

1 ORAL HISTORY OF: Vivian Berry
2 INTERVIEWED BY: Lois Frank
3 DATE OF INTERVIEW: Monday, June 28, 2004
4 LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Leonard and Simons Jewish
5 Community Archives
6 SUBJECT MATTER: Jewish community life

7

8 MS. FRANK: This is Lois Frank. I'm conducting an
9 oral history interview with Vivian Berry at the Leonard and
10 Simons Jewish Community Archives on June 28, 2004.

11 Vivian, do we have permission to use your words and
12 thoughts in the future for educational and historical research
13 and documentation?

14 MS. BERRY: You may use it. I doubt that it'll be
15 very educational.

16 MS. FRANK: That's a yes. Thank you.

17 Let's go back to the beginning, your beginning.
18 Where were you born?

19 MS. BERRY: Windsor, Ontario, across the river,
20 before the tunnel.

21 MS. FRANK: And when and why did your family happen
22 to settle there?

23 MS. BERRY: My grandfather came to Windsor in 1884.
24 I think there was one other Jew there, but he was much older
25 than my grandfather. He had children older than my

1 grandfather. He was very young when he came. And it's a
2 mystery how he got back and forth, but he did settle in
3 Windsor, and he brought his wife over five years later. She
4 died after she had a couple children, my mother and my uncle,
5 and then he married again. A girl from Detroit, only she came
6 by way of Carchine in Russia.

7 **MS. FRANK:** He came from Russia also?

8 **MS. BERRY:** Yes, Grudna. I guess Grudna was Polish
9 or Russian, depending on who won the war that day.

10 **MS. FRANK:** And can you tell me a little bit about
11 your early family life in Windsor.

12 **MS. BERRY:** It was beautiful.

13 **MS. FRANK:** In what way?

14 **MS. BERRY:** It was warm. It was very cohesive. We
15 had many, many relatives in Detroit, but we had no relatives
16 in Windsor, so we used to go to Detroit by boat. You could
17 get your car on the boat, and then we'd drive real far, like
18 to Brush Street, where relatives lived.

19 We had a sidewalk in front of our house. Everybody
20 didn't. And the trees met over the road in the summer. There
21 were races in Windsor, and the cars from Detroit used to come
22 and the horses came up and down the street. The grocery was
23 just a few doors away. It wasn't a chain; it was just a mama,
24 a papa and a daughter.

25 My grandfather built the first synagogue there, was

1 a Talmud Torah There was a little ^{SHUL} ~~show~~ that he had started,
2 then he started a great big one, two stories, brick. Wow!
3 Everything was there. The weddings and the cheder.

4 We had a car but we usually walked places. It was a
5 completely Jewish environment and you knew everybody.

6 **MS. FRANK:** Did you mingle with the non-Jewish
7 people also?

8 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, we were the only Jews in the block.
9 And my grandfather had a business and all the non-Jews knew
10 him as well. In fact, my father was the first Jew ever put on
11 I guess it's called the Rotary Club. Every time he went to a
12 meeting my mother would say "Don't get drunk."

13 **MS. FRANK:** Other than the Rotary Club, what kind of
14 community interests did your parents have?

15 **MS. BERRY:** The synagogue. My father couldn't be
16 involved in politics. He was often asked to be active. He
17 was a well-educated, very personable, very charming man, and
18 had many friends among the non-Jews. In fact he was the only
19 Jew who played golf and belonged to the so-called golf club.
20 He was asked to run for office, but unfortunately my father
21 was born in Chicago, and he would not relinquish his American
22 citizenship.

23 In those days the wife became a citizen of the
24 country of which her husband was a citizen. So my mother was
25 no longer a Canadian citizen, she was an American citizen.

1 And I don't think it bothered her too much except when it was
2 election time. I don't know that she had such a great civic
3 interest, but suddenly she wanted to vote and she couldn't
4 because she was an American. Which made it very easy for me
5 because I was an American citizen from the day I was born.

6 **MS. FRANK:** Other than the synagogue, were there any
7 other Jewish organizations?

8 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, my grandmother and my mother started
9 Hadassah.

10 **MS. FRANK:** In Windsor?

11 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, yes, they did. The lady from
12 Montreal, Lillian Fryman, who started Hadassah in Canada, came
13 to Windsor and she stayed overnight at my grandmother's
14 because she knew that was a kosher home, and they had the
15 first meeting of Hadassah. I was very young, maybe six or
16 seven.

17 Do you want to hear a funny story?

18 **MS. FRANK:** Sure.

19 **MS. BERRY:** When I was way past six or seven, I was
20 in Palm Beach, and we were at a dinner party, and there was a
21 man there by the name of Fryman, which is not such a common
22 name, found out he came from Ottawa. And I said, "You
23 wouldn't be related to a lady by the name of Lillian Fryman,
24 would you?" He said, "It was my mother."

25 **MS. FRANK:** Oh, my gosh.

1 **MS. BERRY:** I said, "When I was a little girl, she
2 came to my grandmother's house to start Hadassah."

3 **MS. FRANK:** Did he love that?

4 **MS. BERRY:** It's like the saying, you never meet a
5 Jew you didn't know before.

6 **MS. FRANK:** That's so true. So you grew up in a
7 very giving Jewish community environment.

8 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, yes.

9 **MS. FRANK:** Now you came to Detroit. What brought
10 you to Detroit?

11 **MS. BERRY:** Should I tell you the real story?

12 **MS. FRANK:** Absolutely. I'd love the real story.

13 **MS. BERRY:** When I was a little girl, my mother used
14 to say, "If you're a good girl, you'll grow up and marry a boy
15 from Detroit," because everybody wanted to get out of Windsor.
16 I was a very good girl because I did it twice.

17 I came to Detroit because there were no jobs in
18 Windsor, but there were a lot in Detroit, and I didn't know
19 much about working because I was supposed to go to college.
20 Then the Depression came and it was all a big deal. So I
21 didn't go to college, and I went to business school. I didn't
22 learn too much there either. I took an accounting course,
23 which is ridiculous. To this day, whether it's deliberate or
24 not, but I don't remember my own age. Figures get me.

25 I got a job in a law office. I interned in a

1 Windsor law office at no pay because I wanted to learn how to
2 be a legal secretary, and it was the office of Kroll, Brody &
3 Moretsky, and Mr. Kroll became mayor of Windsor and a senator
4 in the Canadian government. Anyway, I worked there a few
5 weeks and thought I was very experienced, and then I came to
6 Detroit and I got a job. I worked in a law office, and I got
7 to be what today they call a paralegal. I didn't have a name
8 in those days, but I filed papers, I wrote bills of complaint
9 myself, I wrote bills of divorcement and I filed them. I was
10 pretty good.

11 **MS. FRANK:** That is pretty good for a woman.

12 **MS. BERRY:** I married a lawyer.

13 **MS. FRANK:** This is a Detroit lawyer.

14 **MS. BERRY:** Yes. I met him in the law office I was
15 working in. As a matter of fact, he told me he came into the
16 office where I was working because they had space to rent, and
17 when he walked out, he said, "I'm going to marry that snippy
18 little girl." Well, he did.

19 I had a wonderful job at that time. I was working
20 for a White Russian lawyer, and they were quite anti-Semitic.
21 He wasn't but people who came in were. And I heard
22 everything. I don't know what I did, but this partner said,
23 you know, "I always told Nick he should marry a Jewish girl."
24 I said, "You know, Jewish girls aren't different from Gentile
25 girls. Some are dumb and some are smart. You just happened

1 to get a smart one."

2 Anyway, I told him I was getting married. He said,
3 "Well, why can't you work after your married?" Well, I was
4 raised that you worked until you got married. So I explained
5 that I didn't want to work after I was married.

6 Then I lived very happily with my husband and had
7 three little girls. He died when the youngest one wasn't
8 quite two.

9 **MS. FRANK:** Oh, that's sad.

10 **MS. BERRY:** During those years I worked as an
11 administrator of Shaarey Zedek in the school. I loved it.
12 And I got to know many kids, and I got to be hated by many
13 kids.

14 **MS. FRANK:** When you say you're an administrator in
15 the school, what exactly did you do?

16 **MS. BERRY:** Well, it was a very loose term. If kids
17 were absent, I called them to see what happened. I placed
18 them in classes, I counseled with the kids, I did the
19 consecration, the education, the services, and parading up and
20 down the aisle for the big day.

21 I learned a lot from Rabbi Adler who had his office
22 on that floor. And of course we had become friends from the
23 day we joined Shaarey Zedek, and he and his wife played a very
24 big part in my life.

25 **MS. FRANK:** Is it at this time or later?

1 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, from the day I met them until the
2 day he was killed.

3 **MS. FRANK:** In what way would you say they played a
4 big part?

5 **MS. BERRY:** Well, I attended a lot of his classes,
6 and I became certainly better educated Jewishly because the
7 only Jewish education I had was from what I learned in my
8 house. But I was taught a lot by that man, simply by his
9 living. He was a man of absolutely complete integrity. His
10 morals were superb. I could write a book about him.

11 He had a great sense of humor. Once in his sermon
12 he said something very funny, and I was the only one that
13 laughed, and I said something to him afterward. I said, "You
14 know, I think they were so surprised that you were funny that
15 they didn't laugh. It isn't that they didn't get the joke."

16 Besides his wit he had an amazing brain. A
17 committee could sit for hours discussing how, when and where,
18 and would come to what they thought was the perfect
19 conclusion, and he would walk in and say, "Well, what did you
20 decide?" And they told him triumphantly, and he would say,
21 "Hmmm, but have you thought of?" No, they hadn't. It was an
22 amazing brain.

23 **MS. FRANK:** That's wonderful that you picked up all
24 these things from him. It was like a parent almost.

25 **MS. BERRY:** I can't explain. There was a great love

1 there. I have saved every letter he ever sent me, and he sent
2 wonderful letters because we became family, and to make it
3 legally family, I introduced my first cousin to his daughter,
4 and they got married, and it was a wonderful marriage.

5 **MS. FRANK:** Nami, I remember her.

6 **MS. BERRY:** Remember Nami? She was wonderful. You
7 know, Nami died much too young.

8 **MS. FRANK:** I know.

9 **MS. BERRY:** And the two boys are in Israel. And
10 when I spoke to them -- I speak to them frequently on the
11 phone -- and all this started with the bombing and the
12 suicides, I asked, had you thought of coming back to America,
13 and the wife of one of them said, "What? And give up our
14 dream?"

15 **MS. FRANK:** So he really entered your life at a very
16 important time.

17 **MS. BERRY:** He made a great influence on me.

18 **MS. FRANK:** You met your second husband, Louis
19 Berry, at Shaarey Zedek, I understand.

20 **MS. BERRY:** Yes. He was one of the officers of the
21 synagogue and I was president of the Sisterhood. When I was
22 president of the Sisterhood, I think I was 30. I was the
23 youngest president they ever had. I would meet him at the
24 board meetings. And I thought, boy, he's some smart guy, you
25 know. And through my work I had to talk to him very often. I

1 got to know him very well.

2 And after his wife died, he invited me out, and of
3 course I accepted. It was a wonderful evening. He said to
4 me, "You're very funny. You've got a sense of humor." I
5 said, "Nah." He said, "You know, I laughed so much it was
6 like being out with the fellows." And for 24 hours I
7 agonized, was that a joke or a compliment.

8 **MS. FRANK:** Apparently it was a compliment.

9 What I wanted to ask you is, what motivated you to
10 get going in the Jewish community, to become a part of it?

11 **MS. BERRY:** It never stopped. I started when I was
12 in Hadassah in Windsor at 16, because my mother and my
13 grandmother ran Hadassah, and I kept on going. When I moved
14 to Detroit, the first thing I did, I was asked to join
15 American Jewish Congress and I did. They had a luncheon, and
16 at that time I was extremely observant and I did not eat non-
17 kosher. I went to the first big meeting and there was only
18 chicken.

19 Anyway, there was a board meeting and they were
20 talking about the rights of people, and our rights as Jews
21 could not be denied as American citizens. And I said, "I'd
22 like to say something. You are denying my rights. How can
23 you fight for other people's? I came to a meeting and you
24 didn't give me the right to choose not to eat non-kosher. I
25 went without lunch." So they decided after that they would

1 not serve non-kosher food -- not that it was kosher, and after
2 that, all the organizations did that.

3 **MS. FRANK:** So you're a troublemaker.

4 **MS. BERRY:** I try.

5 **MS. FRANK:** So it really started in Windsor.

6 **MS. BERRY:** Then when I joined the synagogue right
7 after we were married -- we came back from our wedding trip
8 and immediately went to the synagogue, where my grandmother's
9 nephew was the president, Isaac Schetzer, who was an amazingly
10 fine man and happened to be Lou Berry's inspiration.

11 **MS. FRANK:** Oh, interesting.

12 **MS. BERRY:** That was his first job when he came to
13 Detroit, was sweeping the floors for Isaac Schetzer's
14 warehouse. It was a wholesale dry goods. And he always lived
15 in awe of the memory of Isaac Schetzer and the effect that he
16 had on him.

17 **MS. FRANK:** What effect did he have on him?

18 **MS. BERRY:** Well, he thought that he was a very
19 honest, ethical man. When he was president of the synagogue,
20 it was during the Depression. I wonder how many people in
21 this city remember this story? He, for Shaarey Zedek, settled
22 all the bills because Shaarey Zedek couldn't pay it in order
23 to finish the synagogue. And when the Depression was over and
24 Shaarey Zedek had money, he made them repay every one of the
25 people the original and real price that they should have paid.

1 **MS. FRANK:** That is amazing story. It's interesting
2 how you both have met people who have inspired you through
3 your lives.

4 **MS. BERRY:** It is, yes. It's true that we were
5 easily influenced by good people. Well, Louis knew ethics
6 before because he said to me, and that was really -- he was a
7 great guy in every way, but this was the thing -- when he said
8 he knew when he came to America he would be a rich man. But
9 he wasn't just going to be another rich man. He was going to
10 thank God every day of his life, and he did.

11 **MS. FRANK:** He came from Liverpool; is that correct?

12 **MS. BERRY:** Yes.

13 **MS. FRANK:** Now I'm going to skip around a little
14 bit, now that we're talking about Lou. There's one question I
15 wanted to ask you. Immediately after World War II he took a
16 trip to Europe to visit the DP camps, the displaced persons
17 camps, and then he went to what was then Palestine. I think
18 he got there as it was becoming a state in 1948.

19 **MS. BERRY:** Lou was called by -- a long story that
20 had to do with a building that he owned in New York, and after
21 the war UJA was now a big business and they didn't have a lot
22 of quarters. They wanted to have more office space. They
23 found out that this guy, Lou Berry in Detroit, owned the
24 building they wanted to be in. So the head of UJA at that
25 time called Detroit and got the date Lou would be coming to

1 New York. So when Lou got to New York, somebody was waiting
2 for him. I never met the man and I can't think of his name
3 right now, but Lou was also influenced by him. He ran UJA at
4 the at time, and then he went into bonds.

5 Anyhow, Lou did find space and in his charming
6 manner -- I'm sure nobody felt bad -- he moved people around,
7 did a little shuffling, and UJA had space. He was active. He
8 was head of the real estate division, and he worked his way
9 around in the UJA. He did a lot of good work. He was the
10 world's best fund-raiser. I mean --

11 **MS. FRANK:** You couldn't say no to him.

12 **MS. BERRY:** Beggars would have given to him if he
13 had asked.

14 He was called by UJA -- they were sending 28 men to
15 Palestine and to look at the DP camps, so they would be
16 knowledgeable, they could come back to the United States and
17 talk about what they saw, which at that time -- maybe they
18 raised a million dollars a year through all America.

19 Anyway, he was asked to join, and it was an honor to
20 be asked to join this group. They were the outstanding Jewish
21 leaders in the United States. He knew a man by the name of
22 Joe Holtzman, who was a wonderful man. Joe was very, very
23 charitable, and he gave a lot of money to various charities:
24 one-third to the Catholics, one-third to the Protestants, one-
25 third to the Jews. And Lou figured if he gave all thirds to

1 the Jews, it would be very nice. So he asked if he could
2 bring a friend on this mission. He said if we can get this
3 guy interested in Jewish life, we've got a marvelous person.

4 Joe did, he went with them. And Joe became a leader
5 in UJA. He was a great man. And he and Lou had an amazingly
6 good friendship. In fact when Joe died, Lou spoke at his
7 funeral in lieu of a rabbi, and Judy Honigman Levy said, if
8 you have Lou Berry for a friend, you don't need any more.

9 MS. FRANK: What a tribute. That's a tribute in
10 itself.

11 MS. BERRY: Yes. But he had a great subject.

12 I have pictures of Lou. He's coming down a ramp,
13 and you can't tell if it's a boat or a plane.

14 MS. FRANK: Were you married at this time?

15 MS. BERRY: No. Hearsay doesn't count, does it?

16 MS. FRANK: Oh, yes, it does. You live with all the
17 hearsay.

18 MS. BERRY: And I heard plenty.

19 MS. FRANK: I'm sure.

20 MS. BERRY: He's coming off a ramp and there's a
21 sign, and it says Palestine. He went through the DP camps.
22 And when I was in Florida last year -- you know, since I was
23 president of the Sisterhood at Shaarey Zedek, I learned to
24 read obituaries because you had to make condolence calls if
25 you're president. So I never stopped reading obituaries.

1 There was an obituary of a man and it said that he
2 was a survivor of the Holocaust, and he had met a man from
3 Detroit in Palestine. His name was Lou Berry. He said, you
4 work hard, you come to America -- he drove a taxi -- and I'll
5 see that you're taken care of. His daughter said when my
6 father came to America, he got in touch with Lou Berry, and he
7 set him up.

8 **MS. FRANK:** I get chills.

9 **MS. BERRY:** You know, the good deeds of men live
10 after them.

11 **MS. FRANK:** Yes.

12 **MS. BERRY:** It's true.

13 **MS. FRANK:** And we need to know that and we need to
14 record it. And that's what you're doing. That's wonderful

15 **MS. BERRY:** He was an amazing man.

16 **MS. FRANK:** How do you think that this changed his
17 life?

18 **MS. BERRY:** Maybe in interest but not his life,
19 because he was always compassionate. You just don't get
20 compassionate from meeting somebody. You have to be born with
21 a compassion, with a sensitivity for other people's feelings.
22 That he was born with. Didn't have to go to college. You
23 know, he never went to high school.

24 **MS. FRANK:** He had it.

25 **MS. BERRY:** Brilliant at mathematics. He learned

1 like that (snap). You would have thought you were talking to
2 a Princeton graduate.

3 **MS. FRANK:** Wonderful.

4 **MS. BERRY:** He might have made mistakes in grammar.
5 He never made mistakes in judgment.

6 **MS. FRANK:** Well, which is more important.

7 **MS. BERRY:** I was extremely fortunate.

8 **MS. FRANK:** You both were.

9 **MS. BERRY:** Yes. I told him once. We were having
10 an argument, our first, and I looked at him in amazement, and
11 I said, "You know what? We deserve each other."

12 **MS. FRANK:** It sounds like you added to each other's
13 lives.

14 You have many, many organizations that you belong to
15 and were very active in. I'd like to go through them and have
16 you talk about them. You were one of the founders of the
17 Women's League of the Jewish Theological Seminary; is this
18 correct?

19 **MS. BERRY:** That's not correct. I was one of the
20 founders of the Michigan branch. There were many branches at
21 that time, and Detroit was getting bigger and Michigan was
22 getting bigger, so they decided that we should break off from
23 Illinois and others and start our own branch. But I was not
24 the instigator. It was Ethel Robinson and Sadie Spevico of
25 Blessed Memory who were the ones who went to the national

1 meetings and learned, and then I was fresh material. I was
2 president of the Sisterhood, I was young at the time, and in
3 those days I was kind of smart. And the three of us, we
4 worked on it, and we became -- I was pro tem until they had an
5 election. At that time -- I was widowed and I was offered the
6 job at Shaarey Zedek at that time, which I didn't want to
7 take. I kept saying no, no. Rabbi Adler called me. One of
8 the reasons I didn't want to take it, they said that the man
9 who had taken it was now head of a department at Wayne and
10 would I do it until they found a man.

11 **MS. FRANK:** Oh, well, that didn't sit well with you.

12 **MS. BERRY:** How many years ago? About 50 years ago.
13 And I was insulted then. I didn't need ^{Gloria}~~Barbara~~ Steineman to
14 get me installed.

15 So Rabbi Alder called and asked my why I wouldn't
16 take it. I said, well, if I don't like it, I can't quit.
17 It's my shul. And if they don't like me, they can't fire me
18 because I'm your friend. He said, would you take it for six
19 months and do me a favor. And I did. It lasted three years.

20 **MS. FRANK:** So they knew you through Shaarey Zedek.
21 It wasn't just a cold, walk-in job.

22 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, no. I was president of Shaarey
23 Zedek Sisterhood for three years.

24 **MS. FRANK:** Before this job.

25 **MS. BERRY:** I was a hanger-arounder, yes.

1 **MS. FRANK:** Well, you hung around good places.
2 The theological seminary, is that where they train
3 Conservative rabbis?
4 **MS. BERRY:** That's right.
5 **MS. FRANK:** And that's where Rabbi Adler must have
6 come from.
7 **MS. BERRY:** Yes. We have quite a few graduates.
8 Now at Shaarey Zedek we have -- well, Lauren Berkum is not at
9 Shaarey Zedek, but her husband is a rabbi there. She's a
10 graduate. And the rabbis at Adat Shalom and Beth Shalom.
11 There are quite a lot of Conservative rabbis now.
12 **MS. FRANK:** Are you still active in this?
13 **MS. BERRY:** I'm in the complaint department.
14 **MS. FRANK:** Well, that I would call active.
15 **MS. BERRY:** I go to synagogue when I'm here, and I
16 go to synagogue in Florida, where there's also a Conservative
17 synagogue.
18 **MS. FRANK:** You were chairman of Israel Bond
19 functions.
20 **MS. BERRY:** Was I? I don't remember. I guess I
21 was.
22 **MS. FRANK:** That's what it says here.
23 **MS. BERRY:** Well, I guess I was. Yes.
24 **MS. FRANK:** Did you do this with Lou or just
25 independently?

1 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, it was before I was married to Lou.
2 Or was it? I told you I was rotten with numbers. No, I was
3 married to Lou then. I did chair a couple of things and I was
4 awarded honors.

5 **MS. FRANK:** From the Israel Bonds.

6 **MS. BERRY:** About three years ago I was honored
7 again by Israel Bonds.

8 **MS. FRANK:** What kind of honors did you get?
9 Verbal?

10 **MS. BERRY:** No. It was called the Golda Meir award.

11 **MS. FRANK:** How nice?

12 **MS. BERRY:** Yes. I had met Golda Meir.

13 **MS. FRANK:** You did meet her.

14 **MS. BERRY:** Yes, I did. Lou was on the national
15 board of Wietzman Institute. He was on many national boards.
16 And they had a cocktail party. They had about 2000 people --
17 all the brains in the scientific world sat at the head table,
18 and all the big fund-raisers sat at the head table, all the
19 big brains. Lou sat there and I sat up there with him. Many
20 brains. But the table guests had a different cocktail party,
21 because there were 1000 people there, There was a smaller
22 group, and I was talking with the then national president of
23 UJA, and I felt a tap on my shoulder, and here, I want you to
24 meet a friend of mine, and I turned and I was face to face
25 with Golda Meir

1 **MS. FRANK:** What a wonderful experience.

2 **MS. BERRY:** I was spellbound. And I couldn't think
3 of a thing to say.

4 **MS. FRANK:** I don't believe it.

5 **MS. BERRY:** I said something so dumb. Yes, believe
6 it. I said, "May I kiss the hem of your dress?" Then she put
7 her arms around me and she kissed me. She smiled and she
8 kissed me.

9 **MS. FRANK:** She was really a special person. She
10 was really a role model.

11 **MS. BERRY:** She was honored at a dinner in New York
12 and we were there. She spoke and she said something about
13 when Ben-Gurion took her to a meeting with de Gaulle in France
14 and he introduced her, and he said, "Golda is the best man in
15 my cabinet." She said he thought it was a compliment. One
16 amazing woman.

17 I saw "Golda's Balcony" last week in New York.

18 **MS. FRANK:** What is that?

19 **MS. BERRY:** That's a one-many show with Tova
20 Feldshot, where she plays the life of Golda Meir in one act.
21 She talks about her beginnings. She gives you an
22 autobiography there on the stage, which is done in a dramatic,
23 poignant, whimsical, beautiful style. It played off-Broadway,
24 and it was such a hit, and it kept going and going until they
25 took it right onto to Broadway. And that's not easy to get a

1 ticket either.

2 And in the last scene -- and I asked somebody if
3 this happened -- when Golda was through, everybody got up. It
4 was like a wave of people rising in admiration and
5 sentimentality. It was a wonderful reaction.

6 **MS. FRANK:** Did Lou have much of a relationship with
7 her?

8 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, he knew her well. He knew Teddy
9 Koliq when he was a runner for Ben-Gurion. When Lou and I
10 took our first trip together to Israel, we were having dinner
11 and Ben-Gurion's secretary was sitting there. She saw Lou,
12 recognized him immediately. Before she came to say hello, she
13 went to the phone, called Ben-Gurion, and he said, "Put
14 flowers on their table," and she ordered flowers.

15 **MS. FRANK:** So the both of you had a deep connection
16 to Israel.

17 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, yes. It was deep before I ever
18 heard of Lou Berry.

19 **MS. FRANK:** Really. For what purpose? Just to
20 visit?

21 **MS. BERRY:** No, I went on a guided tour. They went
22 to Europe for two weeks and then two weeks in Israel.

23 **MS. FRANK:** What was your impression then?

24 **MS. BERRY:** I was bowled over. I saw the things
25 they had done, all the miracles. Someone said to me, "This is

1 the Hebrew University. Last year we didn't have it. Would
2 you believe we did it one year?" I said, "I'd believe you if
3 you said it wasn't there yesterday." I mean I was accepting
4 all kinds of miracles. It was amazing.

5 I knew a smattering of Hebrew and I smattered a
6 little bit. It was very funny, but there was a guy there who
7 taught Hebrew to bar mitzvahs, and he couldn't even speak
8 Hebrew. When I heard him tell somebody that, she said, "How
9 do you say 'I remember' in Hebrew?" And he said something
10 incorrect. I hate it when people pretend they know more than
11 they do. I didn't know very much, but I knew enough to get
12 along.

13 The people were so kind. They were actually
14 flattered that an American would want to learn Hebrew, and
15 they would help me, and they would be so pleased that I'd say
16 something.

17 **MS. FRANK:** Did you make yearly trips there after
18 you married Lou?

19 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, Lou and I went more than once a
20 year. You know, Lou went very often, and after we were
21 married -- well, he had a business there. There was a
22 business started by a group of many Detroiters. They crushed
23 the rocks and made cement and pavement. We went often. He
24 would talk to the managers and know what was going on.

25 At that point, all of the men who were involved had

1 passed away, and Lou was the last one. But there were many
2 widows who could realize from the investment. Lou said maybe
3 they ought to sell it, although he himself did not want to
4 sell. He loved doing business with the Israelis.

5 The first time we went together he went to a
6 meeting. He was gone the whole morning. I said, "What did
7 you decide?" He said, "Well, we decided where to hold the
8 next meeting. At that meeting we're going to decide when to
9 hold the next meeting." All afternoon they rested so the
10 meetings were in the morning and the night.

11 **MS. FRANK:** Did you enjoy mingling with the women or
12 were you mainly with him?

13 **MS. BERRY:** I mingled to the point where my husband
14 said to me, after several trips, "You could happily live here,
15 couldn't you?" No, not until the pictures of the articles are
16 on the cans because I can't go to the grocery. It's all in
17 Hebrew.

18 **MS. FRANK:** You were comfortable there.

19 **MS. BERRY:** But my family was here. I was very
20 comfortable there.

21 The manager of the plant came once with his wife.
22 He spoke English of course, but she spoke only Hebrew and
23 Yiddish. None of the other men's wives spoke either one. So
24 when I spoke to her in a mixture of Hebrew and Yiddish, she --
25 they thought I was talking in Hebrew. But we got along very

1 well. We became very good friends. And I made several
2 friends over there.

3 Anyhow, they had to sell the place. He wanted the
4 women to get the money out of it, and he took care of the
5 whole deal.

6 He could speak Yiddish. He went over with somebody,
7 and they would talk in Yiddish. They would talk Hebrew, the
8 Yiddish guy would translate the Hebrew to Yiddish. Lou would
9 say it in English to Joel. Finally they had a guy who spoke
10 English, and he said to Lou, when Lou wanted to sell it to
11 this company, he said to Lou, "You want too much money." So
12 he translated it into Yiddish.

13 There were many funny stories. There were many sad
14 stories. I said, "When you're in Israel, you either laugh or
15 cry. There's no in between."

16 **MS. FRANK:** But it sounds like you really felt it.

17 **MS. BERRY:** I loved everything about it. I went
18 back nine or ten times. My son-in-law, Michael Feldman, was
19 leading a mission to Israel, and his daughter, who was nine
20 years old, said to the mother, "How many times has Daddy been
21 to Israel?" And my daughter said, "About 12 times." She
22 said, "Ooh, that's a lot. How many times have you been?" She
23 said, "I've been 14 times." "Ooh, that's a lot." So Marci
24 said, "Mr. Joe Jackier's been to Israel 80 times." And she
25 said, "Oh, that's a lot. But Papa [Lou Berry] -- Papa was

1 there before it was Israel." So her nine-year-old daughter
2 turned to her brother and said, "That's when it was Canaan."
3 A product of Hillel Day School.

4 **MS. FRANK:** What a legacy he left.

5 **MS. BERRY:** Yes.

6 **MS. FRANK:** Can we go back to you and your interests
7 in the community a little bit.

8 **MS. BERRY:** I'm not as interesting as Lou was.

9 **MS. FRANK:** Well, let's say together you did a
10 wonderful job, and you're still doing it, I'm sure.

11 You were vice-president of the Women's Division of
12 the UJA.

13 **MS. BERRY:** Yes, I was. And I couldn't take it a
14 third term, because if I did, I would tacitly say I'm
15 available for the presidency, but at that time Lou wanted to
16 spend winters in Florida, and you can't be president of the
17 Women's Division unless you are present here in Detroit. So I
18 only took it for the one year I guess.

19 **MS. FRANK:** How did you find that? Was it
20 gratifying to you?

21 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, yes. I loved it. I loved it. I
22 did programming, you know, and it was fun.

23 **MS. FRANK:** And the American Jewish Congress of
24 course.

25 **MS. BERRY:** Yes, I was very, very active there.

1 **MS. FRANK:** And Sinai Hospital Guild.

2 **MS. BERRY:** I was the vice-president of the program,
3 and I thought I was taking it for one year, but when I found
4 out it was three years, I kind of -- I had too many things to
5 do to say yes, I will be doing this for three years. So I
6 resigned after the first year as vice-president.

7 **MS. FRANK:** At that point were you going to Palm
8 Beach for the winter?

9 **MS. BERRY:** Yes.

10 **MS. FRANK:** Now you became very active in Palm
11 Beach. You didn't just sit there, did you?

12 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, no. See, I don't sit in the sun.

13 **MS. FRANK:** Well, Palm Beach was lucky you didn't.
14 Tell me what activities you did.

15 **MS. BERRY:** Well, I got active in UJA. Marge Fisher
16 called me once and said, "You know, they're having a meeting
17 of United Jewish Appeal. I'd like you to come." I said,
18 "Marge, I gave in Detroit, I'm not giving anymore." She said,
19 "No, what you gave in Detroit is what you announce here." So
20 I went, and I found out they weren't such big givers, these
21 people. And then I found out a little more, and I found out
22 that the reason they had even started something like that was
23 they were all New Yorkers, and New York women weren't giving.
24 Their husbands were giving. But you couldn't get in an
25 apartment. You had to go through a doorman, so they announced

1 you. They're not going to let you up. So the women didn't
2 give.

3 But in Palm Beach, aha, Mrs. Jones is giving that,
4 I'll give twice as much as Mrs. Jones, that kind of mentality.

5 So they invited me to a board meeting, and it was
6 funny. They had such dumb ideas. And I'm listening, and I
7 said, "Had you thought of doing...?" And they "Next," and then
8 they went onto something else. And they're sophisticated. So
9 I said, "Well, had you thought of...?" And so finally I said,
10 "You know, I've got to say something. You don't know how to
11 fund-raise. You're not doing the right things. I gave you
12 three marvelous ideas. Do you think I made them up? I'm not
13 that smart. These are tried and true methods that they used
14 in Detroit. Detroit is top of UJA and any other fund-raising
15 group, and you'd do well to learn from Detroit."

16 The chairman turned to the pro, Michelle Sheridan --
17 the hotel name -- and she said, "Michelle, is that true?" And
18 she said, "Yes, Vivian's right. They far surpass you in
19 Detroit." So I worked myself right onto the board without
20 trying. And the next thing I knew I was a vice-chairman.
21 That was fun. I got to introduce all the bigshots who came.

22 **MS. FRANK:** Who came to Palm Beach?

23 **MS. BERRY:** Sure. Once we had Congressman Stolars
24 come. He was supposed to come for lunch. And we got a call,
25 he's in the House of Representatives. We kept calling, and so

1 finally he didn't come until after lunch. We had two others,
2 one a national chairman, one a past chairman, and these two
3 women, they couldn't talk until he comes. So they did, and he
4 finally came in, and they said would you introduce him, and I
5 got up and I said, "I wrote a very lengthy and very
6 interesting bio of the congressman, and if he had wanted me to
7 read it to you, he would have taken an earlier plane."

8 So it was fun. And very interesting because I would
9 never introduce anybody I hadn't met personally. So I met
10 them all and took them all for lunch.

11 **MS. FRANK:** That's a very good philosophy.

12 **MS. BERRY:** I got one man, we didn't know if he was
13 Jewish or not. It was not a Jewish name. But he was a well-
14 known writer and speaker. And I had lunch with him. And I
15 thought how am I going to find out if he's Jewish. So I said
16 something about Hadassah. I said that's a Jewish women's
17 organization. He said, "I should know, my mother was a
18 president in the South." So when I introduced him, I didn't
19 say he's Jewish. I just introduced him. And when I was
20 through, as I'm leaving, everyone is kind of whispering. I
21 said, "Pardon me. I didn't finish my introduction. I forgot
22 to tell you that his mother was a Hadassah president." That
23 made him very happy. So that was fun.

24 **MS. FRANK:** You're a people person, so that was good
25 for you.

1 Did you do anything else in Palm Beach community-
2 wise?

3 **MS. BERRY:** Yes. I was on the Commission for Jewish
4 Education for Palm Beach. Palm Beach is a wonderful county
5 and West Palm Beach is an amazing city. It has a vibrant
6 Jewish population.

7 **MS. FRANK:** Are these people full-time residents?

8 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, they're snowbirds.

9 **MS. BERRY:** They have a residential population
10 that's wonderful. The president of the synagogue is a very --
11 he's no longer president -- was an outstanding young man who
12 came from Detroit, Marvin Rosen. Marvin was president of the
13 young people at Shaarey Zedek. He was an outstanding student.
14 He went to the seminary at the same time he was going to NYU
15 and he became a lawyer. He opened an office in Florida and
16 he's very successful. But he's a very giving and brilliant
17 young man.

18 Another woman on the education committee is a
19 daughter of the late Cantor Fenekel from Adat Shalom. So
20 we've got some Detroit blood down there.

21 **MS. FRANK:** This was for Jewish education?

22 **MS. BERRY:** Yes. The Commission on Jewish
23 Education. They have a wonderful Jewish Community Center
24 there, and everything does center on the Jewish community, and
25 they're very giving people. And I like being there.

1 I was active in the synagogue there. I was on the
2 Adult Education Committee of the synagogue. I quit the
3 commission because I felt it was unfair. After Lou died I
4 don't spend as much time there. We were spending six months.

5 MS. FRANK: How much time do you spend now?

6 MS. BERRY: Four or five months.

7 MS. FRANK: Getting away?

8 MS. BERRY: No, I love going there. It's not
9 getting away from here. It's coming home when I go there, and
10 it's coming home when I come here.

11 MS. FRANK: So you've really established yourself in
12 that community.

13 MS. BERRY: Yes, I have.

14 MS. FRANK: And when you go there, do you get
15 involved --

16 MS. BERRY: The next day.

17 MS. FRANK: Why did you wait so long?

18 MS. BERRY: Well, I had to unpack.

19 MS. FRANK: Is there anything else that you've been
20 active in either Detroit or Palm Beach that you want to talk
21 about? I don't know what's left.

22 MS. BERRY: Well, I was a little active in Hadassah.
23 I was president of one of the chapters. I believe very much
24 in Hadassah. I'm financially active in all the fund-raising.

25 And I was active in the Wietzman Institute. And

1 then they did a terrible thing. They started having their
2 board meetings at eight o'clock in the morning. I wouldn't
3 get tapped on the shoulder by the Queen of England.

4 **MS. FRANK:** Do you still go to Israel?

5 **MS. BERRY:** I haven't been for three or four years.
6 Our last trip was with my three daughters, and it was a
7 wonderful trip. I have two cousins living there, Rabbi
8 Adler's grandsons, Benstein boys, and I have no friends there
9 anymore -- oh, yes, I do. I have a few.

10 **MS. FRANK:** But they've mostly disappeared, gone by
11 the wayside, unfortunately.

12 **MS. BERRY:** Yes.

13 **MS. FRANK:** Is there anyplace else in the world that
14 your Jewish travels have taken you? That you've traveled for
15 the sake of exploring Judaism?

16 **MS. BERRY:** For a Jewish cause, no. Israel was not
17 a job, it was a joy. To go there with my three daughters was
18 wonderful. One daughter would say, "Is this too much for you?
19 Are you tried?" And the other daughter would say, "Come on,
20 Mom, let's climb that hill." So I had the best of two worlds.

21 **MS. FRANK:** I'd like to know about your family.

22 **MS. BERRY:** I have three daughters that I had, and I
23 have a daughter and a son that Lou had. And we have melded
24 very well. Louie said after the wedding if our marriage
25 didn't last, he had custody of my daughters.

1 **MS. FRANK:** Do you want to tell me about your
2 daughters a little bit?

3 **MS. BERRY:** The oldest one is Joan. She's divorced.
4 She has three children. One is a doctor here in Detroit, one
5 is in California writing, and the other one is in New York
6 doing dress designing.

7 **MS. FRANK:** How interesting.

8 **MS. BERRY:** She's very good. She's 26. She's very
9 chic. Of course I think looks like a pile of rags. I'm
10 embarrassed to be seen with her, except we go in a store, and
11 they say, oh, are you stunning. To me it's not funny.
12 Nothing matches. Plaids and checks and stripes together. But
13 this is stunning by them.

14 **MS. FRANK:** Do you live with her?

15 **MS. BERRY:** I just saw her last week. I took her
16 with us when we went to see Golda's Balcony. She's a
17 wonderful girl and completely kosher. She is reserved to a
18 point.

19 And my second daughter is Barbara, married to Dr.
20 Steven Morse, and they're good people. And they have two
21 daughters. Jennifer was kind enough to give me three great-
22 grandchildren. And I don't use that term loosely. They are
23 great. They have a daughter who is -- you know, none of my
24 kids were ever Nobel Prize winners. They never got
25 scholarships to college. They're just nice people.

1 **MS. FRANK:** That was what we want, and that's the
2 greatest compliment.

3 **MS. BERRY:** And Jennifer is very active in young
4 adults and so is her husband, and they met through a Hillel
5 Day School reunion. Their older boy goes to Hillel. He is in
6 first grade. He went there to kindergarten. And they're all
7 educated beautifully at the nursery schools of Shaarey Zedek.
8 Ari is now graduating into the kindergarten of Hillel.

9 My daughter Marci was very, very active in -- in
10 fact she and her husband got the youth awards for their time.
11 I'll never forget when Marci got her youth award, we were at a
12 luncheon of the Board of Governors, and there was a Sylvia
13 Simons Award and Michael got the award for men. And when Joel
14 Tauber was the chairman and he started his talk, and he said I
15 can't begin to tell you all the things that Marci's done, and
16 Marci pulls his sleeve and says, "Try."

17 **MS. FRANK:** She's got your sense of humor I think.

18 **MS. BERRY:** We share in that. Marci is funny and
19 she's very bright. And she's very giving and she was chairman
20 of the Resettlement Service. She used to get up at three
21 o'clock in the morning and meet the planes that brought in the
22 Russians. In fact the first plane a man got off and she said
23 "Shalom," and he said, "I'm in Israel?" He thought he got on
24 the wrong plane.

25 She has a very Jewish home.

1 My three daughters carry on their Judaism in many
2 ways. They all keep kosher. My daughter Barbara is present
3 at the synagogue for Saturday mornings and Friday night
4 services every week.

5 They all attend synagogue, and their children are
6 getting good Jewish educations. My grandchildren keep kosher.
7 Again I say I know keeping kosher is not the end-all of being
8 a good Jew, but it's one of the things they think is
9 important. And I always remember what Rabbi Adler said: "I
10 am the bridge between my grandparents and my grandchildren."
11 And now I have a bigger burden because I have great-
12 grandchildren.

13 **MS. FRANK:** But you're a pretty strong bridge.

14 Vivian, somebody asked you in an interview how does
15 Judaism affect your life, and your reply was?

16 **MS. BERRY:** You're going to laugh. I said, "Judaism
17 is my life." I live as a Jew, I think as a Jew, I do as a
18 Jew. Jewish ethics are important to me. I think Jews are
19 kind of funny. Sometimes I think they're funny. And I enjoy
20 being Jewish.

21 There is an intimacy within Judaism. I think we
22 mentioned it before when I was talking. You were there. And
23 I said, there were never times you didn't know the Jew you
24 were introduced to, because if you didn't meet them
25 personally, you knew their brother, you knew their sister, you

1 knew their neighbor, you knew somebody they knew. You went to
2 school with somebody. It's always, "Oh, did you know," and I
3 find that's really close. That's fun.

4 **MS. FRANK:** I experienced that, too. And I have to
5 say the apple doesn't fall from the tree.

6 **MS. BERRY:** I don't believe that.

7 **MS. FRANK:** Oh, okay. Tell me why. We need a good
8 argument here.

9 **MS. BERRY:** There are lots of times when parents
10 have children who are just like them or part of them or
11 something. But I have seen such mistakes in human beings that
12 I think to myself, who is the idiot that said the apple
13 doesn't fall far from the tree? You couldn't throw it farther
14 than a baseball. They don't relate to their parents. They
15 live on their parents' memory. It's like an inherited wealth.
16 You didn't make it but you're using it.

17 **MS. FRANK:** You're using the name; is that what
18 you're saying? I'm so and so, but so what. But your children
19 live it.

20 **MS. BERRY:** Of course their children were not raised
21 like they were raised. And they're not raising their children
22 the way -- it's the earning and it's the having. It's a
23 difference.

24 **MS. FRANK:** This philosophy though, instead of
25 saying the apple doesn't fall from the tree, your children

1 carry on your philosophy.

2 **MS. BERRY:** No, not always. They can be exactly
3 opposite to their parents. You have seen kind, wonderful
4 people who came from homes that had no kindness, no love in
5 it, and you wonder how did they get like that. And then you
6 see some dopes that came from wonderful, warm, kind families,
7 and how did they get so mean?

8 **MS. FRANK:** We don't know what goes on in anybody's
9 house, and maybe a lot of it is the luck of the draw.

10 **MS. BERRY:** I think so. My children turned out
11 great. They did. And people say, well, how did you have such
12 wonderful children? Lucky. You're lucky if your kids grow up
13 to please you.

14 **MS. FRANK:** And you were lucky when you married Lou
15 that he had a fine family.

16 **MS. BERRY:** You know, I didn't speak of Lou's
17 family. I guess talked so much. Harold is a fine human
18 being. He's a dear, kind, sweet man. And Selma is like a
19 daughter. When we got married, I said to Selma, I'm not going
20 to try and be a mother to you. You had a good mother. But if
21 we can end up friends, that's pretty good. And you know,
22 we've ended up being very good friends. I love her dearly.
23 And she in turn has good children, grandchildren.

24 **MS. FRANK:** And I know she cares for you very much.
25 She's very proud of you.

1 **MS. BERRY:** Thank you for telling me.

2 When we were first married, she didn't know how to
3 introduce me. She hates the word stepmother. So I said, "Why
4 don't you introduce me as your wicked stepmother and your
5 three ugly stepsisters?" My kids thought of it. Anyway, I
6 was reading an article and I called up and I said, "Selma,
7 your worries are over. I'm really Amy Vanderbilt, and the
8 question is dad has married again. We are very fond of his
9 new wife, but we don't know what to call her. We don't like
10 the word stepmother." I said, "So the answer is, 'I'd like
11 you to meet Dad's new wife, Molly, of whom we are so very
12 fond.'" I said, "Now you have the words. When you introduce
13 me, I want you to say, 'I'd like you to meet Dad's new wife,
14 Molly, of whom we are so very fond.'" So she did, and of
15 course we'd laugh our heads off all the time. Until one day
16 she introduced me to a woman whose name was Molly. Then it
17 wasn't so funny.

18 **MS. FRANK:** Well, I think your sense of humor has
19 really kept the family very close, and I'm sure they
20 appreciate that.

21 **MS. BERRY:** A sense of humor I got from my dad and
22 it carries you through very bad weather.

23 **MS. FRANK:** What would you say has been your
24 greatest accomplishment?

25 **MS. BERRY:** Marrying Lou.

1 **MS. FRANK:** That and your family. Let's talk about
2 the community. That would be your third best accomplishment.

3 **MS. BERRY:** I never accomplished too much. Maybe I
4 had an idea once in a while. You know, I belonged to an
5 organization, American Jewish Congress, and I'd get these
6 great ideas, and I would tell them, and they would say,
7 "That's great. You be chairman." And I was working all the
8 time.

9 One day I realized that I had a friend who was much
10 smarter than me, and she never had any ideas? Baloney. She
11 had the same ideas or better, but she was smart enough to keep
12 her mouth shut, so she never had to do the work.

13 **MS. FRANK:** But I think a lot of this is leadership
14 and knowing when to open your mouth, and people listen to you.

15 **MS. BERRY:** Sometimes I'm right. Sometimes I'm not.
16 I'm just an ordinary human being. It seems to me I've never
17 worked hard at anything. Everything's come kind of easy.
18 I've had hard years, very hard years. I raised three
19 children. Marci was 16 when I married Lou.

20 Well, I say, if you have a sense of humor -- you
21 have to face reality. Life is not a dream. And if you can do
22 that, you can get by.

23 **MS. FRANK:** Now, the role of the volunteer,
24 especially the woman volunteer, has changed over the years.
25 What would you say the biggest change has been?

1 **MS. BERRY:** That there are fewer young women free to
2 join organizations today. There are so many women out in the
3 field working, with good jobs, with good careers, and with
4 help in the house, they don't have time for an organization.
5 I think every organization is looking for not new material but
6 young material. It's hard to find a young person. I mean you
7 used to get married and join Hadassah.

8 **MS. FRANK:** That's what we did as young woman.

9 **MS. BERRY:** You did that. That was the thing you
10 were going to do when you got married. Your mother did it.
11 Your mother surely did it. She was a president of UJA,
12 Women's Division.

13 **MS. FRANK:** Yes. In fact Selma and I were talking
14 about that today, and I said that's why I finished my
15 education and taught school. I wanted to work, and my mother
16 in her day, they didn't do that.

17 **MS. BERRY:** It was unheard of. A woman might help
18 her husband in his business or in his office, but that's as
19 far as it went.

20 **MS. FRANK:** And that's how she used her abilities,
21 and many women in her generation did that.

22 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, yes, that was the norm.

23 **MS. FRANK:** And even in my generation we were just
24 starting to go back to college, to finish our education. But
25 still, in my generation there are many people active that did

1 a good job, but it is changing.

2 Do you think it will come full circle?

3 **MS. BERRY:** I wouldn't even say hope. I don't hope
4 it should or hope it shouldn't. Because why shouldn't a woman
5 express herself and go into the field and show that she's
6 capable of using her talents?

7 Mostly, Jewish organizations, unless it is organized
8 for the sole purpose of education, which many -- Hadassah has
9 education, Federation has many education classes, they're
10 fund-raisers because the money is needed.

11 **MS. FRANK:** So what do you think the prognosis is?

12 **MS. BERRY:** I just hope there will be peace in the
13 world, that people can, with free hands and free hearts,
14 decide what they want to do.

15 **MS. FRANK:** Now, 1967 was a pivotal year in the
16 community in Detroit. This is when the riots were, and they
17 had to make a decision about the Jewish Community Center. Did
18 this have any effect on you?

19 **MS. BERRY:** The riots or -- I was right across the
20 street from the riots. From our back bedroom windows we could
21 see the flares coming from Livernois.

22 **MS. FRANK:** So it did have an effect on you.

23 **MS. BERRY:** Oh, yes. Lou drove a convertible. And
24 he was never afraid of anything. He stayed home for a day
25 maybe.

1 **MS. FRANK:** Did you move?

2 **MS. BERRY:** Because of the riots? No. We moved
3 because my daughters played a dirty trick: they all got
4 married. And here we're stuck in this big house, and we knew
5 we had to move. So we started looking for places, and that's
6 why we moved when we did.

7 **MS. FRANK:** Were you aware of any change in the
8 community after 1967?

9 **MS. BERRY:** Our whole neighborhood changed. There
10 were no Jews left. We were the last Jews left in the
11 neighborhood. Before, everybody you knew lived across the
12 street from you. They all had gone by that time. No, we did
13 not move because of color or race or neighbors. We moved
14 because the house was too darned big.

15 **MS. FRANK:** Now, you say that you knew everybody
16 there. Do you feel at this time that the Jewish community is
17 spread out?

18 **MS. BERRY:** No question. Oh, yes. My goodness. I
19 told you, we used to come to Detroit and visit my relatives on
20 Brush Street. And then we visited them on Buena Vista. And
21 then -- of course by now I'm living in Detroit -- now it's
22 past Seven Mile Road. Now I'm living just south of Maple.

23 **MS. FRANK:** Of course there are more people.

24 **MS. BERRY:** But the Jewish community has spread.
25 It's always spread, but it was never Jewish. We found out how

1 spread it was during the Six Day War, and I went down to
2 volunteer for Bonds. And people came to buy bonds who had
3 never admitted that they were Jewish. They lived in Grosse
4 Pointe, they lived here. No Jewish neighborhood. Suddenly it
5 dawned on them they were Jewish. They never lived or acted as
6 Jews, but they were. Now we have Jewish communities
7 everywhere. There are pockets of Jews all over.

8 I live in an area called Franklin Colony Club. They
9 are a cluster home. We have still many Jews.

10 **MS. FRANK:** So you still have that feeling of being
11 with a family, a Jewish family.

12 **MS. BERRY:** I know a lot of my neighbors. Some I
13 don't. Some are life-long friends. But we're spread out. I
14 think we feel -- this is a ridiculous statement -- safer among
15 our own. Is that why we cling together?

16 **MS. FRANK:** Yes. That's a very good description. I
17 can remember sitting in Israel. I don't remember where we
18 were. We were down by a lake. And I let out with an "oy".
19 And I looked up.

20 **MS. BERRY:** Whatever that means.

21 **MS. FRANK:** And I said, oh, it's okay. And I think
22 you're right, I think the comfort level is good.

23 **MS. BERRY:** I remember Sal Davison, who's Dottie
24 Gerson's mother, went on her first trip to Israel and she
25 stayed in a kibbutz. She put her watch on the sill and in the

1 morning it was gone. She wasn't upset the watch was stolen.
2 It could only have been a Jew.

3 **MS. FRANK:** How much do you do in the community here
4 now? Do you just go to meetings?

5 **MS. BERRY:** Well, every night there's an honor for a
6 good friend of mine.

7 **MS. FRANK:** That keeps you going.

8 Is there anything that you'd like to talk about, any
9 of your experiences that I've missed.

10 **MS. BERRY:** No. I came here as a bride. The second
11 time I was here as a bride. But I always was active in
12 something. I was belonged to the National Council of Jewish
13 Juniors, where I used to come over every Sunday on the tunnel
14 bus to attend meetings. So I had some friends here, a lot of
15 friends. So when I moved here, I wasn't a stranger in town.
16 But there was the feeling that I was finally settled in the
17 group that I fit.

18 I thought it was very good that clubs did things,
19 and you helped people, and it was a good thing to do. And if
20 I could do it, why shouldn't I?

21 **MS. FRANK:** And if you had to do it all over again?

22 **MS. BERRY:** I'd do the same thing. I never learn.

23 **MS. FRANK:** I would think you do.

24 If I asked you to give a message to young people
25 today, what would you say to them?

1 **MS. BERRY:** You know, that's a hard question because
2 when you say to young people, you mean Jewish young people?

3 **MS. FRANK:** Let's not do the whole world. Let's
4 just stick to Jewish.

5 **MS. BERRY:** To reiterate, I like being Jewish. When
6 I read that some actor who's had five non-Jewish wives is a
7 Jew, so what? He's not living as a Jew. I mean a Jew who
8 identifies as a Jew, who gives as a Jew, who studies what
9 Judaism is all about. Not just fight for human rights, my
10 right to be an American. Sure, we fight for our rights. But
11 how about giving a little time to fight for the future of
12 Judaism, which is disappearing. We have so much inter-
13 marriage and we have so many people who are Jewish because
14 they belong to a Jewish country club. And they're not raising
15 their children Jewish. And I'm not talking about being an
16 Orthodox Jew because I'm not. Of course what's good for me is
17 good for America. Remember that cartoon? Bull Moose.

18 But to be pleasantly Jewish, to enjoy being Jewish,
19 to want to carry on, to go by the ethics. And I know there
20 are Jews who do not believe in religion, but they believe in
21 Jewish culture. That's good, too, but it's not enough. You
22 can't pass on your culture, you can't pass on your Judaism.
23 You can send them to all the art schools in the world, the
24 music schools. But you have to make them a Jew.

25 And for the future I hope you'll want to be Jewish.

1 An educated Jew, do good, live ethically, in a world at peace.

2 **MS. FRANK:** Thank you very much, Vivian. This has
3 been a marvelous experience for me, and I know that others
4 will benefit from your words.

5 **MS. BERRY:** Well, I enjoyed being here. Who doesn't
6 like to talk about themselves?