

BARNARD COLLEGE CLASS OF 1971 ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The Reminiscences of

Lynne Haims

2015

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Lynne Haims conducted by Frances Garrett Connell on January 30, 2015. This interview is part of the Barnard Class of 1971 Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Barnard Alumni Class of 1971 Oral History Project

Interviewee: Lynne Haims

Location: Silver Spring, MD

Interviewer: Frances Garrett Connell

Date: January 30, 2015

00:00:03 Q: This is an interview with Lynne Haims, taking place in Silver Spring, MD on January 30, 2015 at her home in Silver Spring, Maryland. So, we will begin. This is for the BC Voices, Inc., the Oral History Project of the Barnard [College] Class of 1971. So Lynne, good to see you.

Haims: Good to see you, too.

00:00:30 Q: Can we start by asking you a little bit about your early life? So, what was your life like as a child? Can we talk a little bit about your parents? Wherever you want to start.

Haims: Okay. I was born in Hartford, CT, the oldest child of, eventually, a family of four children, and my father was a podiatrist, and my mother was an elementary school teacher before she got married and started having kids. We lived in a lovely little suburb of Hartford called West Hartford. At the time that I lived there, it was very rural. There was a windmill just down the street; there was one corner grocery store that had monkeys in the back. I remember that very clearly, and a pasture with cows grazing, which subsequently turned into a subdivision with houses that all matched each other. So it was—I wouldn't call it an idyllic childhood. My oldest brother had serious emotional problems, which impacted the whole family. My parents didn't quite know how to cope with all this, and I focused on being the 'good child,' the one who excelled in school, listened to the teacher, sat quietly with hands folded. And I did that very well, and probably the happiest I was as a kid was being in school. I really

loved being there because it was quiet. No one harassed me, and it was a lovely, lovely place to be. And my teachers all really were happy to have a quiet child who sat there and did what she was told. So I experienced a great deal of success academically, which, of course, feeds on itself. And, let me think, what else was important about my childhood? I had a few close friends, but basically, I was focused on school and on doing well, and making my parents happy, so that there would be at least one thing in my life that wasn't chaotic.

00:02:50 Q: That's a pretty powerful beginning. So, this was in Hartford, CT, and was this relationship with your brother, did it continue to impact your life?

Haims: Yes, it did. It was difficult until he finally passed away.

00:03:19 Q: Can you talk a little more about your parents. You told me about their professions, but in terms of your relationship with them—

Haims: Sure.

00:03:25 Q: And what they were doing and where they came from, and all that.

Haims: Both of my parents were first-generation Americans. Both sets of grandparents had come over from the Old Country, my father's parents from Romania, my mother's: one from Poland and one from Russia. And my mother's parents met in the U.S. when they both came over. Both of my parents came

from immigrant households and grew up in Yiddish-speaking homes. My mother didn't know any English until she started school, at age five. That's when she learned English, and then she came home and taught her younger siblings. There were six children in her family. She was the oldest of the six, so she taught them how to speak English. And I think that is why she decided to become a teacher, because she had been a teacher from the age of five.

She was a very bright and upbeat woman. She was definitely a “glass half-full” kind of person. She always looked for the good part of any situation, the good part of any person, and she had a tremendous impact on me, both because she did not think it was odd for me to be a high-achieving academic girl, because she had been herself a high-achieving academic girl. When I was in high school, a senior in high school, she was diagnosed with cancer, and at that point they gave her a month to live. And she lived for fifteen years, fifteen years, because—I was the oldest, a senior in high school, my youngest brother was eight at the time—and she was not ready to go. And she just hung on there until all of us were settled in life. The last of my brothers to get married got married, and a few months later she died, having prepared a whole notebook of materials, her favorite poems, whom she wanted invited to her funeral, a collection of Lipton tea tags that she had saved, because she really liked Lipton tea tags, so it's a really powerful example of a strong womanhood. And that was very influential for me.

My dad was the youngest of four. Looking back on it, it is clear to me that he would have been perfectly happy staying home and taking care of the kids and baking bread and planning meals. The things that he loved to do were based around the home, and after he retired he took a lot of baking classes. He really became an expert in French bread, and looking back on it, from my perspective now,

it seems backwards that there was my mother, this very high-achieving intellectual person home with her kids, and never complaining about it. I mean, that's what you did in the fifties. And there was my dad going off to work every day, and really he would have been happy staying at home and baking bread. And also, he really had a lot of trouble having a high-achieving daughter. He really would have preferred if I had been more social, more 'normal.' I remember when I got my acceptance to grad school with a full fellowship, I called them up to tell them, and my mother was, of course, excited, and my father said, “Well, we wish you really would just get married now.” So, now that I look back on it from my vantage point, I mean, you know, we're all formed by our past and our history and what are the expectations of people around us, and they did the best they could with what they had.

00:07:25 Q: Now, was there ever a time when you were growing up when you felt that your family, that you, were different from the people around you?

Haims: I never really thought about it. When you—from what I've read, subsequently, not at the time, but from what I have read subsequently, it is very common to assume that every family is just as crazy as the one you are in. And I just didn't question it. It's very interesting to me because, of course, at Barnard I was taught to question so many things, but it never occurred to me to question the way my family was operating. That's the way it was, and I just had to make the best of it.

00:08:16 Q: So, prior to college, and when you were growing up, being a high-achieving academic young woman, who was probably most influential in your life, and can you share anything about an early mentor?

Haims: Well, there was my English teacher in the twelfth grade, who was really phenomenal. He saw something in my writing that I don't think anyone else saw, and he spent a lot of time with me, before school, after school, helping me polish things. I was writing essays for—not Barnard, because they didn't require essays to go to Barnard—but I was writing essays for various scholarships and he spent a tremendous amount of time with, not writing it for me, but talking with me about how to structure such an essay, how to find a topic for such an essay, and I had never had anybody—I had lots of teachers praising my work, but I had never had anyone working with me in that kind of collaborative way. And it was really very powerful, and somehow I sensed that this was what was going to happen in college, too. That this was a prelude, a preview, of what I was going to see in college; and it excited me tremendously.

00:09:54 Q: So were there particular activities that you were involved in in high school, in middle school?

Haims: I played the violin, starting in the fourth grade, so I was in the school orchestra. Whatever school had an orchestra, I was in it. I ended up by my senior year—amazingly, because I didn't practice as much as I probably should have—but I ended up assistant concert mistress of the orchestra. We had a string quartet that went around to the other classes in the school, giving demonstrations, and I was in the All-Connecticut Orchestra, which was kids from all over the state, so that was really fun. I really enjoyed that. And I got to wear a long evening gown with the final concert of the All-Connecticut Orchestra, so that was exciting. I, also—I was president of the O-20s Library Club, because my mother

and I had marked out my life's story when I was in the seventh grade. We had decided that I was going to go to Barnard, major in English, and become a librarian. So I kept right on track for that plan except for the part about majoring in English and becoming a librarian. I did go to Barnard. But, anyway, so I was president of the library club. We organized all the student aides. I also was in the Latin Club, the French Club, Yearbook. I knew that I needed a lot of activities in order to be accepted to college, so I checked off all those boxes.

00:11:38 Q: Did you continue with your music at all?

Haims: At Barnard, I had many good friends, two of whom were very musical, and we used to play together in the Parlor, in the dorm, just for ourselves. I played the violin, and there was a cellist and a pianist, and we used to do little concerts for ourselves, and it was really fun. I really liked that I could continue doing something with the violin, even though I wasn't in the orchestra at Columbia, or anything like that. But that was really fun.

00:12:17 Q: Let's go back a little bit. So can you tell me, even earlier than high school, you were in the same town all through school—

Haims: Yes, we were in the same town, same house, everything.

00:12:19 Q: Okay. So what was the elementary school layout? What was it like? In terms of the kinds of kids that were there? And maybe for middle school and high school?

Haims: When I was born, I lived in an apartment in Hartford without central heating, and we moved to the house that I grew up in when I was two. And my parents picked that particular house because it was supposed to be across the street from the elementary school that was supposed to be built. This was a new subdivision, so everything was mapped out, where it was going to be, although nothing was there when my parents moved into that house. So, they did, in fact, build the elementary school right across the street. It also contained the junior high. So I walked across the street to school from kindergarten through ninth grade. And the kids were kids from the local neighborhood. The neighborhood we lived in was nicknamed “The Reservation,” because all of the street names were after Indians, so we lived on Mohawk Drive, and there was Mohegan Drive and Seminole Drive, et cetera, et cetera. And most of these Indian-named streets were filled with Jewish people. So just about everyone I went to school with was middle-class and Jewish, and on Jewish holidays—I mean, I wasn't in school, but they told me—that there was no one in school. The teachers were Jewish, the kids were Jewish. There were no black kids in the school, until I think in the eighth grade, ninth grade, one black family moved in. And that was an innovation. We just never really—everyone was the same.

00:14:43 Q: That's a good picture. Maybe this question doesn't even apply, but were there any instances that you recall, any time before you went off to college, when you were bullied or treated badly by someone because of who you were?

Haims: I was a very quiet, bookish kid, and also it was very easy to get me to cry. There were a few kids who subsequently became very good friends of mine, who got a certain amount of pleasure from

teasing me, because I didn't know that you are not supposed to react, so I reacted, and that sort of fed the excitement of teasing me. But nobody stuffed me in a locker, nobody poured substances over my head. I just was—you know, I would be walking down the street and someone would stand in front of me, and I'd try to walk around and they would move right in front of me again and I didn't know what to do, so stood there frozen, starting to cry. But, I didn't tell my parents about this, because it seemed like, I mean, even at an early age, it seemed to me that their burden was pretty heavy, and I just didn't want to add to it.

Q: Yes. In those days we carried those huge—we all carried our books with us. There were no backpacks, and it would have been very easy to bump someone, and what do you do? Anyway, it puts us in a different era.

So, was there a special friend about whom you want to share a story? An experience during those years?

Haims: Well, it's not one of the very early years, but when I went off to high school, which in those days was tenth through twelfth, when I went off to the tenth grade, we were all in Honors classes together, tracked together, and there was a woman who came from one of the other junior high schools that fed into my high school. I sensed that this time, of moving to a bigger high school, with kids coming in from different parts of town, was an opportunity for me to begin to reinvent myself, and that was very important to me, because I really felt that there was really no one who truly understood who I was. I mean, they knew I was good in school, and I got a lot of credit for that, but no one knew that I

had—a wicked sense of humor or any of the stuff that makes me who I am. But one of my friends, one of my new friends, came from a different part of town—her name is Judy. Judy and I were tracked together in all these classes, and we ended up dissecting a fetal pig together in biology class—the pig’s name was Jessica—and that sort of experience really bonds you; and Judy, also—she was quiet, she was smart, but she had a wicked sense of humor, too, and we would hang out after school together, and we would read Stephen Leacock stories together, and we would just laugh, and laugh, and laugh. It was so much fun. And again, this really cemented my thinking that if I could end up in a place with bright women, I would be okay because I could see that I could be myself, I could have fun, I could relax, and I could still get A's in class.

So it was really—I would say that that friendship, which continues to today—yes, we're still good friends, and she lives not too far from here—was really very central. Judy and I talk just about every morning to this day. It's really fun.

00:18:56 Q: So, did you ever do dating in high school? Did you date in high school?

Haims: Oh, you’ve got to be kidding.

Q: It wasn't your style.

Haims: I would have liked to, but no one seemed particularly interested. When I was in the seventh grade, they had the seventh grade dances, and someone asked me to the dance, and I was really excited.

And my mother was like, “You can't go to the dance,” and I said, “But, mom, I want to go.” So finally she relented and let me go, but of course in the seventh grade, the boys stood on one side of the room, and the girls stood on the other side of the room, and I remember there was a big controversy. “Was I supposed to stand next to him on the boys' side? Or was he going to stand next to me on the girls' side?” So, finally, he stood on the boys' side, and I stood on the girls' side, and that was the date.

But once I got—my mother used to always say this to me, because I think she must have had this experience—“But once you get to college, it will be different.” So I had a lot of “differences” saved up.

00:20:06 Q: So your mother, I think was a large influence on you.

Haims: Tremendous.

00:20:12 Q: She modeled so much. Was there, in the relationship between your mom and your dad, was there ever any experience you want to share, that indicated, maybe, how challenging her life was? You've already mentioned the brother, which was huge.

Haims: That was a huge challenge. Well, it was the fifties, so when something would happen at home, my mother would say, 'I'm going to tell your father when he gets home.' I mean, he was not a beloved figure. He was a feared figure. Really. If he would move his hand—he never actually would hit me with the belt, but he hit my brothers with the belt—and when his hand would move toward the belt buckle, when he was talking to me, I would be like, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry!' I didn't even know what I had

done, or possibly could have done, because I was so good, but I didn't want to be hit. But that's not the question that you asked.

Q: Well, it sort of relates.

Haims: Yes. They were definitely together. It wasn't the sort of thing where if I didn't like the answer I got from my dad, I could go to my mother, or vice versa. They definitely stood together, but they weren't a huggy-kissy kind of family. They weren't an emotional kind of family. They were a couple. They knew what they needed to do, they knew their responsibilities, and they were going to carry out their responsibilities. And we had responsibilities, too, as children, and we were supposed to carry out our responsibilities.

00:21:50 Q: Were you close to any of your other siblings?

Haims: Well, I definitely was not close to the brother who was closest in age because he made my life a living hell. The next brother down was seven years younger. My first brother and I are fifteen months apart; then there's a gap; then I had a brother who was seven years younger than me, and then a brother nine years younger than me. So Howard and Mark, these two younger brothers—by that point Ronald had figured out that he got more mileage teaching Mark, the youngest one, to torment Howard, the one who was two years older, than doing it himself. By doing it by proxy, he still had the satisfaction of making somebody's life miserable, but he wasn't doing it himself, so he wasn't getting quite as much blame.

So that was the dynamic between the two of them, and my brother Mark, when he graduated from high school and spent a year in Israel before he started college, wrote to me and said, “I'd like to become closer.” That was extraordinary, extraordinary. It never had occurred—you know when you grow up in a dysfunctional situation like this, so many things don't occur to you because you're just trying to make it through the day. And it never occurred to me that I could change any part of it. So I was really stunned and touched and pleased and—I can't think of the whole panoply of words—I felt so much that he reached out to me in that way, and we are the only two siblings left at this point. Ronald and Howard both passed away. But Mark and I continue to be very close now. And Howard and I became closer over the years, but I think—you know each of us was damaged in a certain way by living with this kind of dysfunction in the family. And I think Howard was—I think we were all damaged in a certain way, and some of the damage that was done to Howard was too hard for me to deal with. Anyway, let's go on.

00:24:40 Q: Yes. That's a very hard thing to have gone through, much less to have to talk about now.

Can you pinpoint a moment that really changed your life, when you felt you had escaped some of that and kind of could leave it behind you?

Haims: When I got to Barnard. During the first semester I was at Barnard, I had a single room in a suite with two roommates. We shared a bathroom. That was not a good pairing. I had written on my Barnard Housing application that I had never shared a room before, because I hadn't. So I think they thought they were doing me a favor by putting me in a single room, with my own private bath and just

two other people to deal with. But really, I had been looking forward to getting into the thick of it all. So that first semester was not my favorite semester at Barnard.

But I had met someone from Naugatuck, Connecticut, at a pre-Barnard meeting, of girls coming from the general Hartford area, and she was really lovely, and she said, “I’ll look you up when I’m at Barnard,” and she did, and I got to be friends with her and her roommates. And so what happened the second semester was that Judith’s roommate decided that she would prefer not to be in that suite that they were in, and I definitely wanted to be out of the one where I was, so we switched. So then I was in a three-room suite, two sets of bunk beds with a common study room in the middle, and it was wonderful. We were all very good students, we all studied together at the proper time, and then when study time was over, we’d climb up on top of one of the two bunk beds, and we’d sit there, and we’d eat cookies, and we’d talk into the night. It was what I had thought college would be like. And it was really, really, really wonderful. And I’d like to say it was the start of the happy part of my life.

00:27:12 Q: Thinking back to your first days at Barnard and your experience there, do you think you are the same person who walked through those gates? And if not, what would be the biggest changes?

Haims: There are so many changes. I am trying to think where to start.

Q: Take your time.

Haims: When I walked through those gates I had the hope of potential, but I didn’t know if it would be

realized or not. And now I've lived, starting from the Barnard days, I've lived a really happy life. I have wonderful friends around me that I can count on. I have a very loving family, wonderful daughter, grandchildren, fabulous husband. I live in a house which I think is really beautiful, surrounded by books. I mean, I feel when I wake up every morning I am living the dream. And before I got to Barnard, I felt I was living the nightmare. So, I am definitely not the same person.

00:28:27 Q: In terms of obstacles, are there any you haven't already voiced that you want to share? Or, maybe in the whole trajectory of your life, are there any qualities in yourself or people surrounding you, or maybe just life, that were obstacles?

Haims: I really, watching my mother in those fifteen years when she was so sick, I realized that so much—the only thing that we can control, let me start that way—The only thing that I can control is how I react to things, because life is going to throw things my way, and I don't get a choice, and it's not because I'm a good person or a bad person. I mean things just happen. Some things I have control over. I can exercise, I can eat the right diet, but if I am hit by a bus, I can't control that the bus came and hit me. So the only thing I can really control is how I react to the things that happen around me, and I try very, very hard to remember that, to remember that I'm not in control of everything. I can't be in control of everything because if I were designing a perfect world, I would be in control of everything, but that's not the way it works. So it's a lesson that I keep reminding myself of, and obviously, I'm not the quickest study in this. It's not like algebra in seventh grade, but it's still a work in progress.

00:30:21 Q: How about joy? What's the most joyful day of your life? Or period of your life?

Haims: Oh, starting from Barnard. It's really hard to choose. I loved being at Barnard. I went on to grad school, which was not so much fun, but I met my husband in the course of grad school, and a whirlwind romance which I never dreamed was possible for me, and we lead a very happy life, wonderful daughter, amazing grandchildren, all within shouting distance, three miles away. I can't believe my good luck that they're here. Relative good health, amazing friends of long duration. I mean, really, it's hard to pick one aspect of that and say, "This is the best thing that ever happened to me."

Q: Sure. I don't like those superlatives either. (00:31.23) In terms of something you were most proud of, could you pinpoint one thing?

Haims: Well, I am very proud of finishing my PhD. As has been a theme throughout this discussion, academic success was the thing that I could always count on. And, unfortunately, one of the things that I couldn't control was that my graduate school adviser became senile. That really was unfortunate. The department knew that he was senile, but he had tenure, and no one wanted to do anything about it. So I went through a very long period, where I would write a dissertation chapter, give it to him and he'd say, "This is terrible, this is awful, this is dreadful. Here is what you should do. You should do a, b, c." So I go back. I do a, b, c. I give it to him; he'd say, "This is terrible, this is awful, this is dreadful. You did a, b, c. Why did you do that? You should be doing d, e, f." And we went through the entire alphabet like that. And finally I sought advice from the department chair, and he told me what to do, and I did it, and what I was supposed to do was do something that would make my adviser resign.

So I did that, and he resigned as my adviser, and I went back to the department chair, and said, “Okay, I've done what you told me to do, now what?”

He said, “Oh, well, you can't get a PhD if you don't have an adviser.”

I was like, “Ohhh”

So, I filed suit against the university, which was very exciting, because I never file suit. And it didn't actually go to court, but they found me an adviser, and I got my PhD, and at my oral defense, the other people on the committee, the outside members, said, “This is a beautifully-written dissertation. Wow. Usually we don't see them this well-written.”

“Well,” I said, “I had time to polish it.”

But I really—I'm really very proud of that, not only for completing something that was difficult, but also for sticking to it and also for coming to the realization that it's not all about me, that everything that happens to me is not because of something I do or don't do, that sometimes there are outside forces and you can't control them. You just have to push through them or go around them or—. My fall back position before then had been, if something is not going right, I must be doing something wrong, I must try harder. But it's not always about my level of effort. And that was a valuable lesson, and I'm proud of learning that, too.

00:34:22 Q: And where were you in graduate school?

Haims: Graduate school? Johns Hopkins [University].

00:34:28 Q: And what was your dissertation on?

Haims: “Domestic Servants in Large Country Houses from 1850 to 1870.”

Q: In England?

Haims: In British History.

Q: That's right. Your specialty is British History. How interesting.

Haims: Yes. It was fun.

00:34:45 Q: Have you followed up at all? Did you do anything with your dissertation?

Haims: I put it on the shelf. I got it bound and put it on the shelf. When *Upstairs, Downstairs* was on TV, I watched it religiously. I haven't done anything with that, although the work that I do now as a book dealer—one of the things I do as a book dealer—and we sell books on history, so—as my mother-in-law always said when my husband and I first got married, “They're going to open a history store,”

and essentially that is what we've done, in that sense. But I don't do academic research anymore.

00:35:28 Q: Now, you did teach for a while, didn't you?

Haims: I taught history for a short while at University of Maryland. A short while, and then—are we moving into jobs, now? Do you want me to talk about that?

00:35:41 Q: Sure. You can talk about—It doesn't have to be a particular order.

Haims: Oh, the teaching, okay. It was clear that if I were to be teaching, I would be teaching as an adjunct professor for hither and yon, and I thought it made more sense to just have a regular job. So I started working for the Federal government and did some teaching for the government, teaching clear writing, which I felt was very useful. And now I teach adult beginners in Hebrew Conversation. And I also, this is a surprise to me, I turned into a jock in my later years. I teach water aerobics, which if you had asked me in my days in high school when I was in remedial gym, I would have said, “No way.” But here we are.

Q: Remedial gym?

Haims: Remedial gym. The only remedial class I ever had.

00:36:49 Q: So, is there anything you've done or not done in your life which you would change?

Haims: No. Because it all got me to this point, and it's a happy point to be at.

00:37:04 Q: And when you were a student, what did you want most out of life? I'd think to be a student for ever?

Haims: That was probably why I went to grad school, I would think. I mean, as I look back on it. I think my basic goal was to get the heck out of Hartford. Having accomplished that, I think anything else was gravy. I mean, as long as I had escaped the situation I was in, I didn't care particularly what I did, as long as I wasn't doing that.

00:37:53 Q: Okay. Can you tell me more specifically about arriving at Barnard? Do you remember your first day and kind of what it looked like, or smelled like, what you were wearing, what you looked like? Can you give a little vignette here?

Haims: I don't have any recollection of what I was wearing, although I'm sure it was conservative and clean. No question there. My parents drove me up. It's about a two and a half hour drive from Hartford to New York. So my parents drove me up, and I had a very small amount of stuff. My Aunt Gertrude and I had gone shopping before Barnard, and she had never actually been to college, but she helped me pick out a “college-worthy” wardrobe. I remember an orange dress, and pajamas—very brightly colored pajamas. She thought that would be appropriate for college.

And there were these sort of laundry carts that you put all your stuff in and wheeled it into the dorm. So they wheeled me into the dorm, and my room was way down the end of the hall, Hewitt Hall? Way down the hall, and it was a long, narrow hall, and we were walking and walking, pushing this thing and I thought, “Wow, will we ever get there?” And when I opened the door and saw it was just a single room, I was like, “Oh, where's my roommate?” But I remember being very excited to be there and a little bit nervous because I didn't know anybody except the people I had met at the pre-Barnard College tea. And none of them were on my hall. There were very few freshmen on that hall; it was all single rooms. So I remember it being a long, dark hall, and walking and walking and walking. What was the rest of the question? There was more—I think I've forgotten part of the question.

00:40:26 Q: No, if you just had a sense of the environment you found yourself in. And how you were feeling about what you saw. The long, dark hall, and confronting a single room was pretty potent.

Haims: I think, before that, I had fantasized that I would have this bright, shiny room with this roommate who would embrace me and say, “We're going to be best friends.” I knew I was going to be in a single room, but I guess the reality of it, you know, like it was quiet, dark, the door closed, and there's nobody there. I mean, even growing up in a dysfunctional large household, there were people around; and it was quiet, very quiet.

00:42:23: So, were there other disappointments, so you felt, “Oh, what am I doing here?”

Haims: Well, that first semester. I needed to find “my people.” And I didn't know who they were or

how to find them. So, I had made friends. I mean I wasn't alone, and the people I had met were friendly —“You want to do this, you want to do that?” I had people I was hanging out with. But in retrospect, I can see, they weren't my people, so I was a little disappointed. It felt a lot like high school—except everyone was a woman—that there were people around me, and everyone was perfectly pleasant. It's not like I sat alone at the lunch table or anything, but I thought it was going to be this sea change in my life, and that didn't happen.

And it took me a while to find my people. And to realize that I had some control over—that I didn't have to wait for people to say, “Do you want to do this?” I could go up to somebody and say, “Do you want to do this?” And then, when I got in with the group that I ultimately moved in with, second semester, that was really great. Then I felt like, “You have not made a mistake.” And the classes were always good. I never was worried about the classes. It wasn't a worry of mine that I was going to flunk out of college or I was going to discover I was really a C student. That part of my life was pretty—I felt pretty confident about that part of my life. But the social part of my life had always been the part of my life that was more difficult for me and the part that I was longing to change. So.

00:43:23 Q: Do you want to talk a little about those classes, ones that were particularly impressive to you? Or, any professors you remember with awe and respect?

Haims: Yes. The class that made the biggest impression on me that semester was Religion with Professor Gaster because I never had a class like that before. I mean, I am Jewish, I grew up going to Hebrew school for many, many years. I certainly—it was an Old Testament class—I certainly had read

the Old Testament many, many times, but never in the same way that Professor Gaster had me reading the Old Testament. And he was an amazing character. I mean, I remember him talking about how it was all written metaphors, like in English you say “Someone has the green light,” but that doesn't mean that they are holding a light that is green. It means they have the 'go-ahead,' and you have to know what these metaphors mean. And, for some reason Professor Gaster really liked me. And I remember that he wrote this note at the end of the semester, about how, you know, “If I could give out an A+ I'd give you one”—and it was really—I don't know what I did. I mean, I have no idea, because I was so awed, I just sat there quietly. But I wasn't awed when I was writing, so obviously the writing part was okay. But that was really something. And then there was the Barnard-Columbia Course Guide, and I got active in doing that on campus, and so someone had to go and ask Professor Gaster if we could pass out forms in his class. So they decided I would be the one because at this point I had already finished that first semester. And so I went to see him and asked him and he said, “Oh, for you, yes, yes.” It was really, that was really—I never had any other class with him. I was too afraid.

But that second semester Freshman year I started taking classes with Stephen Koss, who taught British History. And my original plan, as I mentioned before, was that I was going to go to Barnard, major in English, and be a librarian. So here I was at Barnard, and I wanted to be an English major, so English majors were supposed to take history classes, British history classes, so I just thought, “I'll get that out of the way,” because I knew I hated history; I always hated history. It was just so boring, all the stuff about wars, politics, I didn't like any of that. But his class was fascinating. It wasn't about wars and politics. It was interesting things about how people lived in the past. Wow. It wasn't just memorizing dates, it was cause and effect. I thought, “Wow, this is fantastic.” So I am taking that class, and a course

on Nineteenth Century Novels, at the same time, and—nineteenth century novels were my favorite. So, I thought, I'll get the history out of the way, and I'll love the Nineteenth Century Novels. And the Nineteenth Century Novels were fine, but I really loved the History. So that was when I decided I would be a British Civilization major, because you could combine the history and the English. But he was very, very, very influential on my academic decisions. And I took every class that he offered. I became a “Stephen Koss groupie.” There were a whole group of us. Anything he taught, we would take it, because he was phenomenal.

00:47:30 Q: So the day you left Barnard, what sort of adult life did you anticipate for yourself?

Haims: Well, the day that I left Barnard, I had been accepted in grad school, so I thought I would have just as much fun in grad school as I had had in college, just as positive an experience. It would just be more so; it would just be more fun. And then I would be teaching in a university, and I would have the joy of being in that fabulous academic environment for the rest of my life. And I thought, “It doesn't get any better than that.”

00:48:16 Q: Okay. Let me think. We're going to go back now—because much of the purpose of these interviews is to find people who were involved and what their information was—what their attitude rather was—toward the 1968 Strike, and so I am going to start on that little segment now and find out where you were at the time, and what you did. What was the moment when you first learned about the '68 Strike?

Haims: I think maybe when I heard the students had taken over the academic buildings. I'm not a tremendously political person now, although I live in the Washington, D.C. area, but I absolutely was not a political person then. And I wasn't paying—I probably was paying very little attention to the causes which lead up to the takeover. I don't remember knowing particularly much about the gym; I didn't know particularly much about the research that was being done on campus, so I think the first that I became truly aware of what was going on was when it was in the middle of going on. I certainly wasn't saying, "Oh, here are some causes. Let's see what effects they'll have." And I was totally mystified, puzzled, and very, very uncomfortable.

00:49:57 Q: So were you trying to remove yourself completely from it, or were you surrounded by friends who were involved in it? The sit-ins? The strikes?

Haims: I think the two women who were in my shared dorm room at the beginning—they had the double room, and I had the single room—I think they were very heavily involved. I just heard that from afar.

Q: So you really were out of your element.

Haims: Yes. But my friends were involved with some of the Columbia students—the Majority Coalition I think it was called—the guys who stood around the buildings. They'd let people out, but they wouldn't let anything in. They wanted to keep supplies from going in, so that the people who were in the buildings would not get food or whatever. So, one of my really good friends had a boyfriend who

was in that group, and we would go every night, and we'd just visit to make sure that they were standing strong, not dead on the floor. But I was just totally, totally out of my element—I'd just never seen anything like this—well, it was fairly unprecedented, I think. But I had never envisioned anything like this happening in any place I would be remotely close to. I'd gone to college to find my full self and to study hard, and to move on, and the idea of taking over the buildings, against permission, can you imagine? So the whole thing just absolutely mystified me and made me extraordinarily uncomfortable, and when classes got canceled, I'm thinking, "But I came here to study." It's an interesting experience, because when I tell people that I was at Columbia/Barnard at that time, I mean, they ask, "What did you do?" And, what did I do? I fretted.

00:52:23 Q: Do you feel that it in anyway interrupted the progress of your academics, having classes canceled—what was it, two, two and a half years that we had interruptions like that, during our four?

Haims: Yes, I think in the long run—I think in the long run, it didn't affect my formal education. I think in many ways it was a good thing for my personal education, because I think it's good, it's good to be able to deal with situations not of one's choosing. I had to deal with it because what choice did I have? So I think that was a good thing for me because, given my background, I would have preferred to just compartmentalize it to a different place, and not even think about it. That was my "go-to" method of operation for the first eighteen years of my life. Things are unhappy? Just forget about them and move on. But it's not a good long-term solution for life, so although it mystified me, puzzled me, made me feel uncomfortable, it was "good" for me. But it didn't feel good at the time.

00:53:49 Q: I mean, we were really in a very politically, racially-charged period—

Haims: I had no idea.

Q: Yes, and—

Haims: I had no idea.

Q: So how do you think, how did that impact your life, as a student, as an individual in that community? I remember our second year, was it all the African-American girls moved onto a different floor? And like, “These are my friends. What happened?” Things like that.

Haims: So, I grew up in a basically Jewish neighborhood with basically white people around me, white middle-class people, not even poor people, not even poor white people. Middle-class white people all around me, so it was a huge part of my education. But not—it wasn't what I signed up for, what I thought I was signing up for, but I'm not glad that these problems existed. But I'm glad that my eyes were opened to the existence of these problems. So, but, it really was tough.

00:55:00 Q: Is there anything else you want to say more about the Strike? Or that whole experience that we haven't covered yet?

Haims: I think I've—yes.

00:55:10 Q: How about when you were outside of the campus there was a lot going on. Were there particular political events that resonated in your life, or that somehow you were aware of and wanted to follow up on?

Haims: Yes. There was a March on Washington our Senior year to protest the war, the Vietnam War, and I went to that, which—believe me—the Freshman me would never have gone to that. I went to that, and I rode on the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] bus, and I remember they were asking for volunteers, because they needed a certain number of people from every bus to get arrested. So they were looking for volunteers. I did not volunteer. And I also brought travelers' checks, so if I was not able to get back on the SDS bus, I could get back on the train, which is what I ended up doing.

Q: Were they all arrested? Was no one left on the bus?

Haims: Whoever was signed up to be arrested on the bus got arrested. I mean, they were not close friends, but it was a cheap way to get to Washington still.

But when I went to Barnard, my parents were very big on the authority of the parents in the household, the authority of the government over the citizens of a country, and so when I went off to college—

Q: Good Confucians.

Haims: When I went off to college, I agreed with my parents. If the President said we needed to fight this war, we needed to fight this war. And that's all there is to it. End of discussion. But by the time I got to Senior year, my thinking on that subject had changed, and so I don't think I ever told my parents that I had gone on the March, but I did go on the March. And I collected signatures at Times Square, signatures against the War, so I believe that although I was confused, disconnected, et cetera, et cetera, I think that ultimately it was a very important period of awakening for me.

00:57:28 Q: Did you, do you remember the Summer of '68 in particular? Assassination, in the spring, then summer, Martin Luther King, [Jr.], [John F.] Kennedy?

Haims: You know, I don't. It's really—I think about that often, because when we first got married and moved here, the U Street Corridor in Washington still had not come back to what it had been. And I thought to myself, “How could I not have been—.” I mean, I was an adult; I wasn't a kid. How could I not have known this was going on? I didn't. That summer I was back home. If I was back home, my parents didn't watch the news, I did what my parents did. I was in my parents' house, so I did what my parents did. So, no, I have no memory.

00:58:42 Q: Fair enough. So that kind of covers the politics at least of 1967-71. So after that—I think you have already answered this, but how was your adult life and the life you anticipated the day you left Barnard, and how has it differed?

Haims: I think I—

Q: —I think you answered that.

00:58:59 Q: If you could go back to Barnard your first day and whisper words of wisdom in the ear of that young girl, what would they be?

Haims: Relax and have fun.

00:59:11 Q: Okay. We just started to touch your career and your work history. Could you think of some particular highlights, a time when you thought, “I just love what I'm doing. I'm glowing, during those periods.” And also, go into your whole book company, and how you became involved in it.

Haims: Well, okay. So, after I finished my courses at Hopkins, I taught for a semester at University of Maryland; then I started working for the Federal government. I was a management analyst, which is like an in-house efficiency expert, first at the Bureau of Engraving—and there was nothing remotely satisfying about that job, where I stayed for a year and two weeks and then moved on to another job at the National Archives. And that job was really fun. It had nothing to do with history. I was an in-house efficiency expert, and we traveled around to different government agencies helping them to develop training, and systems to help them to manage their records, and it was really fun because there were all these new, different, challenging things, and I got to teach the clear writing courses, which I really loved.

And then my husband and I started the book business, shortly after we both started working full-time, thinking that it would be something that I could do once children arrived. But the children took their time in arriving. So we had the book business going for a number of years until we finally adopted our daughter. And then I started working full-time in the book business. I really, really, really loved being at home with my daughter and also having an outlet for more intellectual pursuits, and I love working for myself; I love setting my own schedule. The original plan was I would stay home for “x” number of years, then go back to work. And our daughter is thirty-one now, and I’m still at home because I really love working for myself. And I really love the fact that my husband and I built something together, not just on a personal level, but also on a professional level. And so I would say, that really gives me a great deal of satisfaction and pride. And fear, as I think about winding it down, now we’re in our mid-sixties. We won’t be living in a house filled with 100,000 books forever. Now we have to sell them all. But I try not to focus on that, because—

Q: You're still young.

Haims: Right. Thus far everything has worked out. So it’ll work out.

01:02:15 Q: Talk a little more about the business itself. What does it entail? What would a typical day, or an atypical day be for you?

Haims: Okay. Well, my husband and I are both trained historians. I’m a social historian and he’s a military and political historian, and he’s the one who collected the books. So the books are on military

and political history, which is not my favorite part of history, you may remember, which is why I always thought I hated history. But anyway, so we have the 100,000 books in the house and sell them online. We have our own website. We publish on Amazon.com, Inc. and various other places. Customers contact us. We sell them the books, send them out. So, I like dealing with the customers. I like helping them find things. You know, they'll say, "I'm looking for a book on xyz," and I help them locate that book. I can tell them pros and cons of different things, because, in studying, in reading all those books for exams in grad school; I learned how to skim, compare and contrast, and all those skills come into play. And I like having the flexibility. I feel like taking a walk now, so I'm just going to leave in the middle of the day, take a walk for two hours, and then come back. And I get to set my own schedule; I get to do things as I like. I don't have to worry about office politics. It's all the nice parts of work without the bad parts of work.

01:04:06 Q: What do you think was the best part of it? Was it the beginning, starting up, being involved in that kind of a creative endeavor, or has it been maintaining it over the years? What intrigued you the most about this particular kind of work?

Haims: I tend to be a person who gets nervous at beginnings. So, for my husband, I think that probably was the most exciting part, because we were creating something completely new. He loves that sort of adventure. I'm more—"I got it on an even keel. It's running well. I know how to keep it going." To me, that kind of stability and flow is really lovely. So that's what I like. And the starting it up was stressful, and the shutting it down, the prospect of shutting it down is also stressful, but my husband is not worried, so I'm just going to leave it in his hands. What can I do?

01:05:26 Q: Okay. So are there things that you—well, again, another focus of much of these interviews is to get a sense of what the times we grew up in and matured in, even so looking at race, and class and gender, and our particular perspective, your particular perspective on that. So how, having come from a pretty homogeneous background, and then finding your people at Barnard, what kinds of relationships or friendships did you have with people who were different than you while you were at Barnard?

Haims: Well, I had a lot of close relationships with people who were not Jewish. That was not a huge change, because in the high school there were kids from other parts of West Hartford, so there were other non-Jewish kids, but my mother was always very clear, you know, like, “Stick to your own.” In high school, I stuck more to my own. In college, it was like, “My mother is not even going to know.” So I definitely did forge more relationships with people who were white and not Jewish. I knew black students. We certainly didn't have any problems, but I wouldn't say those were my close friends. And I never discussed racial issues with them. Never. I just—I felt uncomfortable discussing the issues. I knew, I mean, I understood as well as any white Jewish person could, what the issues were. I went to the meetings with Barnard Soul Sisters. I mean, I tried to educate myself, but it was more of an academic exercise than a personal connection. So, then, as far as class issues, I didn't know very many people who weren't middle-class. I didn't meet those people at Barnard either. But my awareness of women's issues really grew astronomically. I mean, I'd had these glimmerings of feelings, like—I remember my father telling me clearly—a friend of mine was asking me for help with math, a male friend of mine. My father said to me afterward, “Never let a boy know that you're smarter than he is.” And it was like, “But I am. I know the answer.” And it really made me want to be at a women's college.

From a very young age I knew that I was meant to be at women's college. I was meant to be with other women, and I was meant not to hide who I was, which I was quite adept at doing. I mean, like keeping a lot of stuff inside.

So I would say, of the areas that you listed, the women's awareness part really blossomed at Barnard.

Really blossomed.

01:08:57 Q: And do you think, since Barnard, you had experiences you want to share about further discrimination? You were ready to shrug off this, somewhat, putting-down by your father, because you were the oldest, and the smartest, and you were female. But are there other experiences where you felt, “Because I am a woman, I'm not really getting equal shrift here,” things in which you were discriminated against?

Haims: Well, I think that is another reason why I really like working for myself because the only person who can discriminate against myself is me, and to some extent my husband, but he's not that guy. So I remember when I was working for the government, little vignettes where people didn't listen to what I was saying because I can be rather soft-spoken. But that was very frustrating for me, and sometimes I would just keep saying the same thing, over and over, until somebody male heard it, caught on, and said it. And that was very frustrating, but I didn't want—one of the things I learned in my family was not to rock the boat, so I didn't want to rock the boat. And I guess I would say to myself in those cases, “Your point has gotten across. Let it go.” I don't know if that's the right thing to say, but—my point had gotten across.

01:10:48 Q: In your choice, were you looking at other women's colleges when you looked at Barnard?

Haims: Barnard was my one and only choice.

01:10:53 Q: And how did you know about Barnard?

Haims: One of my other aunts lived in New York, and she knew people, who knew people, who had been to Barnard. And it had a fabulous reputation then, as it does now. I also looked at Douglass, the women's college at Rutgers. I applied to Barnard Early Decision. If I hadn't been accepted, then I would have gone to Rutgers. My Aunt Gertrude, the one who went shopping for suitable college clothes with me, felt that because my mother was sick, that I shouldn't leave West Hartford to go to Barnard, and so she was pushing for me to go to Hartford College for Women, which was the two-year college of one of the women's colleges in Massachusetts—I can't remember which one now. Anyway, that would have meant living at home. That way I could stay home, take care of my mother, and take care of my brothers. And after my mother was dead, then I could go off and do what I wanted to do. Because we thought she had only a month to live. But she didn't.

01:12:07 Q: What a dramatic time.

Haims: Horrible, horrible. Incredible.

01:12:11 Q: It speaks to your strength that you got well beyond it.

Haims: But I still talk about it.

Q: No, we don't forget those things.

01:12:23 Q: Okay, let's look again at this whole political and social activism. Can you tell me about a time when you decided to become involved in a cause? Not at Barnard necessarily, but in the rest of your life. All those years since.

Haims: Well, yes, I did get involved with the anti-war movement, getting petitions, going to rallies, while I was at Barnard. At Hopkins—Hopkins was—if I had been an undergraduate at Hopkins—if I had been a high school graduate going to Hopkins, I would have fit right in, because it was a very apolitical place. It was really funny, because, having come from Barnard-Columbia to Hopkins, the Hopkins students, they were all just studying, studying, studying. And the University of Maryland students are shutting down Route 1. They're lying in the middle of the street. And everyone I talked to at Hopkins was like, “Gosh, the University of Maryland students, they're crazy. They're lying in the middle of Route 1.” So I ended up in a very apolitical environment, and I wasn't political there.

As an adult, I'm involved with the civic association here, and served, was on the Board of Directors and an officer—not now, but in the past, and very aware and involved in my community. It's not a high level of intentional involvement, but it's a connection to try to make this a better place.

01:14:27 Q: How about the whole Women's Movement? Did that ever intersect with your life?

Haims: It is my life.

Q: It is your life.

Haims: Yes, the freedom that I had to pursue academics at a high level, and then to pursue childcare at a high level. I mean, that is the women's movement. I feel so blessed that I live at this time, that I could do both of those things and get great pleasure and joy out of both of those things.

01:15:09 Q: And this was not an option for your mother in the fifties, clearly. So you are the antithesis there.

Haims: Yes, I think a lot sometimes about how different her life would have been if she had been a generation younger because I think she would have had a lot of experiences similar to mine. I think we were in many ways different but in many ways alike. And I wish she could have had those experiences. Both for herself, and also because I think she would have enriched the world, which she did on a very small scale, but it would have been a little bit bigger.

01:15:53 Q: I think you may have already answered this, but let me go ahead and put it point blank again. How do you conceive of yourself as a woman, and how has that changed over time?

So much—you have a very strong core which you have expressed quite well—so this may be somewhat circuitous, repetitious.

Haims: Yes. I have always been from an early age aware that I am a girl/woman. I mean it never was something that I tried to avoid or ignore. I mean it was always something in my face, in one way or another. And for a while I dealt with it by trying to submerge and be quiet. And then I tried to deal with it by being more out there and in front. Now, I just am. It's very clear to me that I'm a woman with a strong core, and I'm proud of being that woman, and I don't hide from it. I don't run from it. I don't throw it in your face. I just am.

01:17:13 Q: Have you ever had any regrets not forcing yourself through the academic world—

Haims: No.

Q: As part of an institution?

Haims: No. No, if it had worked out, I think it would have been fun, and I think I would have done well, but it didn't work that way, but what I ended up with is wonderful. I mean—

01:17:37 Q: Do you want to talk a little more about the whole experience of raising your daughter, and also of running the book company and having involvements in civic associations and such? Balancing—and you were on some board for Barnard—

Haims: I was on the Barnard in Washington Board for a while.

Q: So all of these things were big in your life.

Haims: Yes. It's a really big challenge. I like to think that I have really good time management skills and organizational skills, but it is a challenge, and I continue to face that challenge. Now I'm balancing grandmothering, and it's wonderful to have that “problem,” because most of my friends have grandchildren far away, and they don't get to see them as often as I get to see mine. And I'm very, very grateful for that. My daughter is constantly calling me, saying, “Can you do this, can you do that?” Because she's working full-time, and she's balancing two children. So it goes on into the next generation. And I would like to think that at some point there will be some more systemic way of handling this. It seems—thinking as someone who was formally a management analyst—it seems very inefficient to me. And there has to be a better way to do this, but in the absence of that, we just plug along.

It's very, very challenging, because there are only the twenty-four hours in the day. And I find what happens is I do the things that I have to do, for work, or to keep the health department from shutting us down, and I don't have the time to do the things I really want to do, that are really important to me, meeting a friend for lunch, sitting down with a novel and just reading from start to finish. I just don't have the time, or I can't seem to locate the time. And it's frustrating to me, and I don't know at what point in my life, I'm going to be able to make the time. And that's still a work in progress, too.

01:20:13 Q: I see I skipped here. You mentioned your—sort of the rapidity of your relationship in graduate school with your husband. Do you want to say a little more about that relationship and how it evolved? How satisfying it's been over the years?

Haims: Oh, I like telling this story. So I was in London doing research on my doctoral dissertation, and living in Goodenough House, which is a graduate housing for American and Commonwealth female students. And across the square, Mecklenburg Square, from there is London House, which is graduate housing for American and Commonwealth male students. And on carefully selected occasions, the men and the women would be brought together for a series of sherry parties. So I met my husband at one of those sherry parties, and—he seemed okay—and he asked me out to dinner I had met other guys that evening who seemed a lot more interesting—but my mother had always said to me, “You must take the first invitation that you get.” So I followed my mother's advice, and approximately three months later, we were engaged. So, that's a short version of a long story, but you don't need the long version. So, it was a whirlwind, romantic thing. I never dreamed such a thing was possible for me. I asked my mother for advice after Roger proposed, and she said, “My feet were always firmly planted on the ground when I met your father.” That's what I expected—feet on the ground—and this was like—wow!—I could tell something was really, really different. It was just not my typical experience and—you know—when you meet someone and date somebody and even when you marry somebody, you don't really know what you're getting. So, I've been very pleasantly surprised with what I've gotten, and I hope he's equally pleasantly surprised.

But he's very grounded, and logical, and takes things step-by-step. He doesn't leap ahead to possible crisis conclusions. He just takes it very calmly, step-by-step, and that quality has been amazing. It's just made me more grounded and more—I don't have to think and plan twelve steps in advance. I can just take it where it is, maybe look one step ahead, and then we'll see where we are, and then we'll re-evaluate, and we'll stay calm and we'll breathe. And it's just really been a great, great gift. I don't know if—If I had seen him in a line-up of guys, and someone had said, “You're going to have to marry one of these guys,” I don't think I would have picked him out. Just, you know, he didn't look like my type. And yet, here we are. It's been a great gift, and I think a great part of my adult happiness is being in each other's lives.

01:24:09 Q: And do you think this is someone who has understood you intellectually from the beginning?

Haims: Absolutely.

Q: Respected your intelligence, your brilliance?

Haims: Absolutely. I think on our second or third date, I don't know why we were talking about this— Oh, I know, we were going to be meeting some friends of his in London, and he said, “I should tell you that they're married, but they have different last names.” And I said, “That's what I'm going to do.” And I said, “So, what do you think about that?” And he said, “Oh, it's your name. You should call yourself whatever you want to call yourself.” I mean, it was our third or fourth date. We weren't even thinking

about going out on a fourth or fifth date even at that point. But he's just been very, very supportive, and during those years of dealing with my senile adviser, he's the one who had the original idea, "You can file suit." Like, "Okay, I can file suit." It never would have occurred to me. He's been extremely, extremely supportive, never said to me, "Why are you doing this? What a waste of your time. You should be spending more time with me instead of in the library." I mean, never, never, never. And every time he introduces me to people, he says, "This is my wife, Dr. Lynne Haims." I mean, he's very proud of what I've accomplished.

01:25:34 Q: Good. And, not that it's important, but are you the same age, same background, or—?

Haims; Yes. He's a year older than I am. He also comes from a Jewish middle-class family. He also had a wonderful breakaway from home experience in college, a totally different college. It was in the middle of the wilds of Pennsylvania, out in the country. But we both also, we both hang on to people. We both have friends from high school, college, early work years, I mean. I think we both felt very isolated in high school and looked forward to college, and misunderstood in our families, so that whole kind of emotional baggage that you come with; we have very similar emotional baggage, so we—I think we understand each other very well, because of that.

01:26:52 Q: Okay, let's go back. I know you are Jewish and do you want to talk a little bit about some of the traditions you might remember growing up. And then we'll go on to its involvement in your life, your involvement with Judaism over the years and spirituality.

Haims: Okay. My parents were both Jewish, both came from Jewish homes. My mother's family was more observant than my father's family, and my mother was definitely in charge of that part of our home life. So we did things basically the way she had done things in her home. We kept Kosher, we went to an Orthodox synagogue. At the times we were living close enough, we would walk to the Orthodox synagogue; otherwise, we would drive to the Orthodox synagogue. I went to after-school Hebrew school for many years, and then did an extra year, just because I really liked it, because I was academic and—

Q: And you excelled.

Haims: Yes. I really liked it.

Q: And now you're teaching Hebrew.

Haims: I am. I am. And I loved going to synagogue. I loved it because I loved music, and most of the service is sung. So I really loved that part of it. I especially loved it because men and women sit separately, so when I went to synagogue, I got to sit with my mother. We were the only two women in the family, and I had her all to myself. And it was really, really nice. I loved it, because there was no drama. I just had my mother. No one was beating up on me; it was really nice. And on Yom Kippur evening, that's the final part of the New Year's service, there's a special service in the evening, where you stand up for the whole hour-long service, and it's the final prayer before your fate is sealed for the year—very powerful. And my mother and I would walk to the synagogue together. It was about a three-

mile walk, so we had a long time; and we'd talk, and just be together in the service together, and it was really, really—that I think is the most powerful, continuing religious memory that I have from my childhood: walking with my mother to services and just being with her. And she didn't like it when people around her would talk because they didn't know where we were in the prayer book, so she would always say, "Let me show you where we are in the prayer book." So I'm like that, too. Not because people are talking, but when I see someone who is coming to visit our synagogue, where I go now, and in this synagogue they don't announce the pages or anything. They just assume you know where we are. So when I see someone sort of looking lost, I always go over and say, "Let me show you where we are" because I know that's what my mother used to do. So I really loved everything connected with services. It was a happy place too because I wasn't with my brother because we were separated. Which was good.

And my husband, Roger, he grew up Jewish, but he's not religious, but he understands that I am, and you know, he doesn't have to be religious for me to be religious, and I don't have to not be religious for him to not be religious. So that's fine. And we sent our daughter to a private Jewish school, and that was very important to me for the Jewish content, and it was very important to Roger because it was a private school. But once we signed her up, he was very involved. He was the one who was on the Board of Directors, he was the one who was on the Search Committees. He's much more used to working with groups of people on committees, because that's the kind of work he does for the government, and I like the solitary life. He does very well guiding people to decisions where they think it is their idea, but it is really his, so that everyone is happy.

And our daughter and son-in-law now send our grandson to a private Jewish school now. They're very happy about that, because both of them went to private Jewish schools, and it is very important to them that the kids get that kind of education.

01:31:55 Q: Do you see any changes, or what if any changes do you see in your spirituality, your faith, and your practice of religious traditions, since you were a child?

Haims: I observe more things. I follow more of the rituals of Judaism now than I did then when we were kids. A lot of that came once I had a child. I felt strongly that I wanted to model for her the things she was learning in school. And I find a great comfort in those observances. I mean, I am no longer modeling them for her, because she doesn't even live here anymore. But I feel a great comfort from that. Also, I never thought of myself as a particularly spiritual person. I thought of myself as an organized person, and I could organize myself to buy the Kosher food, you know. But I didn't think of myself as having particularly a spiritual component. But the wife of one of the rabbis in our synagogue who has now moved to Israel, she and I became very close, and we would talk a lot. I would say things, and she would say, "That's a very spiritual insight." And I would go, "Oh, I had a spiritual insight? I didn't even know I was capable of it."

[Interruption]

So my rabbi's wife would say, "You had a real spiritual insight there." And I would say, "Wow, I had a spiritual insight." And that was very exciting to me. And then I started realizing that I was having them

all the time, but I didn't even know that they were spiritual, because I thought, “Oh, that's just organized.” So I feel much more balanced. I feel—I used to feel kind of embarrassed at not feeling more spiritual, but now I realize it's not an in-your-face spiritual, but it's my spiritual. So that feels very good. And also as life throws curves along the way, I find it a real comfort to have religious practices to fall back on. When each of my parents died, and I sat Shiva for them, that was such a healing experience. I was stunned at how insightful those ancient rabbis were, to come up with these traditions where, for seven days, all you do is talk about your loss, and people come and whatever you want—you choose the topic—they're not supposed to raise the topic—Whatever you want to talk about, that's what we talk about. So for seven days you're talking about your loss, and you're showing the pictures of your loved ones, and you're reminiscing about the stories, the happy times, and people bring you food, and you're never alone, And at the end of seven days, I feel ready to face the world again. It's just so healing. And so, it's been a very important part of my life, and with growing importance, as I get older.

01:35:52 Q: And are you particularly involved in your synagogue, in your congregation?

Haims: I go—religiously. It's a very small congregation—I get a little nervous in big crowds—but it's a hundred member families. So for these sorts of things, it's relatively small. And the people come regularly. It's not that ten people come for a regular Sabbath service, and then a thousand people come for a High Holy Days service. People come every week, and they always have a little get-together afterward with food and conversation, and it's not overwhelming. So, I look forward to it. You know. I'm going to see my friends; we're going to talk about—whatever. The rabbi talks about the Bible portion for the week. It makes me think about that again. And it's nice. I like continuity and repetition

and structure, so it doesn't get much more structured than that. I find a great comfort in that.

01:37:08 Q: Okay. Now we're going to look kind of into the future. What do you look forward to happening? In the future, in your life?

Haims: Well, I look forward to many shared experiences with children and grandchildren, and getting to know my grandchildren as they—well, the five-year, almost six-year-old is definitely a person, but the ten-month old is still exhibiting her personality a little at a time, So I look forward to seeing what kind of people they become, looking for the clues to what kind of adults they'll become, and just spending a lot of time together with them. We just came back from an extravagant week at Disney World with everybody, and that was really fun, just to hang out and have a wonderful, wonderful time. And we talk—not with the ten-month old—we talk a lot about it now: Remember when—? What was your favorite part of—? And it's really nice.

I don't look forward to amassing more possessions. I really look forward to downsizing possessions, but the shared experiences are what I am really looking forward to.

01:38:43 Q: And you've sort of hinted at retirement, a little bit of an issue, a little fear on your part, in terms of—

Haims: Just getting—

Q: You want to say more about that?

Haims: My husband and I really like the work that we're doing, I mean we're doing different sorts of work, but we both really like it. Both of us envision a thing called retirement, when we just downsize what we're doing. I see no reason I can't continue—assuming my mind and my body hold out—I see no reason that I can't continue selling books, on a smaller scale, tutoring Hebrew students at a smaller scale, doing water aerobics on a smaller scale. I mean, many of the women in my class now are in their nineties, and they take the class.

So, I'd like to continue doing those sorts of activities, but space it out more with trips and making the time for reading the novels and seeing the friends I don't seem to have time for now. So as long as health, mental and physical, provide for that to happen, that's what I'd like to do. I don't envision a retirement of playing golf everyday. I would like to become a docent for something. I don't quite know what yet. But there are so many historical properties here. I'd really like to learn something, enough about one of those properties so I could give tours. One of the things I like to do now for recreation is to go to these properties and take these tours. And it's really fun, and I can see how with an enthusiastic docent it would be so much fun. I mean, to be in the group being shown and to be showing around. So that's something I'd like to do. But I don't—of course, future health is a wild card, and I don't know what that's going to be, but I've learned that I can't take it twenty steps ahead. Like right now, this is where I am, this is what I'd like to do.

01:4:17 Q: When I first came in, you very enthusiastically gave me a little background on your

daughter, and I didn't get that on tape. Could we go back and would you like to say a little bit about her?

Haims; Yes. My daughter is Kimberly. We adopted her when she was six weeks old. And she has been a most wonderful child, not a perfect child, but a most wonderful child.

Q: That would be boring, if she were perfect—

Haims: Absolutely. And she definitely has not been boring. But she's a very different person from me. I tend toward the introverted side of the scale, well toward the introverted side, and she definitely is on the extroverted side of the scale. She loves being with people. If she's tired or depressed, she wants people around her. She wants action; she wants activity; whereas I would curl up in a little ball by myself. That's not her. And from a very early age, her very early age, I could see that she was really, really good with people, very empathetic, very insightful, and she has parleyed those wonderful traits into a career as a social worker. She specializes in children and families, and she works with children with developmental delays, emotional problems, physical problems, birth to age three, and their families; and all the families in the program who are on public welfare are her clients. They give them all to her. So about half her caseload is families on welfare; the other half is not. She's just amazing. She sees incremental change and improvement, and she gets excited about it, and does not get weighted down if the improvement is slow in coming. She's just very upbeat and sensible and grounded, and a wonderful, wonderful child. I've learned a lot from her and have actually become more able to handle large crowds because I had to because of her. And she's married to her high school sweetheart. They

met when she was fourteen, and his name is Eric, and he's also from Silver Spring. They have two children: my grandson we're celebrating his sixth year birthday this weekend. And my granddaughter is about ten months old.

01:44:19 Q: Okay. Well, you've covered a lot and been very efficient, so we've not taken as long as it sometime takes. But I do want to ask, is there anything that we haven't covered that's important to you and that kind of defines you as an individual and as Lynne, that you want to share?

Haims: Well, I think we've covered it all, at least. I think that you have a full picture.

Q: Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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