LEXINGTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS, INC.

Interview
Eva Gordon
September 8, 1992

Interview conducted by Nancy Earsy
Videotape length 58 minutes

INT: We're interviewing Eva Gordon about what happened in Lexington in 1971 on Memorial Day Weekend. But before we get into that particular day, Eva, I would like you to introduce yourself, and tell us a little bit about yourself, and tell us where you were before you came to Lexington and just a little bit of background.

EG: I was born in Berlin, Germany in 1922. That makes me now almost 70 years old. My mother was Jewish and my father was Aryan which made me a *"Mischling erste Classe"* which means a mongrel, first degree, and you get it certified, and you get an ID that says so. My mother left for England in 1939 just two weeks before the war broke out, and the plans for me to come with her or to follow her went down the drain, and I stayed with my father in Berlin all through the war and the Hitler years. I came to this country after the war in 1947 thanks to a law that Truman, I think, introduced that let DPs [Displaced Persons] come outside of the quota, and came here, got married to an American. We were married for seven years or eight years. I went to the University of New Hampshire, studied languages because that was easy; I thought the world would be at my feet when I got my degrees. Well it wasn't, and—we'll leave all that stuff there. Eventually Tom and I parted company. I met Bruce, whom you have on tape, and we've been married now since 1956, and have lived in Lexington since 1965. In connection to this event we're going to talk about, my background is that I jumped into that with such glee because here was a country in which I could protest! In which I could be arrested, but it wouldn't be my head. It was a really euphoric experience to be able to disagree with the government or to disagree with the Selectmen and find

out that this is okay, and there were others who were doing it, too. You know, that was the big thing for me. That's why I was saving the memories of it.

INT: That's very interesting.

EG: Because in Germany any kind of resistance had to be done so surreptitiously and was fraught with such danger. Even before the war in Germany I was a member of a Quaker youth group in Berlin. The reason that group was formed by the older Quakers was to help endangered youth. "Endangered" was either racially or politically, and the group consisted of people either *Mischling* like me or people whose fathers were in concentration camps or had lost their jobs because they'd been Socialists. So this was a very nice select group, and we were very comfortable with each other and we did all the things that German youth does like hiking and singing and all that stuff which the Nazi youth did, but we did it also and had all the same enjoyments without being Nazis. Being Quakers, of course, set a tone for pacifism, for passive resistance, all these good things that one absorbs as a young person, just sort of by osmosis it becomes part of you, although I'm not Quaker and never was.

INT: You mention pacifism, and your interest in protesting because you're allowed to without the world shattering about you. Had you been involved in protests or demonstrations before 1971 here?

EG: It's almost a joke: In 1948 when I was at the University of New Hampshire, at that time Truman introduced universal military training. Some of my friends there were protesting universal military training, and they said Eva, "You come on, will you give a speech?" and asked me to give a speech. "I'll give a speech," and my two minute little talk outside in front of some big rock there was completely drowned out by protestors of my speech who were honking their horns. I was trying to say, "Look, people, you were just friends with the Russians, and now suddenly you're

enemies again? I remember when you were shaking hands; I was there when the Russians and Americans were shaking hands. Don't be led by the nose." Nobody heard that speech, and it took two minutes, and off I was. About five years later there was a knock on my door and I was alone at home, living in Brookline, and there were two people identifying themselves as CIA, and they wanted to talk to me, and I said, "Listen, the last time something like this knocked on my door it was the Gestapo," and they were kind of insulted. "Well, we're not the Gestapo," and so I let them in and they wanted me to sign something that I was loyal to the United States or something, and I said, "I'm not going to sign anything. Why should I sign anything?" They said, "Okay, you don't have to," and they disappeared again. I found out later that they had interviewed people, talked with people in the various places I had been just prior to living in Brookline, and that was just during the McCarthy era, so I'm on somebody's blacklist. I thought that was wonderful. [Laughter.]

INT: You weren't scared, though?

EG: I wasn't scared then either. No. I felt I could say, "Hell no, I'm not going to sign anything," and I felt pretty comfortable about that.

INT: And at this time were you working?

EG: I was about to get a job in teaching. Yes, and then I had to sign a thing anyhow, which I didn't mind. Everybody did, but not because of that particular incident.

INT: So there were some requirements around teaching, but you had to be loyal.

EG: Yes. It was a joke.

INT: But people just signed it?

EG: Oh, sure. If they were really Communists they would have signed it. You know?

INT: So, you were teaching? Moving into the time after the fifties and the sixties—were there other events or political issues that you felt strongly about and were involved in?

EG: I wasn't involved. I mean, the whole McCarthy era was pretty awful, but I was studying and was completely involved in…it took me twice as long to read a book than everybody else.

INT: Because German was your first language?

EG: Because [English] still wasn't my language, right. And so on, writing a paper; I studied hard…

INT: Moving into 1971 and Lexington, then on the Green, how did you learn that the Vietnam Veterans Against the War were coming to Lexington? Do you remember?

EG: Bruce—that's my husband—he was the one that really was very angry about the whole thing, and I was a fellow traveler. I was a very avid and delighted fellow traveler, but all the thinking on what shall we do, and where shall we go, and so on, I left that up to him. Whatever he decided was fine with me. As long as we were protesting and as long as we were doing something, I went right along.

INT: So Bruce found out about it and you…

EG: Bruce found out about it. I trotted along through first the Hanscom protest where we heard—what's her name? Bass?

INT: Yes, Emily Bass. Who was she?

EG: She was…was she a student or was she…? I don't remember. Listen, I can't remember what I did yesterday, so twenty years ago what I remember is only the feeling, tone.

INT: What do you remember about that as you joined the veterans at lunchtime—did you?

EG: Yes. We went up to Fiske Hill.

INT: What do you remember about that?

EG: It was a lovely day, and everybody had a picnic, and I particularly enjoyed…I have a picture of this young man, who was—this is absolutely my favorite young veteran—who had picked up a dog, a little dog, and he was draping it—here.

INT: Let's see, which one is it now? Hold on just a second. I'll just take that into focus. [Photograph is shown; other pictures are shown and briefly discussed.]

INT: We were talking, Eva, about the picnic and you mentioned a Vietnam vet with a dog, and the sign…

EG: Yes. I've been hoping to use it again: "If they mean to have peace, let it begin here," which echoes the words on the stone on the Green, "If they mean to have war, let it begin here." You know, hold your fire, but…

INT: Which is a wonderful turnaround.

EG: Yes.

INT: So, it was a nice day and you had a picnic. Do you remember whether you prepared that picnic?

EG: Oh, no. Heck no. We took sandwiches along. But then you met everybody. You met your friends, you know, there was good old Wes Frost, and there was Stilly [Stillman] Williams, and there was Herb Glucksman, and there was everybody that you knew.

INT: So, you had friends in the community who were protesting also?

EG: Um hmm.

INT: And was that part of the pleasure?

EG: That was absolutely part of the pleasure, and then we marched into town. It's single file. They have pictures of that, onto the Green, and so on. Then things proceeded as Bruce told you about it with the Selectmen not wanting the veterans to have their bivouac and offering them the dump, and the veterans saying no, the townspeople saying no. Then we decided

okay, so they're going to get arrested, we'll get arrested. So we brought our blankets and we were all set, and there was another lovely evening. It was warm at first and I remember I wrote down someplace that the birds were singing and the lilacs were smelling and the bottle of wine made the rounds, and again you met some other friends, and it got darker and darker and colder and colder, and we'd say, "Gee, when are they coming? I mean, it's getting cold here. Let's hurry up with your arrests." Finally 2:00 o'clock [AM] the only moment of disorderly conduct came when we were all rushing to the buses.

INT: Why was that disorderly?

EG: Well it was perhaps not that disorderly; it was just rush-rush. [Laughter.]

INT: In other words, people wanted to get on the bus?

EG: Wanted to get on the bus,.

INT: Were you among the first?

EG: No, we weren't going to be greedy about it. Then the church bells began to ring and that was another romantic moment. At that time we were not members of that church and we wished we were there.

INT: But it made you feel good about the church?

EG: It made us feel good about the church and about the town and about everything. We got to this oil-spilled cement floor in the depot [Department of Public Works building]. In those days—it was 20 years ago—it was still possible for people like Bruce and me to sleep on a cement floor. Now we wouldn't be able to do it anymore, but then we slept on the cement floor on our blanket and that was fine.

INT: So, you had your blanket. You were all prepared, and you just went with the flow?

EG: Right.

INT: What do you remember on the Green: there was camaraderie? Did you talk to any of the soldiers, any of the vets?

EG: We talked to people. I don't even know whether they were vets or not. There was a fellow sitting on our blanket, and I don't know who he was, but sure we talked, and the girl that was singing these folk songs and we didn't see her but as it got darker we just heard this disembodied voice.

INT2: And you were there?

EG: Only we didn't know each other then yet.

INT2: That's right. It's somebody's blanket I shared, and I still haven't figured out who it was. It was a couple, because I was the only in my family who was arrested. I wanted to thank them. So, if it was your blanket, thank you.

INT: But what about the town barn [Department of Public Works building]? You mentioned trying to sleep…

EG: Yes. The Public Works depot. What took them so long to arrest us was they had to remove the equipment out in the yard. That's why they kept us there so long. So they had moved all this stuff out. I have a picture of it someplace, too. I went the next day to take the scene of the event. The next day it rained like cats and dogs, and when we had to troop to Concord to pay our five bucks it was raining.

INT: What do you remember about court?

EG: Nothing much. The judge—what was his name?

INT: Forte.

EG: Forte, yes. He was a tennis friend of one of my friends who was also arrested, Peggy Gerstenfeld. Do you remember Peggy? All right. She had no flies on her [laughter] and so she was, I think, saying some appropriate things to him while she was paying her $5. I think there again it was a lark. It was all just a lark. Then we called a friend who lived in Concord, and said, "Hey Joe, give us a ride home. It's raining and we have

to…" and so our friend Joe regretted that he hadn't been on the Green, and he gave us a ride home. That was Joe Salerno. It was absolutely in spirit with us.

INT: How did you feel about this tennis-playing judge?

EG: I didn't know at the time that he was…I didn't think much about that.

INT: You weren't mad at him?

EG: No, he was just the judge. He was doing his job.

INT: So, everyone was playing a role?

EG: Everybody was playing a role, yes.

INT: What about the policemen?

EG: They were decent, you know. At one point I remember talking to [Police Chief] Corr. He was pretty immutable. He stood there when we had the meeting in the Town Hall the night before and subsequently I said something to him, my usual flippant way, and he didn't crack a smile. It was no laughing matter to him, but other than that everybody was just…

INT: So, some people didn't take it the same way?

EG: He was on duty, now this is serious business here.

INT: What do you remember about the follow-up to the arrests here in town?

EG: Then we mobilized to get rid of the Selectman who had brought this about. And we went to meetings in which—what was his name? Sandy?

INT: Brown.

EG: Sandy Brown was then promoted as a candidate and eventually elected, and I remember lots of—who is the lady with the pipe? Elizabeth…?

INT: Carr? No.

EG: Yes. I remember her pipe, and she was…so you met a lot of other people, whom I still now meet and say, "I remember you from when we were in jail together." Several times later I met John Kerry when he was now running for Senate or when he was a Senator. When I was a counselor in Needham High School, Senator Kerry came to talk to the students, and I marched up to him and I said we were in jail together. [Laughter.] He didn't particularly respond to that.

INT: He didn't want to remember?

EG: I don't think he wanted to remember that. But I did it several times to him. There was another location. We went to a coffee or something where Carter was speaking, was introduced—this was in Cambridge—and there was John Kerry standing next to me, and I said we were in jail together. That time he was a little more friendly about it, but he didn't like what Carter had to say. He said it was pablum.

INT: But the local reaction was mobilizing and political. Do you remember any negative reaction from neighbors or people?

EG: I don't know. Just things in *The Minuteman*. I guess some of the letters in *The Minuteman* were not exactly positive. My friend Larry, he didn't like the bells waking him up. But I did not experience any awkward hostility. Maybe people might have argued or disagreed, but I didn't find any outright hostility, and it was more finding people who agree with you that was so much fun.

INT: What was it that people were agreeing with?

EG: That, number one, the war in Vietnam was a big mistake; that, number two, it was perfectly crazy to go and be killed there, and it was perfectly all right to protest—you know, not to go—that these soldiers or people like Clinton had a right to say "no." I wish [President] Clinton would say now that that was a good thing he did it; you know, be proud of it. That was a good decision he made, and he should be proud of it.

INT: Do you think that growing up in Germany gave you a greater sense of your own mind about things than perhaps some Americans have?

EG: I think so, yes. I think so, because I felt everybody should take advantage of this opportunity to be able to speak up, to have a say, because that way you prevent a dictatorship or…

INT: Do you see some differences in yourself in that respect from some of your friends and neighbors and associates here in town?

EG: As compared to what happened in Germany?

INT: In terms of being ready to take a stand.

EG: Yes. On the street. It feels very good to have bumper stickers: "Congress Vote Against Proposition Whatyoumacallit." And go to the Stop & Shop and sign petitions for this and that referendum. It makes me feel good, because all of this was not possible in Germany, and it really was so suppressed. People do not understand how dangerous it was, and how the slightest thing that somebody did or a joke that somebody could tell would land them in a concentration camp. Why didn't people protest? Why didn't people? They couldn't. Unless they wanted to put their life on the line, which Jehovah's Witnesses did because they refused to go to war, and they were just killed. So if you feel you're going to right the world, then that's wonderful. Then you will let yourself be killed. If you don't believe that, then you don't do it.

INT: And you experienced the CIA showing up at your house, but it didn't chill your spirit?

EG: No. When I said to them, "Oh, the last time it was the Gestapo," I thought they would break out in laughter or something. They were miffed, and again, I was a little reassured that they were miffed. But I wasn't afraid of them. Maybe I should have been. Maybe I really did believe in this country being free and open and democratic.

INT: Do you still?

EG: Yes, I do. Because I think we can organize and we can protest, and we're not always successful, and some idiots are…you know, you have Buchanan, and Dave Duke and people like that running around, and even McCarthy was eventually curbed, and so it…

INT: You feel the system has a way of correcting itself?

EG: I think so. Maybe not immediately; maybe not as fast as one wished, but yes, I think it does.

INT: And did you feel that that was what was happening in Lexington around this particular campaign?

EG: Yes. Because eventually we…I feel it's a fairly good place, too.

INT: You mentioned in terms of your primary reason for wanting to be involved was being against the war and wanting to stop the war.

EG: And supporting my husband, who was more so than I was. The funny thing is that here was Bruce growing up in Medford 6,000 miles away from me, an entirely different set-up, and the youngest of nine children. I was an only child. He came from a, I guess, middle class. My parents had this aspiration toward…in Germany you're more class conscious and so on. None of this made any difference. We saw and agreed on all the essential things and to this day I don't know why we do, but we just do. We're puzzled about it all the time.

INT: Do you think the actions that people took here in demonstrating did help end the war?

EG: I'd like to think so. I don't know for sure. Well, Nixon, when did he finally say, "Elect me and I'll end the war," and then it took another four years. But I don't know. What do you think?

INT: I think it adds up.

EG: You think it did?

INT: But it's one little piece.

EG: Yes, and that is all it is. And one has to put one's little piece in there, if one has a little piece.

INT: And so that's part of your motivation, too?

EG: That's right. Single-handedly nobody can do anything, but if you have a right idea, you owe it to yourself and you owe it to everybody else to come forward with it. You know, this old [saying], "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem."

INT: I hardly need ask this, but would you do it again?

EG: Yes. Want to do it tomorrow?

INT: Do you see any issues today that you might be called upon to do something like this to protest?

EG: Well, when the Persian War [Gulf War] was about to happen, and we stood by with our little signs. We still have them on Mass Avenue, and had people either cheer or jeer. Yes, that was an exciting time, too, because I never heard such wonderful debates in Congress on both sides. That was really great; some people made fantastic speeches. Even Gore, who was at first opposed but then supported the President, but his reasoning was very thought-out, agonized over. You know, it gave me a good impression of Gore even though I disagreed with him. This fellow from…had just been elected…

INT: Wellstone?

EG: [Minnesota Senator Paul] Wellstone, right. Who said I had wished to make a different maiden speech here in Congress, but this is what I have to say, and he was tremendously eloquent. Even Kerry was good. So, yes, there are issues that keep coming up and yes, this whole…

INT: Let's stay with the Gulf War for a minute. It seemed to me that it wasn't even close in terms of a decision to go or not to go, that the majority of people and the majority of sentiment was very supportive of going over

there and giving Saddam Hussein a good whack. Why do you think that would be? Why was there such a vast difference on a…

EG: Versus Vietnam?

INT: Yes.

EG: Because of the figure of Saddam Hussein who I also see as a very dangerous person, who was doing some very dangerous and incredible and brutal things. Here is one man I felt if…if Hitler had been stopped in 1938 or even in 1936, we would have saved a whole lot of stuff. So, part of me felt, yes, Saddam has to be stopped. My pacifism goes only so far, but I did feel at the time let's not rush into it. Let's see if the sanctions will work. Let's see if the United Nations can be more…and Kuwait doesn't send me. You know, Kuwait, there's no great democracy that one wants to defend all the sheiks there, so I have mixed feelings about that. I have mixed feelings about Israel, too, because I see on the one hand these people that got finally their country and finally supposedly could live in peace and the Arabs have been and the British have been treating them badly for lo these many years, but they shouldn't be driven into being just as bad as everybody else. So, therefore, that stinks. That's takes us too far. I think the Likud takes us too far.

INT: I think that we've completed the questions I have for you, and I was very interested in your answers.

INT2: I'm curious about how you met the Quakers in Berlin.

EG: Oh, my mother's cousin Paula had…according to my mother a religious craziness came over her and she became a Quaker. It was a good Jewish family and the whole Jewish relatives felt she was just crazy, and she became a Quaker, and her son Ted, who was a couple of years older then, said to me one day, "Hey, you ought to come to the school. We're meeting every Monday and we're singing songs and we're having discussions and go on hikes—wouldn't you like to come?" and so that's how I got there. It has

really changed my life. Aunt Paula's religious craziness was really a godsend, you might say.

INT: How was it precisely that it appealed to you? You said you didn't become a Quaker, but that whatever you were learning and exposed to in that group changed your life.

EG: First of all that I had this group of young people that you need when you're an adolescent. You need friends. You need to belong someplace; otherwise I wouldn't have had anything. But the people themselves I knew what they were—they were doing things. They were helping Jews when it was highly dangerous. They were the most decent people I've ever met in my life. In a very understated—well, isn't that what one does—kind of attitude which really became a role model for a young person, and so all the survivors of this group are still in touch, and they're in Australia, in England, in Germany, in America. We visit each other. We talk. We write. The cohesion is still there.

INT: Eva, did you communicate to any of your friends from that Quaker group that you were arrested?

EG: Oh, I'm sure we did, yes. One of the girls visited, and she went on a march in 1960. She must have gone on a civil rights march. She was just visiting from Germany. So this is in our blood, in all of our blood.

INT: You talk also about singing songs. You didn't sing the songs that the Hitler youths sang?

EG: Oh, no.

INT: What kind of songs did you sing? Music seems to play a big role in all of this.

EG: Well, this is German youth romanticism, and one of the songs that is in my book that—revolutionary songs—and it's called "Die Gedanken Sind Frei" which means "Thoughts Are Free," and that became sort of our hymn, our thoughts are free; they break through any barriers; you cannot

prevent them from… In a book in America that I just picked up at the church fair about revolutionary songs that changed the world that is one of them.

INT: That's one of them?

EG: Yes. And hiking, you know, the there are millions of hiking songs, and nature songs, and love songs, and so on.

INT2: May I jump in with a question? When you came to the United States and went to school, and then you were married, and then you later lived in Brookline, and then you came to Lexington. When you came to Lexington did you become part of any of the community groups that were happening or any of the organizations?

EG: No, not at first, because I was working. I was commuting to Needham every day.

INT2: Because you were working at a high school?

EG: Yes. Guidance Counselor, Needham High School for 30 years, and so I came home and I collapsed on the couch. It's only now that I'm retired I have time and energy to do stuff I enjoy doing and I don't mind.

INT2: Along the same lines, the positive impression you had of the church bells ringing and now many years later you are a part of that church?

EG: Yes. Again.

INT2: How did that all come about?

EG: Well, my husband. One of the people I was commuting with to Needham was Carol Scott, and Marvin Scott—Marvin was Carol's husband—and so Marvin, when we went over and had supper with him one time said well, you know, we're just working on a new creed, "something" affirmation—the book about…

INT2: Unity affirmation?

EG: Unity affirmation and "What do you think of it, Bruce?" And so Bruce said, "Oh, this is interesting." He talked about [minister] Helen Cohen, what a wonderful person she was, and you should come some time. So, Bruce went and came back and said "Oh, I don't want to go to church, I don't want anybody to sermonize to me. Absolutely not." But he went a couple of times, and "Oh, you ought to come. You'll enjoy it." I did, and I enjoyed it, and so eventually we decided, well, we'll put our signatures where our ears are, and Marvin was our so-to-speak, what do call—Godfather? [Laughter.] We signed the book, and that's how we joined the church. This was long after it had been such a…with [former minister John Wells], Shea-Wells and all—such a controversial thing.[1] Now we just enjoy Helen Cohen and all the people that are pretty sensible people. You know, this old story about if Moses had come down from—if he would have been a Unitarian—he would have come down from Mount Sinai with the Ten Suggestions and not the Ten Commandments. [Laughter.] I like that.

INT: Is the church involved in any social program at the moment?

EG: Yes, the church has a very active social responsibility committee consisting of five people of whom Bruce and I are two-fifths. Maybe it's going to be six people or seven people next year. We have done things on the Central American problem, helping people get bail for…we put in a big concert one time—Florda Cana—and raised money for bailing people out that have been illegally kept or something. Then we got into the environment and put out a questionnaire, getting people to save water and do stuff like that that's good for them. And then homelessness, and put out a little booklet on how there are ways in which you can help and

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[1] Shea-Wells refers to legislation drafted by Massachusetts legislator James Shea and John Wells, minister of First Parish Unitarian Church. The legislation prohibited Massachusetts reserve troops from serving with U. S. forces fighting in an undeclared war, i.e., the Vietnam War. It was enacted by the Massachusetts legislature and signed into law by Governor Francis Sargent in 1978. Upon appeal, the U. S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case

organizations you can support or places you can give your furniture to, your money to, or people you should write to change this or that law, a whole booklet on that, and then the thing that's really close to my husband's heart is world government. In other words, we put out a booklet on global—global what, Bruce?

BG [Bruce Gordon]: Oh, various global problems and how they interrelate.

EG: How the various global problems interrelate, and so everything that the social responsibility committee has done is somehow immortalized in a booklet. A lot of work, and now we're working on health care, and Nancy [Earsy] is going to be moderator of a forum to which you're all invited on October 28 with various panelists discussing the issue: What message do we want to send to Washington about health care and needs and so on? It's going to be wham-bang.

INT2: Were the people who were a part of your group in Germany and whom you still write to also involved in social consensus?

EG: One friend she became a member of the Quakers and she's very much involved in Quaker activity and whatever they are doing. But the other friends have fallen by the wayside. My cousin Ted, the crazy Paula's son, came here as a student, went to school, came in as an immigrant, and when the war broke out he volunteered or something and was put in the CIC because he spoke German (that's Counter Intelligence Corps), and was sent to do all that stuff, and he stuck with it. Now his and my views are very divergent because FBI and all these things he has a lot of positive feelings about, and of Commies where he interviewed them also eventually, and had kind of…so cold war shenanigans where all…and he still doesn't talk about it much, now even though he is retired he won't say much. He's been brainwashed to keep his mouth shut. His Quaker pacifist ideas went out the window pretty soon. My friend in Australia, I think the same thing.

But my friend in England, she and I are members of Amnesty International. So she is still in the same groove.

INT2: And in Germany—you said you still have friends in Germany?

EG: Yes, there are ones who are Quakers in Germany. One of the guys became a criminal, he joined the criminal police. However, he is doing all these wonderful things now that he is retired for elderly people, giving lectures to old ladies about how to protect their pocketbooks against…and working as a member of the Social Democratic Party and doing all kinds of socially good things. So he also had absorbed the…

INT2: Were you in East Berlin or West Berlin?

EG: See, there was no east or west. There was all one big Berlin before the war or during the war. It was only after the war that the Russians divided it, and where we lived happened to be West. But there is a house that my grandmother owned in East Berlin, and now there is a big thing that I own a quarter house in East Berlin, but can't get at it very easily.

INT: You're not going to show up and claim it?

EG: Well, yes, I've claimed it, and some of my co-heirs have also, but it's red tape. So I have a foot in both east and west.

INT2: I have a question. I'm not even sure how to ask it. You obviously saw some terrible things when you were growing up in Germany and your consciousness was scorched with the reality of…to be visible could end your life, and yet you seem to have a tremendous amount of confidence that once here in this country you could be saucy to the CIA and you weren't scared. Can you just trace how in your lifetime in Germany and then once you got here, did you begin to test the possibility?

EG: Chutzpah. You know chutzpah? When I wrote my little story there for Temple Isaiah the first thing people say, "Oh, but you don't express any fright. You seem to have enjoyed life. How could you? How

could you?" So I had to think about it. Your question I thought about. Number one, my mother from the first…I was ten years old when Hitler came to power, and it's then that I found out I was half Jewish. I hadn't the slightest idea before, and then she put it in terms of it was something special. I should be so proud of it. I was a descendent of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. Well, hell! You know, Queen of Sheba and King Solomon! She said it as a joke, but still with a certain amount of…so that was one of the things. Furthermore, my mother was a great denier, and I picked up the denial of unhappy bad things you don't talk about. You don't acknowledge much. In front of me they didn't they didn't talk about things, and when I was ten, eleven, twelve I was kept pretty much out of things. And then I had very positive experiences with friends in Germany that were, although not Jewish and although not *Mischlinge,* also not Nazis. When I told them, and I always did, my unfortunate racial background, they accepted me right away. There was never a question, and at one time I had a friend that was Jewish and she was in danger of being deported and I spoke to my other friends about it, and without a question they said, "Well, Eva, let's meet her," and they met her, and they decided to hide her, and so she survived the war with the help of a whole group of friends who brought food stamps and various things, and she survived. And this was just…you know, one did that. They did that, and that gave me a great feeling of…I had a lot of positive experiences where people are heroes, when they were doing a little thing. So, does that answer that?

INT2: What it doesn't explain is how you felt so safe here.

EG: I sort of expected this to be safe.

INT2: Yes, but why?

EG: Well, because this is where one went to immigrate. This is where one fled from the Nazis to. This is the country that let you in. Now that there was [also] a great abandonment of the Jews, and that a ship like the

St. Louis was turned around, [but] all this I didn't know, and I'm only finding out gradually later on. The expectations in my youth and when I first came and when I first lived here was that this is a free country, and, by gum, it's a free country.

INT2: I guess I'm trying to figure out where you got indoctrinated with that. Was that in school?

EG: No, no, no. This is family. This is our people around me who immigrated to America because they knew that they would be safe there, and once they got here they were tremendously grateful for having been allowed in, and so isn't it wonderful that we can say what we want to say, and we could say what we wanted to say. The difference between living in a country like Germany and America is so obvious that even though there's lots to criticize, by comparison it's really…you know.

INT2: Have you been back to see it?

EG: Yes.

INT2: Has the country changed?

EG: Oh, gosh, yes! Just tonight they had a thing on television about the skinheads and the right wings doing horrible things to the foreigners and I don't know [Chancellor Helmut] Kohl is sitting on his hands. I don't think Kohl is much of something to be proud of. So, yes, it has changed a lot. But we went back in 1961, and I put my husband into all the…you know, there was a big gap in the years. The house where I used…of course, there's no house any more. I put him in front of the blank space and took his picture, and here was the place where we always such and so, and I took his picture. It put him into my past with pictures. And in 1969 I went again and then in 1986 I went. My aunt turned 100 years [old] and so everybody came, and three months later she died. She just hung on to be 100. But it was her father, my grandfather, who would have been 100, too, had he not died in Theresienstadt. Theresienstadt was one of the

concentration camps where they took old people or sick people. The Nazis made it out to be a real treat, but it was just as horrible as all the other places, and from there his two daughters and…in other words, two aunts of mine and so on were taken to Auschwitz. I found out about it because I came over on the boat. I met some people who had just come from Theresienstadt who knew my aunt and uncle, and I mean thousands of people were there. They knew them and they told me what had happened. So that…how did I get there?

INT2: How old were you then?

EG: In 1942 I wrote to them in Theresienstadt and that was in 1942, so I was 20, and I have some postcards from that.

INT2: So you were there until you were 20?

EG: I was in Berlin until two weeks before the Russians came in 1945. So I was, yes, 22.

INT2: You mention taking pictures and putting your husband in your past. You took a lot of pictures here; was there a sense as you were participating that this was something to record, that this was history in the making?

EG: Yes, absolutely. I had that feeling that this is an historical event, and I think it was. I'm so glad that you guys are resurrecting it from the dust.

INT2: When we get our little case in the library—I told you the story that they cancelled it when the Gulf War began…it didn't work out. When we get out our new case in the library, I'd like to put your album in it, right? The pictures of…because I think a lot of us did feel it was historically important. A lot of people when we had the first sort of exploratory meetings also said they even that night were afraid that something was going to happen.

EG: Oh, really, like what?

INT2: Your bravery stands out. Maybe those of us who are inexperienced with Quakers were sort of naive. That sometimes when I think about fear, maybe we should have been afraid.

EG: No, no, because again, if you're afraid, then things will happen and people can take advantage of your fear.

INT2: Yes.

EG: Right now I told you I'm helping this Polish woman write her story, and she survived. She was also a young girl, and she survived three years in the ghetto, Krakow ghetto, and then half a year in Auschwitz, and she was marched by Mengele for the selection. You know, the doctor that [selects]: "left—in our gas chamber; right—you go to work." She wrote a diary at the time which survived, and some of the stories and some of her experiences were where she braved the…and impressed people by being brave. She might have been killed, but people were not…people who were afraid were killed. So, it was a good chance to take.

INT2: There's a book, Eva, by Stringfellow Burr, a Quaker. It's called "Speak Truth to Power." Do you think that's what it's about?

EG: I think that's a good line, yes. Speak truth to power? I like that. I admire people who can express themselves well and can say it in a reasonable way; I'd get excited, I couldn't do it, like I wouldn't be a good…I'm following this campaigning now, the election campaigning and so all these things that could be said and that…

INT: Some of them are getting said, really.

EG: But I like Clinton. When Bush claims that he's like Truman with "The buck stops here," and Clinton says, "The buck doesn't stop here; it doesn't even slow down."

INT: I like what you said, though about wanting him to take a stronger stand on his stand during the Vietnam War. He's been defensive on that the way [Michael] Dukakis was defensive about being a liberal, as if it was

something wrong. That seems to be a good point, when you make your letter to write to him to say that we want him to proud of what he does.

EG: Yes. Maybe not one person, but maybe this Lexington group we should write him a letter. Can't we do that?

INT2: We should. I think we should.

EG: Why don't we?

INT2: Good point.

EG: Because a group letter will have more chance of getting his attention as millions of…

INT2: Yes. Not proud of not fighting, but proud of taking a stand against killing people for the wrong reasons.

EG: Exactly.

INT2: You draft it. I'll sign it. We all will.

EG: Good.

INT2: In fact, you can take it to the town Democratic Committee and get everybody there to sign it. Right? Or most of them, I would think.

EG: Wonderful. See, this is the kind stuff I like. This is what you can do in this country. You know? Hitler's strategy was having people in a beer hall, in a pub, you know, seven people he started with. So—one, two, three, four, five—well, six..

INT2: And Bruce.

EG: And Kafka. [Laughter.]

END OF INTERVIEW