He was a clown...

NS: Was he?

MW: ...He was marvelous. He was wonderful. He was a good student.

NS: Was he?
MW: Mmm-hmm. Yup. He was a good student...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: And he was just hilariously funny in class.

NS: Was he?

MW: And I was young enough, you know, I wasn't even thirty yet. So I ...

NS: right

MW: Was young enough that--and loose enough...

NS: Right.

MW: ...that his being funny just tickled me.

NS: Right

MW: And I had a great time with him in the class, yeah.

NS: That's good.

MW: I often thought that I'd like to write him a note and say I know you don't remember me but I was your teacher in American history.

NS: I'm sure he would appreciate it.

MW: Honestly. Yeah.

NS: He probably would (said simultaneously with Dr. Weinstein) he would...

MW: Yeah.

NS: Yeah I see. Umm...

MW: That's my claim to fame. I taught Bill Cosby. [Laughter]

NS: [Laughter] Good claim to fame. I don't have that yet.

MW: And he went on and got a doctorate.

NS: Yes he did.

MW: Yeah. Right. So...I must--I feel like that was my good influence.
NS: Ah. It probably was. [Laughter] How was--So you moved to Philadelphia--How was Philadelphia similar or different to Baltimore?

MW: Well... I don't know. I don't really know how to make that comparison. I really--Yeah.

NS: It's a tough one. [Said simultaneously with Dr. Weinstein]

MW: Yeah. I really don't know how to make that comparison. I fit in. I was comfortable here.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Umm...I liked teaching at Temple at first...

NS: Right.

MW: ...and then when I stopped liking, and I started looking for...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...another job. Anyway.

NS: Right.

MW: And I applied around the country...

NS: Right.

MW: ...But when La Salle expressed an interest in me, I was very interested in them.

NS: Right. Makes sense.

MW: I felt that going to a catholic college, teaching at a catholic college. Maybe I'm wrong...

NS: No.

MW: ...Maybe it wouldn't of been true. Maybe it --It would've been the same anywhere. But I felt that there was a strong intellectual tradition...

NS: Right.

MW: ...That I thought I could fit into.
NS: Uh-huh.

MW: And when they offered me the job, I grabbed it. Uh-huh.

NS: There's nothing wrong with that.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Umm-- Let me ask you this: Does...

MW: I also was sort of a freak.

NS: Well, how so?

MW: Well I was Jewish and a woman.

NS: And a woman at La Salle...

MW: At La Salle.

NS: Yeah.

MW: Totally all men students...

NS: Right.

MW: Ah, there were a handful of -- Of Jews on the faculty...

NS: Right.

MW: ...but no other women.

NS: Right.

MW: and I liked--I liked it.

NS: You liked...

MW: Really...made me different, you know.

NS: Yeah. It did.

MW: I walked into my first class at La Salle; it was an eight o'clock class.

NS: Right.
MW: I walked in and in those days you never could be sure there'd be a...uh--that one of the other faculty one of the other faculty told me, you'd better take a podium with you.

NS: Okay.

MW: So I came in...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...Carrying a podium...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...and uh set my stuff up and made sure I had the right maps and uh [Pause]a boy came up to me and he said, “Excuse me Ma’am, but we're waiting for Dr. Weinstein.” I said, “Yes I know.”

NS: [laughter]

MW: [chuckles] And then he learned that...

NS: ...Right. [Chuckles]

MW: [Chuckles] ...that I was Dr. Weinstein. Right.

NS: That's--that's a good story. Umm...

MW: Yeah. It is a good story.

NS: Yeah. K... Before when you--I read in one of your articles--you--you were a little unsure whether or not you would even get the job at La Salle.

MW: Yeah I was unsure, because of all the things against me.

NS: Right.

MW: Jewish, woman, you know. [Chuckles]

NS: Right.

MW: All these things.

NS: But I assume you were pleasantly surprised when you...

MW: I was. I was. I was first of all very surprised when they made me the offer and it was quick.
NS: R...Oh really.

MW: Yeah it was fast. I had-- I had two interviews. I met with the -- the department chair, whom I was certain did not like me.

NS: Really.

MW: And to this day I'm still sure [begins to chuckle] he didn't like me. But that didn't interfere with his choosing me to be--to go to a second interview...

NS: Right.

MW: ...with the other people from the department. It--you know I went to the AHA for...

NS: R...

MW: ...For the initial interview.

NS: Right.

MW: Interviews. I mean I was interviewed by a lot of places.

NS: Right.

MW: The only one I really liked was La Salle.

NS: Really.

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: Well...

MW: I really liked it.

NS: ...And that--what--it was what made you different that you liked it or was it other things too?

MW: There were a lot of other things. There really were. I felt like it--everything that I read about it was impressive.

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, [pauses] the incredible number of students who went on and got doctorates.

NS: Right.
MW: Uh, and you know, an army of physicians that graduated from La Salle.

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, so I was—I was impressed with La Salle. I thought it must be a good undergraduate school and if it's a good undergraduate school, then they must've had good teachers.

NS: Yeah.

MW: Which was not anything I ever felt at Temple.

NS: You didn't think that they valued the...

MW: No.

NS: ...Professors.

MW: No. No. They did not.

NS: Really.

MW: Yeah they didn't.

NS: And you were teaching there before—you were teaching back at Temple before you even had your PhD. Right? You were...

MW: That's right. That's right.

NS: ...just an instructor. Ok.

MW: I was an instructor.

NS: I see.

MW: And it was fairly clear to me that’s all I would ever be.

NS: Just an instructor?

MW: An instructor.

NS: Do you think--You said--You think that...

MW: They had to fill up--Temple was just at that moment...
NS: Right.

MW: ...Uh establish its relationship with the state of Pennsylvania.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Which meant that, umm, it was--And Pennsylvania requires that you have a course in American history--It meant that they were gonna hire an army [pauses] of young faculty to teach...

NS: Right.

MW: ...American history. [Pauses] Which is what I taught there at--even with--I couldn't even get Western Civ.

NS: Really.

MW: Yeah.Yeah.

NS: So you never taught any of those things at...

MW: I taught Western Civ...

NS: Oh you taught Western Civ. at Temple, but...

MW: ...At Temple, but what they really wanted at that time--within two years of my being here--they really wanted people who could come and teach American history--or who would teach...

NS: Who would teach.

MW: ...Not could...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Would teach American history.

NS: Right. When you got the job at La Salle, how excited were you?

MW: I was very excited. I really was-- I thought I'd--I'd-- was--I thought it was gonna be wonderful and it was.

NS: Right.

MW: It was. It--I--I loved it. I loved it. Even thought when I first started to teach there, I taught on the fourth floor of Wister Hall...
NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...And there was no ladies around...

NS: Really.

MW: ...And I had to go down to the second floor to go to the ladies room and then come back up—but it also meant I had to go outside to smoke and...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And you know all those things were...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Wre, eh, uh a burden, but the ladies room [begins to chuckle] was the—you know—the problem.

NS: Really.

MW: As I recall, the third—the—the last set of steps—the last flight...

NS: Uh-huh.

MW: ...from the—w—there wasn't any third floor—it went from the second floor to the fourth floor.

NS: At Wister?

MW: At Wister...

NS: Uh-huh.

MW: ...I don't know what it is now, of course.

NS: Yeah. No, it's still Wister Hall.

MW: Yeah, but what I mean is—is they put in more stairs. [Begins to chuckle]

NS: Oh. Oh. Maybe they did.

MW: It was really a trip...

NS: Was it? [Chuckles]
MW: Yeah. Yeah. [Pauses] And I was young--I mean...[chuckles]

NS: Right. Right.

MW: Yeah. [Laughing]

NS: No I understand. [Pauses] So, you got the job--You're excited--Were you nervous about it?

MW: No.

NS: Not at all?

MW: No. No. No I was very confident teaching.

NS: Were you?

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: So you started off as being somewhat unconfident--So you felt that you weren't very confident...

MW: No I was very confident. I really was...

NS: Was...

MW: ...I was a good teacher and I knew I was.

NS: That's good.

MW: And, uh--and that first day--You know--When, uh...

NS: When you were m...

MW: ...When the guy said to me--You're--Ya know--We're waiting for Dr. Weinstein.

NS: Yeah.

MW: I thought to myself, this is gonna be fun.

NS: Yeah. [Pauses] Well you were the--What did it mean to you to have been introduced as the first full-time woman at...

MW: At La Salle.

NS:...At La Salle? What did it mean to you?
MW: It was wonderful. It felt wonderful that I felt like a real [Pauses] umm, groundbreaker.

NS: Right.

MW: Mmm-Hmm. Ah--And--Umm, The happy--The second happiest day at La Salle...

NS: Right.

MW: ... Which was when they hired another woman?

NS: Who was that? Do you remember?

MW: A woman in the French department.

NS: Oh. Umm, was it Blumenthal?

MW: Blumenthal, that's right-- She died.

NS: Oh yeah.

MW: Yeah.

NS: How 'bout that. How long after you was she...

MW: The next year...

NS: The next year.

MW: ...She was hired full-time. She had been teaching the evening program. Yeah.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: And of course her husband was in the—-[Pauses]

NS: In the?

MW: In the--uh--language department too.

NS: Okay.

MW: Umm, So I had met her once or twice because--You know-- La Salle always has this--You know--a Christmas party and this party...

NS: Right. Right.
MW: ...And where people--And the departments do try and meet one another...

NS: Right.

MW: ...So I had met her before, but with her husband. Which is the way you met most women at La Salle.

NS: Through the husbands?

MW: Yeah through their husbands. But, uh--Then she was hired full-time.

NS: Okay.

MW: And that really was a groundbreaker, because she was hired in the same department as her husband.

NS: Oh yeah, languages.

MW: Languages. Right.

NS: Right.

MW: So, uh, that took--I thought-- A certain courage on the part of the--of the college.

NS: Right.

MW: They were agreeing that...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...To take-- That really breaks all the rules.

NS: Right.

MW: Not the rules. The unspoken...

NS: Right. Right.

MW: ...There's an unspoken...

NS: There was...

MW:...thing that you don't do that.

NS: Right.
MW: And they did.

NS: Right.

MW: And they did it because she was good.

NS: That's good. That's a good reason to...

MW: Yeah.

NS: ...Hire a teacher.

MW: That's a good...very good reason.

NS: Very good reason.

MW: Yeah.

NS: [Pause] Let me ask you this, like you said—you—you felt like you were a freak when you started and other than—you know—the first day, when you were moving the—uh...

MW: The--The...

NS: ...The podium around...

MW: Yeah. [begins to chuckle] You're right.

NS:...How are-- How did--How do you think you were treated at...

MW: Wonderfully.

NS: ...At La Salle. Wonderfully?

MW: Wonderfully. By everybody. By everybody...

NS: By everybody?

MW: ...From the president down--Now, uh, the president when I was hired, was Brother Daniel Bernian.

NS: Okay.

MW: And I'm sure that he's dead...

NS: Okay.
MW: ...But maybe not. Maybe he's still living down in Maryland, where they have there, uh, place--the brothers have their place down there.

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, from the president on down there-- Everybody was wonderful to me.

NS: That's good.

MW: And I'll tell you one--Uhm--Once he invite--ummm--I was on college council very quickly...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...But elected by the faculty...

NS: Right.

MW: ...To the college council. And there was supposed to be meeting of the council...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And I couldn't go because it was Rosh Hashanah.

NS: Oh.

MW: So, I decided that rather than write a note, I would go see [pause] Brother President.

NS: Okay.

MW: And that was how you referred to the president then...

NS: Brother.

MW: ...Brother President. You were very formal.

NS: Okay.

MW: And he was very formal.

NS: Right.

MW: And I said to him, umm, Brother, I'm not going to be able to be at the--the meeting of college council--ummm-- because it is Rosh Hashanah. It's a major Jewish holiday.
NS: Right.

MW: Oh, he said. I should've realized that. I'm sorry that I didn't look at the calendar. He said--uhm--Anyway, when I left he was very nice...

NS: Right.

MW: And he said of course you're excused. There's no problem about that...

NS: Right.

MW: And he said to me, I want to wish you a happy feast day. It wasn't--It was Yom Kippur.

NS: Right.

MW: He said it's--uh--I hope you have a happy feast day because for Catholics...

NS: It's...

MW: It--Feast day is synonymous with holiday...

NS: Right.

MW: But it was [Chuckles] there was no feast on Yom Kippur.

NS: [Said with Dr. Weinstein] No feast on Yom Kippur. Right.

MW: So, I said--You know--Thank you Brother.

NS: Right. That's nice.

MW: Yeah--uh-huh--They were wonderful to me. They really were.

NS: Right.

MW: I never--uhm--I only once had a disappointment and it was perfectly reasonable--I mean now that I look back on it...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...Uh, the first time I went up for full professor. You know...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...I was promoted right away to Associate...
NS: Yeah.

MW: ...And then when I went up for full professor and I was turned down.

NS: Okay.

MW: And now that I think about it--It was perfectly reasonable -I mean now that I look back on it...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...Uh, The first time I went up for full professor. You know...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...I was promoted right away to Associate...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...And then when I went up for full professor and I was turned down.

NS: Okay.

MW: And now that I think about it, it was perfectly reasonable. I didn't have enough publications. I should have had more. Umm, I went up too fast. I just, uh-- A--At the time, you had to have been in rank five years before you could go for full professor.

NS: Right.

MW: I should have waited...

NS: Right.

MW: I know that now...

NS: Right.

MW: ...But at the time I was very disappointed.

NS: Right, I can imagine.

MW: [Cough] But the next year I was promoted to full professor and then...

NS: There you go.
MW: Yeah and apparently (?) it was fine.

NS: You didn't have to wait too long.

MW: No, one year...

NS: [laughing] No...

MW: That's fine. That's fine.

NS: Right.

MW: And, at La Salle, it was different from what it was at Temple.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: The, uh-- From most schools that I know about now...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...You know, having worked at Middle States and seen a whole lot of schools...

NS: Right.

MW: ...At La Salle you didn't have to wait to find out. You didn't have to wait for a letter to come.

NS: Okay.

MW: The chair of the committee, who was usually the Dean...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Phoned me

NS: Oh.

MW: ...And told me, "You've been promoted." And that was very wonderful. I thought it was a wonderful thing to-- To treat people as they should. As if they really are friends.

NS: Right.

MW: And that this is a great moment that people sweat through...

NS: Right.
MW: ...And he kept the worry to a minimum.

NS: Okay.

MW: Yeah. So, I like to think of La Salle being a school with a heart.

NS: Yeah.

MW: I believe it still does have it.

NS: That's good.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Well, what was the, uh, student body like as comp-- As compared...

MW: I loved them.

NS: ...As compared with Temple.

MW: Exactly the same.

NS: Oh, was it? You...

MW: Yeah.

NS: You're problem was never with the students, it was...

MW: Never...

NS: That's good.

MW: ...Never. Never. Exactly the same and people were lovely to me just, you know, one guy said...

NS: Right.

MW: ..."We're waiting for [said in unison with Nathan] Dr. Weinstein." And I thought that-- I, I was rather charmed by that because he, of course, made the assumption that I couldn't be Dr. Weinstein. [Laughing]

NS: Right. Right.

MW: But, uh, no, I loved it. I loved it. I loved the students there.

NS: Right.
MW: And, uh, I have wonderful memories of them.

NS: Right.

MW: I still hear from them, um...

NS: That's good.

MW: ...And I get letters telling me what I'm doing and, you know, that sort of thing. So, yeah, I-- I really, uh-- I loved teaching there.

NS: Right. What did you teach when you got there? 'Cause you left Temple because you weren't getting-- A lot of it was you weren't getting...

MW: Yeah.

NS: You were teaching the classes you wanted to teach.

MW: Okay, umm-- You could choose as a freshman-- Of course you had to take American History...

NS: Of course.

MW: ...If you were going into Education.

NS: Right.

MW: Everybody had to take it.

NS: Right.

MW: But they didn't make me teach it.

NS: Oh, okay. Well, that's good. You must have liked that.

MW: I did...

NS: Right.

MW: ...I did. I was tired of American History.

NS: Right.

MW: I mean how would you like to get up every morning an go teach American History four times in, you know...
NS: Uh, if it's something you're not interested in, yeah.

MW: Well, I made myself interested...

NS: Well, you had to...

MW: That's right. You know, I had to do that, but-- It's not what I wanted to do.

NS: Right.

MW: And, uh, [Pause] almost immediately I got upper division courses.

NS: Really?

MW: I really was treated like a professional.

NS: That's good.

MW: And so La Salle made all the difference in the world to me.

NS: Yeah. Wh-- What were some of your favorite classes to teach?

MW: Well, I loved "Renaissance and Reformation."

NS: Right.

MW: That really was an area that I loved.

NS: Right.

MW: Truly loved. And of course my research was in Reformation history...

NS: Right.

MW: [Pauses] And then, I never taught Western Civ.

NS: Oh, you didn't?

MW: No, uh-uh. I taught modern Europe.

NS: Modern Europe?

MW: Yeah.

NS: Was that an upper division class?
MW: Mmm--mmm. Well, it was like a mid-division...

NS: Mid-division? Okay.

MW: Yeah. It-- I mean you could take it if you had Western Civ...

NS: Oh, okay.

MW: ...You could take it. Uh, that was, sort of, my bread and butter course. That's what I taught a lot of.

NS: Okay.

MW: Maybe two sections a year, uh-- You know it was a year long course and it was 1500 to the present.

NS: 1500 to the present?

MW: Uh-huh.

NS: Okay.

MW: Which is a lot nicer that Greece to the present.

NS: Uhh, yes.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Like a survey class. Yes.

MW: Yeah, it's very and-- But I really loved it. I really loved it. And then I almost-right away started teaching upper division courses: Renaissance and Reformation...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Age of Absolutism. Uh, you know the course that I really felt prepared to teach because I'd done a whole lot of reading in those areas.

NS: Right.

MW: And I felt very comfortable and one of things is that I didn't have courses like that.

NS: Right.

MW: So, I really was doing it from scratch.
NS: Right.

MW: Which is not something you do at the beginning. At the beginning you teach what you were taught.

NS: Right, and then you evolve from there.

MW: And you evolve from there. And this pushed me into, really, um, becoming what I really wanted to be: A good history teacher.

NS: A good history teacher.

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: That's good.

MW: And I was!

NS: Yeah, apparently.

MW: I was!

NS: Speaking of which...

MW: Yes...

NS: ...Two years after you were there...

MW: I got a Lindback.

NS: ...A Lindback Award. What did that mean to you?

MW: Oh, it meant an incredible moment of recognition. I took it to mean not that I was, you know, a Jewish woman teaching at La Salle, but that I had proven myself to them...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And that I really was a good teacher.

NS: Really?

MW: And that was, um-- Because, you know, students had a whole lot of say about it...

NS: Right.
MW: ...And, uh, it was really a great moment for me: Getting a Lindback.

NS: Right.

MW: And in those days they gave it Commencement.

NS: Oh, did they?

MW: And that was lovely.

NS: I can imagine.

MW: That was lovely.

NS: That's very...

MW: Yeah. And, of course, the [sigh] truth was that I still was sort of freaky, in that, you know-- There still weren't a whole lot of women there...

NS: Right.

MW: ...In the faculty and stuff like that and...

NS: Right.

MW: When I went up to get it...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...And what you went to get was a check.

NS: [Laughing] Oh, really?

MW: Yeah, it was a thousand dollar check.

NS: [Still laughing] Was it really?

MW: [Also laughing] Yeah, it sounded like a whole lot of money to me then...

NS: No! I-- I'm not laughing at the money. That's good that they gave you something.

MW: Yeah, a thousand dollar check. Right. And then, uh, you know a big ovation and everything. I still remember the day; it was wonderful.

NS: It must have been a pretty good feeling.
MW: It really was.

NS: Yeah.

MW: It really was.

NS: Well...

MW: Which sur-- That's one of the reasons I was surprised I ever left La Salle because I was so comfortable there.

NS: Right. Well, umm, the following year-- That was in '69. In 1970 they-- I believe they started letting women in full-time.

MW: That's right.

NS: How did that-- How did that...

MW: That was wonderful.

NS: Really?

MW: Yeah, it changed the whole-- Not just the appearance of the class...

NS: Obviously.

MW: ...But the whole feeling in the class. It was very good for the men students to have women there because women are smart...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Just as smart as men. Smarter sometimes...

NS: Absolutely.

MW: ...[Pause] It also was a challenge to them to treat the women like equals. Not to treat them like, you know, some cute chick that you could look at or...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And, uh, I thought it was good all the way around...

NS: Right.

MW: ...When La Salle went co-ed. And I also happened to think that La Salle had really good faculty...
NS: Right.

MW: ...And that women were closed down from that and now they wouldn't be.

NS: Right.

MW: Now, the men faculty was not universally happy about it...

NS: Oh, really?

MW: Yeah. They felt like it would change the whole nature of the school, but it didn't.

NS: Right.

MW: Women fit right in.

NS: Oh, alright. What do remember-- What do remember most about being at La Salle? Like what instances do you just-- You'll-- You'll always remember?

MW: Well, obviously, the one-- The things that I will remember the most, were the things that happened to me.

NS: Right. Oh, obviously.

MW: Yeah. Being, umm, being promoted the first time to Associate and-- And then when I became a Full Professor; That was a very great moment in my life. It really was. Umm, I thought it was a wonderful place. I had wonderful colleagues...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Who, uh-- It was a very, uh, congenial place to be.

NS: Right.

MW: Faculty members invited each other to their homes. Umm, and I always accepted and I always invited them to my home...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: I always, uh-- It was a real strong sense of being a community and being committed to each other as faculty.

NS: Really? [Nathan starts to say something and tails off]

MW: And we talked a lot about students.
NS: That it was all...

MW: None of that gossipy...

NS: No, no, no. In the students well-being--He wanted...

MW: Yeah.

NS: ...Everybody wanted the best for...

MW: For the students. Absolutely. So it was the school--That did--That really walked the walk and talked the talk. It really was a good--uh--it really was a good place and I was very proud to teach there.

NS: That's good.

MW: Yeah.

NS: How did...

MW: Then I was attracted away by money and power.

NS: [chuckles] Oh really?

MW: [chuckles] Yeah.

NS: How long were you there?

MW: At La Salle?

NS: Yeah.

MW: Thirteen years.

NS: Thirteen years. What did you notice that there was any change in-- I guess the--other than I would say the obvious--other than--you know --like-- there were more female professors, there were female...

MW: [coughs]

NS: ...Did you notice that there was any difference...

MW: How?

NS: ...In the student body from--not...
MW: No. When they---

NS: I don't mean the make up, but...

MW: Yeah, when they admitted women. Then they got a lot of really wonderful students.

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, and those women students who were good students were--Represented a challenge to the men who worked harder, I thought.

NS: Oh well that's good.

MW: So I thought that in general it was a very good move in everyway it was good for the women, good for the men.

NS: Right.

MW: And good for the faculty too.

NS: Right.

MW: Because here, really you can imagine a faculty of all men, many of whom graduated from La Salle...

NS: Right.

MW: ...That it could be a pretty macho class.

NS: Right, but you--You said--you didn't-- it was just a m-- great experience.

MW: It was a great experience for me. I loved it.

NS: Well that's good. Umm...

MW: I would still--I would retire from La Salle. I mean--you know...

NS: But you just got lured away.

MW: I got lured away. Right.

NS: Right.

MW: Of course now that I'm getting ready to send my daughter to college-- I didn't have her then.
NS: Right. Right.

MW: She could go to La Salle if I were someone on the faculty.

NS: [chuckles]

MW: See how...[chuckles]

NS: Yeah.

MW: She--But I'm sure she wouldn't want to.

NS: Nah.

MW: No.

NS: I understand.

MW: But La Salle was part of the sort of Catholic, uh consortium.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Where if--if--bec--faculty members almost never sent their own children to La Salle.

NS: Right.

MW: They would go to another one of the Catholic colleges...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...And go free.

NS: Right. $r_0 \parallel$

MW: You know would--Umm--I don't know who kept the role for that, but obviously not everybody could go to the same school. You know, they would--they would...

NS: Oh yeah.

MW: ...give a limit, but she could've gone to La Salle or to anywhere--St. Joe's or anywhere she wanted to.

NS: Right. Hmm. [Nathan starts to say something and trails off]
MW: She's gonna go to Penn State.

NS: Penn State?

MW: Uh-huh.

NS: That's a good school too.

MW: It is a good school. It is-- so big...

NS: Yes. History?

MW: No, English.

NS: English.

MW: She wants to be a lawyer.

NS: Oh.

MW: So, she's gonna--Not gonna go into the pre-law program, but she's gonna major in English.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Which I'm very glad for. It's better to have a discipline.

NS: Right. Oh. Okay. So overall, you would say that going to La Salle--What-- How would you sum on up your experience there?

MW: It was wonderful.

NS: Wonderful?

MW: I really was happy there. Now after saying all that you may wonder why I left and I'll explain why in a minute.

NS: Please.

MW: But, umm-- No, it was a wonderful experience. I remember [pause] it was great fun and umm, and I had people there who were my friends that I really, uh, liked a lot...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...John Grady, Honors. Is he still the director of Honors?
NS: Not-- I, I am not sure. I could check it out.

MW: Umm, he was, uh, terrific and he used to really recruit me to do Honors courses so...

NS: Right.

MW: ...It wasn't your department that decided that. It went through the Honors Program.

NS: Right.

MW: And, uh, I used to get to teach different courses...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...By doing honors and that really kept me on my toes.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah.

MS: Okay. And you were saying-- You were going to say, uh, why you left since you liked it so much.

MW: Well, when Middle States came after me I couldn't say "No" to that.

NS: Right.

MW: It really-- [Pause] You know when people would say to me, "Why did you leave?" I'd say for power and money...

NS: Right.

MW: ...I-- I-- I-- First of all, the salary was terrific.

NS: Was it?

MW: It was double what I was getting...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...At La Salle.

NS: Right.
MW: And, uh-- [Pause] You have to be very foolish or be independently wealthy to, uh, say "No, I don't want that money."

NS: I understand.

MW: And I-- That attracted me very much and also, umm, Middle States is Middle States, you know...

NS: Right.

MW: ...It is the accrediting agency for the whole region...

NS: Right.

MW: ...You know, in six states...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And it carried, uh, a lot of prestige...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Umm, [pause] and I'll be honest with you: After having taught for thirteen years, I was ready to do something different.

NS: Okay.

MW: And this was different.

NS: Did you miss it, though, when you left? Eventually?

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: No?

MW: No, no. I just turned to a new stage in my life.

NS: [Interrupting] Another new thing.

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: Okay.

MW: Yeah. No, I mean I loved it while I was there...

NS: Right.
MW: ... But I chose to leave to go to what I thought would be a very interesting and
different kind of job and it was.

NS: Right. Okay.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Alright. Uhh, I thank you for your time today.

MW: It was a pleasure.

NS: I appreciate it. Thank you.

MW: A great pleasure.

[END OF FIRST INTERVIEW]
SECOND INTERVIEW

NS: Ok. Uh, this is my second interview with Dr. Minna F. Weinstein. It is Wednesday, April 19th, 2006. Dr Weinstein, do I have your permission to record and transcribe?

MW: Absolutely.

NS: Okay, thank you. You mentioned in our last interview that, uh, when speaking about your parents that they were deaf mutes.

MW: That's right. I wondered why you didn't follow-up on that.

NS: Ah, it didn't occur to me at the time. I guess I didn't expect it, but uh...

MW: Right.

NS: ...How do you think that influenced your upbringing?

MW: In every way. Umm, [coughs] in a sense when you have deaf-mute parents, then you're the parent. And I had responsibilities and obligations beyond that of what other kids my age would've had.

NS: Okay.

MW: Now I did have a brother who was older, six years older, but when I was twelve, he was eighteen and in the army, I mean-- you know he was drafted.

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, so I did have a lot of responsibilities that I confess, I didn't want and that there were times that I resented that.

NS: Okay.

MW: Not for long and...

NS: Right.

MW: ...You know and they-- Resenting it didn't keep me from fulfilling my obligations, but by the same token, I think it's natural that a -- A kid going into her teenage--would prefer to be almost anywhere than home doing things for her parents.

NS: Right.

MW: Right.
NS: Ah, you said it affected it in different ways. Does that include socially? Like...

MW: No.

NS: No?

MW: No. Not socially at all. First of all when you're a kid—and I lived in a neighborhood that was very neighborhood oriented.

NS: Okay.

MW: Umm, and we lived at the bottom of a very long block.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: In Baltimore, there must've been seventy-five houses all together, so that there were a whole lot of kids my age and the kids all knew my parents and...

NS: Okay.

MW: ...And, uh, no it didn't affect me socially while I was a child and it never did.

NS: Right.

MW: It never did.

NS: Okay, and...

MW: It--There were just more responsibilities than I wanted to have.

NS: Okay. Do you think that was just--More responsibilities than, like you said, ummm, somebody whose parents weren't deaf-mutes would norm--Would have?

MW: Well sure--Ju--You--Just think about it for a minute. Just something as simple as, they couldn't use the phone.

NS: Right.

MW: And so I was responsible for all phone calls and, you know, when I was twelve, thirteen, fourteen, I didn't like it. Now when I got older...

NS: Right.

MW: ...It made me very bossy. And not with...

NS: [Chuckles]
MW: ...Them, but with the people that I spoke to on the phone, who did not respect the fact that a child was calling.

NS: Right. I understand.

MW: But it--I got nasty and they accepted it and that was that.

NS: Yeah. Well they'd have to.

MW: And my father always had a job. It wasn't that we were poor or anything.

NS: Right.

MW: And, umm, he was a printer.

NS: Right. You mentioned that.

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: And you said...

MW: And he...

NS: I'm sorry. Go ahead.

MW: He worked at the Baltimore News Post.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: In, uh, the composing room.

NS: Oh okay.

MW: Yeah.

NS: And you mother--Do you--I believe you said she was a seamstress at one time.

MW: At one time. Uh, before she got married. Once she got married...

NS: Oh. Okay.

MW: She stopped working. [In unison with Nathan] She stopped working.

NS: Okay
MW: It was a different world then.

NS: Right. (Pauses) Umm, Did your brother feel the same way about--Ah, as you about the responsibilities? I know like you said, he was six years older.

MW: No. No he didn't and I'll tell you why.

NS: Okay.

MW: When he, uh, was born...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: And he's 6 years older than I am.

NS: Right.

MW: So when he was born, my mother's family, in effect, stepped in and said to my mother. And these were--She had four sisters and her mother and her father then and, uh, they stepped in and they said if you teach him sign language he will never be able to talk.

NS: Okay.

MW: And my mother didn't know that that was ridiculous.

NS: Okay.

MW: Umm, and so they never taught him sign language.

NS: Right.

MW: So, his communication with my parents was very limited.

NS: Okay.

MW: And as soon as he could write, he wrote them notes.

NS: Right.

MW: But, uh my f--And my father hated that. Hated that he didn't learn sign language.

NS: Understandable.

MW: So, mmh, to please my father he—he learned a little.

NS: Right.
MW: But it was a sort of pigeon sign language. It wasn't using the vocabulary as it is, and that sort of thing. And sign language although it's not language, language, is a pretty f--Sophisticated way of communicating.

NS: Absolutely.

MW: And you can really communicate a lot of things, a lot of feelings, a lot of thoughts. And he never had any of that.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah. But he was very lovely to me. He was a wonderful brother. I was very lucky.

NS: That's good. Well I didn't ask you about him a lot last time.

MW: He was wonderful. He was a wonderful, wonderful brother to me.

NS: Yeah.

MW: Yeah. He-- He used to wait for me for--to everything.

NS: Really?

MW: Uh-huh.

NS: What was his name?

MW: Mel. M....

NS: Mm...

MW: ...Melvin.

NS: Melvin? Oh okay.

MW: Uh-huh.

NS: Umm, speaking of him. You mentioned that ended up going to college, part of the G.I. bill?

MW: That's right.

NS: What would--Where did he go ... 

MW: Maryland
NS: ...to coll--He went to Maryland as well. What did he take up studying?

MW: Business.


MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: Did he end up following that?

MW: Yeah.

NS: Oh okay.

MW: Yeah.

NS: What did he end up doing?

MW: He did two things. He taught business...

NS: Oh really.

MW: ...He became a teacher...

NS: Oh.

MW: ...He taught business...

NS: Yeah.

MW:....And he always had two or three businesses going.

NS: Oh really.

MW: Yeah. He did very well.

NS: Really.

MW: Unfortunately, he died young.

NS: Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

MW: Yeah. Thank you. I am too.

NS: Yeah.
MW: He was only fifty-seven when he died.

NS: Yeah that is young.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Mmm-hmm. Umm, you mentioned that, umm, your brother and yourself, went to different high schools 'cause they were segregated by, umm--by gender. Right?

MW: That's right.

NS: Oh.

MW: We both went to segregated high schools.

NS: Right. Umm...

MW: He went to, uh---This was in Baltimore. It was...

NS: Right.

MW: ... a city college. It wasn't a college, but it was called a college.

NS: Right.

MW: He went to City and I went to Western High School.

NS: Right.

MW: It was [Pauses] all girls.

NS: It-- You mentioned also last time that, uh, your high school was, uh, very diverse. It was any type of girl...

MW: That's right.

NS: ...Round. Did--Was that--Was that every a cause of threat to you?

MW: It was --It was m--Almost all academic though.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah.

NS: I understand that.
MW: No. No friction.

NS: N--Really.

MW: I never felt any. No.

NS: That's good.

MW: No. I always got along well with everybody. I was always elected a class officer.
And my, uh--And everybody in my block, you know, umm-- You have to-- I guess put it in its, uh--In it's place. I was born in thirty-three.

NS: Right.

MW: As I came to my teens, then the United States went to war.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: And my girlfriends, by in law-- That there fathers went to war.

NS: Right.

MW: Now, umm, there was a lot of, uh, huddling together and hoping for things to get better.

NS: Right.

MW: During the war itself.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: And I have a very clear memory of it and worried that [Pauses] we would be bombed that, you know, the things that we were doing to other people would happen to us.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: And so look at there was a constant worry about, uh...

NS: Really. So, you mean you clearly remember the--uh...

MW: Oh yeah.

NS: ...During World War II?
MW: Perfectly.

NS: Really. What--What other...

MW: Sure, when the war broke out-- I was born in thirty-three...

NS: Right.

MW: ...the war broke out forty-one...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ... I was about nine years old, eight...

NS: Right.

MW: ...years old. Umm, and it dominated my whole, you know, uh--From eight until thirteen or fourteen...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...when the war ended.

NS: Right.

MW: It dominated that it was total. It really was.

NS: Right. Umm, I asked, uh my grandmother the similar--Whose much older than you, but-- I asked her a question about World War II, what she remembered of it. Like, real specifically, I said...

MW: Right.

NS: ...And she said that, uh, you know, uh, the, uh--The Japanese were seen as the worst people ever for bombing Pearl Harbor.

MW: [Dr. Weinstein begins to speak] That's right. Ever. That's right.

NS: Really. And you f-- Did --Did you think that was...

MW: Yeah.

NS: Do you agree with that?

MW: I agreed with it. Yeah.
NS: Right.

MW: I agreed with it. I agree with your grandmother's memory.

NS: Right.

MW: And I also agreed with that feeling...

NS: [Nathan begins to speak] Rr...

MW: ...I hated the Japanese

NS: Right. What--Did you ever--I mean, sounds silly to ask but when did you realize that it wasn't, you know, just the Japanese-- Or did you always have that feeling--That was what they did was despicable?

MW: I h--I had that feeling...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...Until I got old enough....

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...To understand...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...What causes war.

NS: Right.

MW: And then I didn't hate the Japanese...

NS: Right.

MW: ...And I didn't hate the Germans either for that matter, even though I'm Jewish.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah.

NS: That's true. Umm, let's see. Speaking of being Jewish, were your parents observant?

MW: No they couldn't be.
NS: Right.

MW: Now we would, umm, always do the things that my mother's mother had taught her.

NS: Okay.

MW: So she would change dishes for Passover.

NS: Right.

MW: Umm, she would light the candles on the S--Friday night.

NS: The Shabbos, Right.

MW: But, she didn't know the prayer.

NS: Right.

MW: So she would just light the candles and close her eyes and pray a little.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Um, Yeah we--We were--We were as observant as Jews are these days.

NS: Yeah. That's a...

MW: Yeah.

NS: That's a good point. Umm, [pauses]

MW: But I have to tell you that...

NS: Yes.

MW: ... as soon as my mother died [Chuckles]...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Which was pretty young...

NS: Right.

MW: ...She was only fifty-four and, umm, so, uh , you know I was [Coughs] twenty. I--I was in college when she died.

NS: Right.
MW: My father immediately converted.

NS: Did he?

MW: Yeah he became a Methodist.

NS: Oh really.

MW: It was a very, uh, [Pauses] energetic and [Pauses] uh, communal, uh Methodist Church for the deaf. It was called Christ Church for the Deaf.

NS: Okay.

MW: In Baltimore. And my father and mother would go there now and then for their social things.

NS: Right.

MW: And as soon as my mother died, my father joined it.

NS: Really. Umm...

MW: And when he married again, uh [Pointing to a picture] that's my stepmother, that's my father.

NS: Oh okay. Yeah.

MW: [Still pointing to a picture] And my stepmother...

NS: Oh alright.

MW: [Pointing at a picture] ...And that's my mother and father over there on the right at their wedding picture.

NS: Oh okay.

MW: Uh, my father married again. He married a wonderful, wonderful woman from West Virginia.

NS: Yeah.

MW: And, deaf...

NS: Oh really.
MW: ...So-- Yeah, oh yeah, well. And uh, --And they had a lovely long marriage. They were married about eighteen years.

NS: Right.

MW: Before, umm, he died.

NS: Oh okay. I see. Umm, well [pauses] he converted to be Me--Methodist...

MW: Yeah.

NS: ...And you me--You've talked about it many times, you still consider yourself Jewish.

MW: Of course. I'm very Jewish.

NS: Okay what part of being Jewish played in your life?

MW: [Pauses]

NS: I know it's a very broad question.

MW: That really is.

NS: [Chuckles] Yeah.

MW: It's a hard question too.

NS: Okay...b...

MW: Because obviously I came from the kind of background, you know mostly what people learn about being Jewish, they learn from their parents.

NS: I would agree, yeah.

MW: And, uh, I didn't learn much of anything from my parents.

NS: Right.

MW: [Coughs] Also that was a day and age when, typically girls didn't go to Hebrew school...

NS: Right.

MW: ... and I was never Bat Mitzvah'd or anything like that.
NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Only my brother was Bar Mitzvah'd.

NS: Was he?

MW: Yeah.

NS: Okay.

MW: Yeah cau--Because my mother heard of that, you know what I mean?

NS: Right, right, right. She knew what it was.

MW: Yeah, yeah. Umm, but I felt very Jewish. I always did.

NS: Okay.

MW: And, uh, once I could re--Choose my own reading and do stuff like that, I read a lot about being Jewish.

NS: Really.

MW: I think I knew a lot.

NS: Huh.

MW: I also think it's what led me to, uh, concentrate so much of my academic efforts in Christianity. That's sounds silly that I didn't do it in Judaism, but...

NS: [Nathan begins to speak] No it doesn't at all.

MW: ...In-- In Christianity...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...because I think by then I was experienced in knowing how to study of--Study religion.

NS: Right.

MW: And so you know I was a Reformation scholar.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah. Right.
NS: Now I-- I know exactly what you are talking about cause I usually focus a lot of what I learned among-- Well a lot of it's social, but a lot of social revolves around, uh, religion too...

MW: Yeah.

NS: ...As far as history. I'd like to learn why people do things the-- The way they do...

MW: Right. Right.

NS: ...And a lot of times were religiously motivated. Umm, okay like you said, you consider yourself Jewish, ah...

MW: Now I have to tell you....

NS: Oh.

MW: ...I've never married but I have an adopted daughter...

NS: Right.

MW: ...Who considers herself Jewish.

NS: Does she?

MW: Yeah. Now I didn't raise her Jewish. I raised her Jewish to the extent that, you know...

NS: Like cultural things?

MW: Cultural things.

NS: Okay.

MW: That's right, but umm, the school that she goes to-- That she's graduating from. Woodland...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ... is full of Jewish kids.

NS: Is it?

MW: And all her girlfriends are Jewish.
NS: Oh really.

MW: And so when she would mingle with them, she became more and more Jewish. So she considers herself Jewish.

NS: Does she?

MW: Yeah. Uh-huh. And it's my belief because when we filled out her applications for college...

NS: Right.

MW: ...It's very unusual for Penn State Main Campus...

NS: Uh-huh.

MW: ... To accept kids from this area.

NS: Really?

MW: Mmm-hmm.

NS: I didn't know that.

MW: They don't go to the Main Campus because there's a campus in Delaware County.

NS: Right. Or in Abington too.

MW: They send you there. And Abington.

NS: Yeah.

MW: They send you there, to those campuses.

NS: Right.

MW: Which also have to be filled up. You know they...

NS: Oh.

MW: ...Put up two hundred thousand at the Main Campus....

NS: Right.

MW: ... if they let it.
NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Umm, and in her essay she talked about being Black and Jewish.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: Uh, and what those things meant to her...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...In her college essay and within a week [Chuckles] she got accepted to Penn State.

NS: Yeah.

MW: Yeah, so that was a-- I think it made-- It made a difference, her consciousness of being Jewish and Black.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Certainly. Umm, let's see. You said that you didn't raise her Jewish, but she--I mean culturally you did--D--Do you think that she just--She decided to practice Judaism because of...

MW: She's never practiced.

NS: Oh. It's just--It's just...

MW: It's just cultural.

NS: ...Cultural.

MW: Right. Right.

NS: Okay.

MW: She's a--A Matzah Jew. You know she...

NS: Yeah.

MW: Yeah. So no, she doesn't know anything, but she knows very little whenever I say to her-- My next neighbor is my childhood friend...

NS: Oh okay.
MW: ...She was my roommate in college...

NS: Oh really.

MW: ...And everything. Yeah and...

NS: How 'bout that.

MW: ...She's Althea's godmother.

NS: Oh okay.

MW: And she's very Jewish. Her nephew's a Rabbi and...

NS: Oh really.

MW: ... Right.

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: And she, uh, she usually goes with Jewish questions to Eileen, to ask her.

NS: Right.

MW: But I-- She wasn't raised Jewish. She just wasn't. She watched it. She observed it.

NS: Okay.

MW: And I would say ninety percent of her friends are Jewish.

NS: Right. Partly cause of the school she's in.

MW: And the first boy she was really serious about...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...uh, was from Puerto Rico.

NS: Really.

MW: ...Raised by a Jewish family.

NS: Oh really.

MW: Adopted by a Jewish family.
NS: How 'bout that.

MW: So there's circumstances seem to them to be identical. And that they were sort of meant for each other.

NS: Yeah.

MW: Cause they broke up.

NS: Yeah well.

MW: [Laughing-trails off]

NS: [Nathan begins to speak] I guess they weren't meant for--Yeah.

MW: Yeah.

NS: But still that's interesting similarity. Umm, well like I said, umm, Do you consider yourself observant, as far as Jewish goes?

MW: No. I don't. I--I know I'm not.

NS: Okay.

MW: I know I'm not.

NS: Okay.

MW: Yeah. I mean I...

NS: [Nathan trails off]

MW: ...just had a lunch, uh, which I just finished as you were coming in...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...of, uh, Gefilte Fish and Matzah, but...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...No, I'm not observant. I'm not.

NS: Do you keep Passover?

MW: Yeah, mmm-hmm.
NS: Oh do you? Well, your lunch.

MW: Yeah. Yeah. But it's so easy to keep.

NS: Really I don't think it's easy.

MW: Well it's easy. You know, you don't have to make the Matzah yourself, I mean...

NS: That's true.

MW: ... I had chicken.

NS: That's true.

MW: You know and the Gel--Gefilte fish, although it's Kosher for Passover, came out of a jar.

NS: That's true.

MW: Right. So, and it's so--It's easy now to keep...

NS: I--There are a lot more choices, I've learned. I've seen.

MW: Yes. Yes.

NS: Yes. Umm, okay, so overall, you said religion played a part in your life, as far as your studies and I guess culturally?

MW: Yes culturally. Culturally it really did. And also, it--Really I did choose to, umm, to be a historian of...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ...Religion.

NS: Right. Okay. Umm, you mentioned in your article, that I showed you last time, uh, "What's a Nice Jewish Girl Like Me Doing in a Place Like This."

MW: Yeah, Right, uh-huh.

NS: Umm, that you were concerned with being Jewish at a Catholic school...

MW: Right.

NS: ... As well as being a woman at an all boy's school.
MW: Right.

NS: Which of the two aspects, do you think, was more accepted?

MW: More accepted?

NS: More accepted.

MW: The fact that I was a woman didn't seem to matter...

NS: Okay.

MW: ... At La Salle.

NS: Mmm-hmm. Right.

MW: Now I taught six years at Temple, before I went to La Salle.

NS: Yeah how 'bout there?

MW: [Pauses] No, no that was an awful-- I didn't like-- I really didn't like Temple.

NS: No I know you didn't.

MW: And, uh I don't have happy memories--I don't have any memories of it. I really wiped it out of my head.

NS: Right.

MW: Yeah.

NS: Except for Bill Cosby.

MW: That's right. That's right. Well that was fun. That was a whole lot of fun.

NS: Yes. I understand.

MW: He was a really neat guy.

NS: Yeah.

MW: Yeah. And I never would've met him at La Salle, he would've-- A boy like that would never have gone to a Catholic school.

NS: How—Wait, why do you say that? I'm just curious.
MW: Well because he's from a very fundamentalist, Protestant family. I don't think his parents would've let him go to Catholic school.

NS: It's possible. I was just curious. Yeah.

MW: That's what I'm guessing. Yeah.

NS: Okay.

MW: Umm, At La Salle I really was so different...

NS: Mmm-hmm.

MW: ... When I started teaching there...

NS: Yeah.

MW: ...That I-- I can hardly choose which thing it was that they found cute.

NS: Okay.

MW: That I was Jewish, that I was a woman...

NS: Right.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION FROM SECOND INTERVIEW]