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## **Bloomfield, Alice oral history interview**

Steve Hochstadt

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**ALICE BLOOMFIELD  
LAGUNA HILLS, CALIFORNIA  
10 JUNE 1990**

**Interviewer: Steve Hochstadt**

**Transcription: Paula Wood  
Shane Stoyer  
Steve Hochstadt**

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**Steve Hochstadt:** Mrs. Bloomfield, what I'd like you to do . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . is, start from the beginning of your, really the beginning of your life. Tell me where you were born, and a little, just a little, about your family and what they did.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh, yeah?

**Steve Hochstadt:** And then sort of quickly up to the time that you first thought about going to Shanghai. And, and then all about preparations for going to Shanghai and the trip to Shanghai . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh, oh, even that you want . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Yes, I'm quite interested in what happened before you got there, because I think that's important, too.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Very important.

**Steve Hochstadt:** And then all about the time you were in Shanghai, even though it was brief, and then about leaving Shanghai . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . and coming here.

**Alice Bloomfield:** I don't know how short could I, today I could have prepared myself, if I would have known that, I don't want to take too much . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Oh, no, no, you can't say too much.

**Alice Bloomfield:** That's what I say!

**Steve Hochstadt:** You can only say, you can only say too little.

**Alice Bloomfield:** [laughs] Too little, yeah, I see, yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** I may ask you some questions . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . as we go along to try to get more details.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Maybe, you s-, if I ask you a question that you don't want to answer . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . please tell me, say that you don't want to answer.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** That's all up to you . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** What else can I say? What I, what I will do with this tape, as soon as I can, or as soon as I can get one of my students to do it, is to type out everything that you say, so we have a nice transcript . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh, I see.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . and then I'll send you a copy . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** That would be nice.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . and I will also, I'd like to give a copy of this to a Jewish archive, perhaps the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, because I think it's important to save all of these things for future generations, for scholars.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Do you think so? I don't know, I'm afraid that the Judaism, well, I don't know. I shouldn't say it. But I'm afraid that we don't have too much chance any more.

**Steve Hochstadt:** That may be, that's, perhaps that's why it's even more important to save these . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** You know?

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . things.

**Alice Bloomfield:** If you see what's going on in Israel, how long time can that last?

**Steve Hochstadt:** I don't know.

**Alice Bloomfield:** That's terrible, but that's the way it is, the way I see it. I don't know, but the point, but I hear, you know? There never can be a Israel without war or [unclear], I mean . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** That's the way it seems sometimes.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Right? The PLO, one day they will take over, they are very strong.

**Steve Hochstadt:** I don't know, if they'll take over . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** They have the support, they have the support from, from all the countries, you know, Iraq and so on, and all the rich countries so . . .

**Paul Feitler:** Well, first of all, there are Jews all over the world.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, but not enough.

**Paul Feitler:** We are not helpless, no . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** We are, we are a minority. I wouldn't know. Too bad that little book. How long time are you still here?

**Steve Hochstadt:** I'm leaving tomorrow.

**Alice Bloomfield:** I wouldn't find it 'til tomorrow. I don't know.

**Steve Hochstadt:** But I'll give you my address, you could mail it to me?

**Alice Bloomfield:** I think I have your address . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Or, wait 'til I come again?

**Alice Bloomfield:** [laughs] All right.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Bring it to my parents, who are just over there, any, anything is possible . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** So. Yeah, yeah. Your parents must be my daughter's age.

**Steve Hochstadt:** My father is 70.

**Alice Bloomfield:** No. My daughter is not, no . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** And my mother is almost 70.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh, yeah? I see.

**Steve Hochstadt:** So, do you want to start?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Sure.

**Steve Hochstadt:** With where you were born and when you were born and a little . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh. When I was born! Oh, do I have to say my age?

**Steve Hochstadt:** No, no, you . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Everybody knows it here, [laughs] but still . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** It's better for me if I know how old you are, but, or how old you were at different times . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** I think the, oh, I see, next month I will be 88.

**Steve Hochstadt:** I see.

**Paul Feitler:** You were born in Berlin.

**Steve Hochstadt:** And you were . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Born in Berlin.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . born in Berlin. Could you tell me a little about what your parents did, what kind, I thought you said your father had a business?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, my father, we had a wholesale business in, how is it?

**Paul Feitler:** Grocery.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Wholesale, yeah. Not exactly grocery, you know, like, sugar, flour, you know, wholesale. And my father was on the stock market in Berlin. And I went to school, *Lyceum*, and one year of Latin, but that was it. And my father, I was an only child, my mother

died when I was eight and a half years. And I didn't want to go in my father's business, I was always a little bit different from all the other girls, you know?

**Steve Hochstadt:** How were you different?

**Alice Bloomfield:** I wanted to make my own money, and I wanted to show my father that I can do it and I did. And I got a job, I was 18 years old in a lawyer's office, and later on I had another job, and then I quit, because I got engaged. And I was, as people know here, I was very, few people are still around who knew me in Berlin. I, I was very well off. We had two children, one, my daughter was born '29, and my son '37. Because we didn't think that something very bad would happen. We thought, maybe with Hitler, that will be over. Like many of our friends were thinking the same thing. And my husband's business clients and so on always said, "Ah, that will be over in a year. Don't leave here. It's nonsense."

**Steve Hochstadt:** What did your husband do for business?

**Alice Bloomfield:** We had agencies in lady, lady hats.

**Paul Feitler:** Millinery.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, millinery. And he traveled quite a lot. And after my son was born, we realized all of a sudden we were wrong. In '38, I think November 9th, *Kristallnacht*, and from one of my husband's, they had a, that was a big factory in, in ladies' hats, you know, they threw everything out of the window, in the streets, and my husband didn't look Jewish at all. He could go downtown, he wouldn't be bothered. And when he saw that, he said it was something he would never forget in his life.

**Steve Hochstadt:** He went downtown the next day?

**Alice Bloomfield:** The same day, even, yeah. The same day. And many of our friends had left already, for Israel, for Brazil. And we had already, in the meantime we got an affidavit from a very rich cousin, I even have it here, I can show it to you, in San Francisco.

**Steve Hochstadt:** So you did that before *Kristallnacht*?



**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** You were thinking already of . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . leaving.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. Then we knew already, in July, about July, I guess June, July '38, we wrote to him. And I, if I'm not mistaken, maybe I have the letter, he wrote back in September thirty- . . .

**Paul Feitler:** Eight.

**Alice Bloomfield:** . . . -eight. '38. yeah. And he didn't want to give the affidavit, he didn't know us, and maybe he was afraid that we would be a burden to him. But the Council of Jewish Women were after him in San Francisco. And so he sent the affi-, affidavit, it was in, he was a millionaire at this time already. But my husband had the so-called Polish quota. He was from Germany, but this part was, after '18, it went to Poland. And, of course, in, for the American consulate, he was Polish.<sup>1</sup> He was born in Germany and, 'til this quota was very, very, you know, overloaded already from all the Po-, Polish Jews, you know? And the German was still good. I could have gone with my children, we had German, we had the German quota. But I wouldn't leave my husband alone. So we all, and my husband said, "The only thing now, we can go to Shanghai." Like many of our friends already did. Like the Lewin boys. And they went shortly before us, three or four months, I guess in January. And we, we left April 20th, Hitler's birthday, we left. I never can forget that. We left Italy on a very beautiful Italian ship, "Julius Caesar".<sup>2</sup> And, but we didn't know, you know, what would happen. On the ship, you know, we all had our evening gowns, everything. You know, we took everything we thought would be of value.

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Blumenfeld was born in Leszno in Posen.

<sup>2</sup> The "Giulio Caesar" of the Lloyd Triestino line arrived in Shanghai on 15 May 1939.

Ridiculous, you know? I mean, it was, I had a, I, we could take a *Lift*, that we could. But not money, and . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** What do you mean a *Lift*?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh, a *Lift* is a, a van, you know?

**Paul Feitler:** Household goods.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Household goods. We were allowed.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Furniture?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, yeah . . .

**Paul Feitler:** Furniture, linens . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** But we didn't take all, linens, we didn't take all our furniture, you know. Because . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** But you could take what you wanted.

**Alice Bloomfield:** This we could take, but no silver, no gold, no jewelry, nothing.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Was there someone to check that you didn't put those things . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** You could, I, we had people coming that packed everything. We couldn't. And they didn't even look, they were very nice. But I was afraid, you know? To put . . .

**Paul Feitler:** It was dangerous.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, it was dangerous, you know? I mean, that was right away . . .

**Paul Feitler:** They could open the things and look in it.

**Alice Bloomfield:** What I said . . .

**Paul Feitler:** You know, if you had something, so you didn't dare.

**Alice Bloomfield:** You didn't dare to do, people did, many, and of course, you know, when they arrived there, they had it. But . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** So you didn't take anything you shouldn't have.

**Alice Bloomfield:** No, we didn't.

**Steve Hochstadt:** And did you make . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** But we gave it to the, what would you call it, the [unclear] from *Geschäft*, he [unclear].

**Paul Feitler:** Well, to the . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** What was he? Moment . . .

**Paul Feitler:** People in business who were . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, no, no, no, she was, she was not Jewish, and she had a boyfriend who was Jewish. She followed him to Portugal at this time. And I gave her all my jewelry. I never saw it again.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Did you think that you would somehow get it back?

**Alice Bloomfield:** I thought, yeah. Because . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** But you had sent it in . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** She was, he was a friend of mine, and he died. And she wrote us, she was a lovely person, I never thought that she would do that. She said everything was stolen from him while he was sick, so it wasn't there any more.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Did, was there anything you could do with money? What did you do with, with money?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Ah, you couldn't do anything with money. You could, you, sometimes you had people that took it out for you. And my husband's younger sister went to Uruguay Christmas eight, '38. And I had some money at home. You could not go to the bank and get it, you know, I mean, that was too obvious. And that money, my husband, I didn't dare, my husband gave it to his sister. And she knew an attaché, I don't know from, I don't know from which country, from what, what continent. And we really got the money later.

**Steve Hochstadt:** You did get the money.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. We got the money.

**Steve Hochstadt:** While you were in Shanghai?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. It came the last minute before the war broke out, '39. Until, we lived for about six weeks in Hongkou, like all the other people. And my husband got very sick, and my son got very sick. And I was standing there, and my daughter, without money, you know, the Committee gave us room, but still, I don't even, I don't know even any more how I managed, I don't know. We didn't have money. I, I forgot that, really. And then the money came, six weeks after we arrived there. And in the meantime, my husband was in the hospital, my son, my daughter got sick, so I really didn't know what to do. And, by the way, the hospital, the American hospital, was excellent. And even the hospital in Hongkou, they had the best physician from Germany and from Austria. And we even knew a few [unclear] people, Doctor, I don't know, Kummermann, Doctor Fischer, I don't know if your parents knew 'em.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bloomfield might be referring to Dr. Franz Fischer or Dr. Fritz Fischer, both from Vienna.

**Steve Hochstadt:** I don't know . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** They all lived in, in, already in the French Concession. And we moved also in the French Concession.

**Steve Hochstadt:** After the money came?

**Alice Bloomfield:** After the money came. Yeah. And we stretched it and stretched it. When we bought some chocolate, we never ate it, the children got that little bit. Or we all had in the evening liverwurst, a piece like this for four people. A little bit butter, you know. Of course, the children, oh, you know, we saw to that the children were fed, you know? But we, I don't know how, I was that small when I left Shanghai. And that I started to make hats there. I'm even in this book under Chapeau, what was it, see, my memory fails me now, let, let, Chapeau, Chapeau-Chic, yeah.<sup>4</sup>

**Steve Hochstadt:** That was your business?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Business, you should have seen the business! Where we lived, we lived in two rooms in, in the French Con-, French Concession. But of course, the rooms, you know, were awful. And people came there, you know, and you couldn't call that a business, but, of course, the name, you know, if you read it. And there was even a lady, she had a very big business, in Rue Joffre, I guess, yeah, and she said, "You can have your one window from my store. I'll see what you can do." I never learned it, I just, six weeks, I've been to a milliner to, or to other Jews. Because Jews couldn't go any more to any business. They didn't have schools, like here. It's different. You went to a shop, and then you learned it. You know?

**Steve Hochstadt:** Do you mean in Germany?

**Alice Bloomfield:** In Germany, yeah. I'll, completely different. And I, I could do it in six

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<sup>4</sup> In the *Emigranten Adressbuch* of November 1939, p. 142, Alice Blumenfeld and the Salon-Chapeau-Chic are listed under *Putzmacherinnen* at 333 Cardinal Mercier.

weeks. And she said, the only thing that you know, need, is a little bit practice. But, you know, you have the idea, you know how to design. And that's when I, I knew that I could, that I would be a designer. I never knew it before. And I made hats for only a few people, it wasn't a business to call. [laughs] And, I didn't, I didn't go in the business that the lady had already, because we would have to have paid something for rent and this and this and this, and my husband said, "We have to keep the little money that we have for America. I won't, I don't want to stay here." And I don't know, if, even if I get a million, he was right. He only wanted to get out. And only a few people, we were the last one on "Tatu Maru", a Japanese ship with two other parties from Shanghai, who left Shanghai. And after that it was over. It was our luck. Of course, we didn't have all the money, was very expensive, and we were sleeping, you know, where all the, the . . .

**Paul Feitler:** The lower deck.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Hmm?

**Paul Feitler:** Lower deck.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Ah, it was not even lower deck, it was, I don't know, where all the machinery is, you know? That's where we slept. Lower deck! [laughs] And we used that, we used the little money we had, and at this time, even the Committee helped us, but more, his first name, Hayim, what was his first name? This man really should go down in a book. What was his first name?

**Steve Hochstadt:** How do you spell his last name?

**Alice Bloomfield:** I guess I forgot that, too. H-A-Y-I-M, Hayim.<sup>5</sup> Yeah, he was a Sephardic Jew. And this man, he was extremely rich, I forgot what he, I forgot his business. And when, you know, people could go to him, and when he liked the people or when he thought that somebody, I don't, I don't know, what his thinking actually was, I don't know. But when I came to him, don't forget, it was 50 years ago, and I was young, and one man, too bad he died in the meantime, too,

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<sup>5</sup> Ellis Joseph Hayim (1911-1984) was a wealthy member of the Baghdadi community, who was active in the organized efforts to help refugees.

he lived in San Francisco, his wife is still there, but I, she even could give you, yeah, some hints, they live close to San Francisco. And Hayim asked, you know, he had several ladies, they were at about my age, what I am now. And then he asked, “Who is this lady?” And he said, “She's, she needs money, too. Tell her to come in.” And the other lady, of course, you know, they didn't like that so much, you know, somebody just came in that he preferred, somebody younger at this time. And I spoke already English, so we had a nice conversation, and he helped us with 50 American dollars, was an amount.

**Steve Hochstadt:** So that you could have passage to the United States?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Mm-hmm, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Why did you go to him in the first place? How did you find out about him?

**Alice Bloomfield:** I heard of him. This Lesser, what's his first, Heinz Lesser, I knew him in Germany, in Berlin. And we met him there, and he was married. In the meantime, he divorced his wife and he married another girl, and he passed away about two years ago. She still lives in Middlebury or Burlington, you can look her up. His name was Heinz Lesser, Heinz Lesser.<sup>6</sup> And she knows who I am. Yeah. And . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** And so you found out about Hayim from . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** About Hayim. He said, “Come. He helps many people. If you are lucky, he will help you, too.” So he did. I got it from the Committee, and . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** What did you get from the Committee?

**Alice Bloomfield:** That, I forgot to, of, only, I remember, 50 dollars . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** But you got some money from the Committee?

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<sup>6</sup> This might be Heinz Lesser, born in Posen in 1913.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, we got some. We could, we didn't have enough money left any more. We had to, to live there, for one and a half years, living, you know, two rooms, when the, the cockroaches in the evening, you know, they just went back and forth, you know, [laughs] over the table. And we lived, the house belonged to *Weiss-*, to White Russians. So what could we say, you know? We could not afford to live differently, and we lived in the city of Shanghai, that was more important. Hongkou, people started to do business, I think you read that, in the meantime, and some did very well. I had a friend for 12 years, and he was in business, and, and I never knew him before, I met him after my husband was dead in San Francisco. He made frames, picture frames. He never did that before, but he was handy and he started to do it. So some people could make a living.

They, in the meantime, Shanghai, not Shanghai, Hongkou was a little bit built up, and we came there. My first impression, we came from the ship, and we had to go all on a, how would you call it, *Viehwagon*, cattle, a cattle van, you know, where they had the, in the morning they had the pigs on it, you know, that was a big thing there, pigs, on account of the, you know they made brushes out of the, yeah. And in the afternoon, they went and got the people that just had, had arrived there for the Committee, you know, what could they do? And then, the whole thing was, you know, a shamble. And there was a church, and we had to stay for two nights in that church.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Where was that?

**Alice Bloomfield:** In Hongkou, everything Hongkou, in the beginning, everything in Hongkou. And then the Committee gave us a room. They paid for that. And that's how we started. And then my husband, he didn't make money, I couldn't make money, that was a, my husband went, he sold liquor. It was also somebody, his name was Gumpatts [unclear], I don't know if he's still alive in, in Los Angeles. I wish, I would like, like to see him. And the other one was Arnsdorff. Arnsdorff still lives somewhere in the East, I don't know where.<sup>7</sup> But I read his name. And they were young at this time. And there was a man from close to Berlin, Fürstenwall, yeah, he knew how to, how should I explain it, to, you know, how to, liquor, you know, the, how to . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** How to make it?

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<sup>7</sup> This might be Herbert or Hermann Arnsdorff.



**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah! He knew . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** How to distill it?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. He knew . . .

**Paul Feitler:** Distill.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, he [unclear] . To me, it, it was all right, I don't know. And my husband sold it in bars, you know. In Hong-, it was all Hongkou. Yeah. But they . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** So how long, you were in Hongkou for six weeks until the money came?

**Alice Bloomfield:** That's all, yeah. Beginning of August, we moved to the city of Shanghai.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Did you have, did you spend all of your time in this little apartment, these couple of rooms in Hongkou?

**Alice Bloomfield:** A couple, yeah, yeah, all the time. Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** You didn't have to stay in the, in the *Heim*?

**Alice Bloomfield:** No, the *Heim* was, that is always Hongkou. It's a big difference, you know? People in Hongkou, some, as I told you, went in business and made a living, you know? I mean, a living over there, that wasn't a living. But they were all very happy at this time that they didn't have to go to a concentration camp. So we knew then, we heard a little bit, but we didn't hear the whole truth what happened. How could we, you know? There, the war broke out, and that we heard later. Because my husband's sister, brother-in-law, and child, you know, they all, and from my family, my, my aunt, my uncle, yeah, several are all disappeared in Au-, in Auschwitz. We, we don't know even how, when, we don't know anything about it.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Mrs. Bloomfield, could I . . .

## BREAK IN RECORDING

**Steve Hochstadt:** I mean you, you were speaking about your family. Could I ask, did other members of your family go to Shanghai or leave Germany?

**Alice Bloomfield:** One sister from my husband went '38, Christmas, to Montevideo. The other sister went '39, I think, always to America. She was married, and her husband, you know, sent the affidavit. She just got married shortly before. And my husband had a cousin there, but they all died in the meantime, in San Francisco. Cousin, yeah. They all, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** When you were leaving Germany, did you try to convince other relatives to go to Shanghai with you?

**Alice Bloomfield:** My husband wanted his sister to come to Shanghai, but she was married to a man who never liked to work very much, and he wanted to wait 'til the other sister who went to Montevideo would send them a affidavit or something. They never did. It was too late then, you know? So, that's why they, yeah, yeah . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** And your father?

**Alice Bloomfield:** My father died so, my mother died very young, I was a little girl, my father died '35.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Ah.

**Alice Bloomfield:** But my father said already, '30, '31 to my husband, you should go to America. I still remember when we lived, left him, and going down, my husband said, "I don't know what is the matter with your father. I should leave here? I have a big business. What would I do in America?" It was very hard on my husband, America. He, he could not succeed here. He, a man who'd made lots of money could not do it any more here, impossible.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Why?

**Alice Bloomfield:** One thing is, he didn't learn English. He went to a humanistic *Gymnasium*. He learned French, Latin, Latin and Greek. And he always said, "It's very, very important that I learned that, to have here a cleaning store in San Francisco." So you know what I mean. And he never, and he was never too strong, it was too much for him.

We had two stores, at first one, then another one, a friend of ours came from *Siberien*, he was there, and he came to San Francisco, and we were in partnership with him. The second store was a very big store. And my husband died in '57, and I had a very hard time then. I still had one store that, my store, you know, I stayed there and, and so, '62, yeah, in '62, I sold the store. And I had a few part-time jobs, but it was not very long, and then I was quite lucky, lucky, I don't know, stock market and in, in mortgages, and so on. I did that all by myself. I was lucky. I dealt with people. I knew they were honest, and I never lost anything. Just the opposite, as you can see.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Yes. Could you tell me more about your trip from Berlin to Shanghai?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, I could.

**Steve Hochstadt:** About what you thought about during the trip, and how, how it was traveling with small children on the boat.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. We left, and my sister-in-law, that was the only one who was there, the one that later died in Auschwitz. Her husband, the child, one, and of mine with a husband, who also had to go later to Auschwitz. They all came to the station when we left. And my maid, who I had for many, many years, I had, she was always the head, I would say, of the household, you know, next to the, what do you call, yeah, nanny for the kids. But she was carrying my son on her arm, and crying, crying, "Leave him here, that poor child in Shanghai. You get him back, that wouldn't last long. You get him back when the, when the whole thing is over." You wouldn't leave a child. You know, with, I mean, we knew, she, who she was, but still, you know, we were the parents. We could have gone to Brazil without the little one, because he could not get the visa, because he was too small. Not a visitor visa. So that we didn't do either. My husband used to say, in German, "*Der Koffer gehört zum Reisenden.*" If you understand what it means.

**Steve Hochstadt:** I understand what it means, but I don't understand what it means.

**Alice Bloomfield:** If you are in business and you have your merchandise in a suitcase, that has to go with you. You don't let it handled by somebody else.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Yes.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Because that you need, and that is, that belongs to you. And the same with a child. And, of course, we were a group of at least 20 or 25 people. All of a sudden, all our friends, yeah, there is something interesting. My husband didn't know how to get tickets to Shanghai, they were very rare at this time already. And we didn't know where to go, where to ask, you know, what line, because you had never heard very much. Nobody told you, you didn't know, all of a sudden, people had tickets. My husband met an old girlfriend of his, and she said to him, "Herbert, my brother will go tonight to", what was our line, wait a minute. What, I forgot the name of the line now.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Lloyd Triestino?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah! Right! Unter den Linden in Berlin, right. Lloyd Triestino. "They should have tickets tomorrow, my brother will go there tonight. If you really want to leave, you have to go there tonight, because they will be sold out right away." We had very good friends, we told them, and the husband of our, of that lady I was friendly with went with my husband, one o'clock in the morning. It was ice cold, and they took Cognac with them, you know? When they came there, there were already three or four people standing.

**Steve Hochstadt:** This was when?

**Alice Bloomfield:** That was in February '39. It opened at nine o'clock in the morning. Eight o'clock my husband calls me up and says, "Listen. Ruth and you, you have to go right away to the bank and bring us money. We have to pay that here, cash." So we both, you know, when they opened the bank, we both got the cash and went down Unter den Linden, it was close to Friedrichstrasse, and brought the money. I think, after my husband, ahead of him, that is even, I guess the late mother of that, of that Mrs. Lesser, if I'm not mistaken. She will know. She came

from Breslau, I don't know, to get tickets in Berlin, you know? And, after my husband, I think there were two or three parties, maybe ten people got tickets, and that was it.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Was the line longer?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Ach, the whole street, you know? 'Til the next corner around, in the meantime. Ten people got tickets, you know. Maybe altogether some for friends, family, I don't know if she gave more than forty or fifty tickets. I don't think so. And we were the lucky ones. And we got only second class, first class was already sold out. So we started to, sold everything, there was not very much left any more anyway. I sold part of my furniture, because I didn't want, I knew. We didn't have any money, wouldn't even know, how could we get them out from custom? We wouldn't have money, you know? I had those huge, you know, in Germany, you know? And beautiful things. Some I sold, of course, not for the price we paid for 'em, and my father paid for 'em, you know. But we sold part, and the other part we took with us. And we left. I forgot . . . .

**Paul Feitler:** [unclear] .

**Alice Bloomfield:** . . . Potsdamer Bahnhof, ja, or Anhalter, I don't know any more, with about 20 or 25 people that we knew.

**Steve Hochstadt:** All going to Shanghai?

**Alice Bloomfield:** All going to Shanghai. All going to Genoa for this ship. In the meantime, they bought them from some dealer, you know, you know how that is, they, they couldn't get the tickets there, so, you know, under the table they could get tickets. And in my compartment, or with us was a very good friend of ours, with a husband and with a son, and we were so excited when we left. She didn't have any relatives, no, at the station, they were from, from Ostpreussen. But my husband's family was there, and mine, and we, I didn't even know any more what was going on, you know? She took my little son in her arm, she was crying, crying, I still see it, and they both fell asleep, my son and her, you know, crying.

In Munich, friends were waiting with a bottle of milk for us, for him. And then, we went to Bolzen, Meran, you know, that's close to Meran. I remember Bolzen from better times. And

there's a train, we all had to go in one room there, I don't know why. They, of course, had, they locked that room, and my son had to go potty. So [unclear] I always had that little pot with me. Nobody said a word, you know, everybody understood, one and a half years old, you know, a baby.

**Steve Hochstadt:** What was his name?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Now, Ernest, Ernest Bloomfield. Blumenfeld was our name in Germany.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Blumenfeld, eh?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, Blumenfeld.

**Steve Hochstadt:** And your daughter's name?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Irene, Irene. Yeah. And, who took that out?

**Paul Feitler:** It was you.

**Alice Bloomfield:** I didn't. No, I didn't.

**Paul Feitler:** I know, you know who did . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Maybe she, maybe she did it. Yeah. And, we were two nights in Genoa, and my son had always a little, I don't know the name, English, *Rosshaar*, *Rosshaar* pillow, that was that, you know. Very, a very thin pillow. [unclear]

**Paul Feitler:** Horsehair.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Horsehair.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Horse-, horse-, what is that?

**Steve Hochstadt:** Horsehair.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Horse-, horsehair . . .

**Paul Feitler:** Horsehair!

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, horsehair. Yeah. *Rosshaar*, yeah, from a horse, yeah. Horsehair, and, I forgot the pillow. And we had already left the hotel, and I wanted to go back and get it. And everybody said, “Don't go back!” We have seen already some, some people in Nazi uniform in the hotel. “Maybe even they take you, when you are, when you are going back there.” And I said, “My goodness, that baby doesn't sleep without that pillow.” But I didn't go back, I was scared.

On the ship, we were all thinking, what will we do there? What will come up? And what will we find there? And how will be our lives there? One party from Vienna even had a bird in a cage. I think the bird died on the trip, I don't know. And in the evening, yeah, we had a lot of money for the, that money we could take, you know, the German money. We could pay on board the ship with it.<sup>8</sup> So every night we had champagne, everybody. Every night I wore one of my evening dresses, I don't know why I took them, I didn't use them any more. [laughs] And everybody, don't forget we were all pretty young, you know, and we said, “Oh! Something will come up.” And my husband bought from the *Bordgeld* with somebody else, I don't know what their name was, but a very expensive camera at this time, and they sold it when we came to Shanghai.

And, of course, the trip was very interesting, because we went, we passed Aden, where the elephants come to the ship, with the trunk, they go even in the window. Aden, I think Calcutta, we, Bombay, Singapore, through the Suez Channel, the, that is something I will never forget. Beautiful. I never have seen the, the Suez Channel again, yeah, because when I went to Israel, at this time, you couldn't go to Egypt. And now it's too late. It was really like you read it, you know, in the Bible, when you, at this time, you know. The caravans, the camels, and the men, you know, who lead them. And then, it's just unbelievable, unbelievable. Like in “1001 Night”, beautiful. And then, we saw Shang-, Shanghai. Oh, we were surprised. What they call there, the Bund.

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<sup>8</sup> Although the Nazis allowed each person to take only 10 Marks in cash, money called *Bordgeld* could be paid to the shipping company, which could be used on the trip.

END TAPE 1, SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B

**Alice Bloomfield:** But that was it.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Did anyone, was anyone able to get off of the ship as you were traveling?

**Alice Bloomfield:** You mean to Shanghai?

**Steve Hochstadt:** Yeah, before that.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Everybody got off . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Before you got to Shanghai. Get off in Aden or in . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Ja, wait a minute . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . Bombay . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Maybe somebody got off, yeah. I know, when one man died, and, of course, they threw him overboard. They all said Kaddish, and that was it, you know?

**Steve Hochstadt:** But otherwise, nobody could get, nobody could get off and stay in Bombay or Calcutta.

**Alice Bloomfield:** No, I don't know of anybody. I wouldn't know.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Was the ship mostly Jews?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Only Jews.



**Steve Hochstadt:** Only Jews.

**Alice Bloomfield:** It was only Jews from Europe. Only. Was a big business, imagine. They make a fortune out of that, the Lloyd Triestino. The, the ship was filled up to capacity.

**Steve Hochstadt:** How many people, do you think, on the ship?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh, my goodness, I wouldn't know. I really wouldn't know. The whole ship was filled up. You couldn't get in the corner there.<sup>9</sup> In the evening they were sitting on the stairs, you know, talking, what will become of us, and so on. And, later on, I think other people can tell you much more, what I know from our, from our friends and so, many from the women worked in bars, what could they do? They didn't know what to do, in the first place, there was no work. In the, at, Shanghai was a, a, in shambles.

But the Jews, not when we were there, did a very good job. They, they started to, you know, they built the houses up, you know, that people could live in, of course very primitive. But I think it was primitive before, too, I don't know. Somebody said at this time, when it was still a city, the people from Shanghai, from Shanghai, went there to live during the summer, summer. I don't know, that I don't know. To me, they were all so primitive. But people had already, where we lived, people, she was from Romania, she had already, downstairs a gas stove, so. And later on when we moved to, to the city, to Cardinal Mercier, she, this Russian woman also had a, a gas stove.<sup>10</sup> But the kitchen, it's not like what we call a kitchen. It's a corner of, to our standards, even then, it was very primitive, very primitive. Yeah, you could, once a week, we could heat up the boiler in the bathroom for a bath, that you could do already, yeah. But otherwise, it was very primitive.

And in Hongkou, I didn't know anybody who had a real bathroom. They all had those big pots, and in the morning, the, you could hear 'em, the Chinese, "Ho-ho-ho-ho", like this, you know, and they carried that out and brought it back. And that was what caused the disease, that's how my husband got sick with dysentery, and my son had *Cha-*, had scarlet fever.

They both, I, we were lucky. For some reason, they both were brought to the American

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<sup>9</sup> The "Giulio Caesar" arrived in Shanghai with about 725 refugees on board.

<sup>10</sup> The Blumenfeld family lived at 333 Cardinal Mercier in the French Concession.

hospital in Shanghai. Of course, that was tops. And the Chinese doctors were tops. And from what I know, all the doctors in Hongkou, German and Austrian doctors, they were good, good to people, helpful. So that this really, I like to emphasize how good they were with everybody who had to go there. After all, you know, they live very, very, how should I say it, under, I don't know even where they lived, but they just had very primitive living quarters. I guess, you know? But they were very, very helpful and good. That should go in this book. Yeah.

We had a friend there, he died a long time ago, Dr. Freund, he was from Berlin, and I had a polyp, it was taken out with ano-, another doctor from Vienna, I forgot his name.<sup>11</sup> In the office, of course, it was not like here, you know, hospital with, with everything, you know, clean, nice. But they didn't send it out to, to a, to a . . .

**Paul Feitler:** Exam.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, they didn't, no, nobody examined something like that, you know, for cancer. At this time, we didn't even know that a polyp could be cancerous. So there is nothing to say. They were very fine doctors. Dr. Sommer, where was he from, I don't know, I forgot that, that I have to say.<sup>12</sup>

**Steve Hochstadt:** You went from a wealthy family or . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . life in Germany to this very primitive life in Shanghai . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** . . . where you didn't have any money, and you had to ask people for money.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Right.

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<sup>11</sup> This may have been Dr. Julius Freund from Berlin.

<sup>12</sup> This may have been Dr. Rudolf Sommer from Krefeld.

**Steve Hochstadt:** What was that like? How did you feel about that?

**Alice Bloomfield:** At this time, when I saw all the corruption going on, and even in Shanghai, you know, I thought, if I don't get it, somebody else gets it. You know? Because everybody was out just for getting money from someplace to get out. And since I had two children, and one was a baby, I was thinking that we should get, get help, like other people got it. And some people maybe even had enough money, and asked for money. That's what I heard, you know?

And when we came to this country, that I remember, we had to pay, I forgot how much, we had to pay something back, here. I forgot, but I know that my husband paid, paid something back to a Committee. That I remember, I don't know any more how much.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Was it easier for you to make this change from being well-off to, to being poor than for your husband?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Why is that, do you think?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Good question. Maybe I was stronger than he was. Our life changed completely. In Germany, my husband was the bread-winner, and that was it. All of a sudden, it turned around. If something came up, like going to the man who gave us the affidavit, my husband said, he was related to him, but there was no, there was no, he said, "I think you better go and talk to him." Because when we arrived here, we lived here first, two nights in a very primitive hotel, from the Committee. And then we went to the Committee. I forgot her last name, Pau-, Paula, she spoke *fliess-*, *fliess-*, fluent German, maybe she was born, I don't know, in Germany. And she said, "Listen, Mr. Lachman has to help you at first, a little bit, I hope you will make it on your own . . ."

**Steve Hochstadt:** Who's Mr. Lachman?

**Alice Bloomfield:** That was our sponsor. And a few weeks my husband didn't do anything. And then he got a job as a night watchman in that big building that Mr. Lachman owned, that big furniture building. I got a job in a trouser factory. Do you remember the Manchester men trousers, heavy like a board, for people, for working, you could . . .

**Paul Feitler:** No.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Even, even to carry they are . . .

**Paul Feitler:** They don't have that any more.

**Alice Bloomfield:** No.

**Paul Feitler:** You would know.

**Alice Bloomfield:** I had to, I had to sew on the sewing machine the seams. Imagine, never used to things like, I could sew on a machine, but not that. And heavy. She was a very nice lady, you, the, the wife of the owner. She said, "Alice, I can tell, you are not used to that. See that you get something else. In the meantime, I keep you here." They were from Russia, nice people. So I got a job in the milliner-, millinery factory. I was used to design hat, and to look at this and this. Here I had to, you know? How could I do that?

**Paul Feitler:** Piecework.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Piecework.

**Paul Feitler:** Piecework.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Piecework. I couldn't do it. Then I went to a lampshade factory, where I trimmed the top and the bottom from the lampshade. That is very easy to do, and that I could do. But after you had made so-and-so many lampshades, you had to wrap 'em with cellophane, with a narrow cellophane. After the third lampshade, I couldn't do that. My muscles were not used, you know, to heavy work. They were [unclear] from Poland and from Russia, heavysset women, to them it was nothing. And my husband said, "No." I said it, I will try to make it private here. I think I will succeed.

And we lived in a very small place, yeah, the first six or seven months we lived in one of Mr. Lachman's apartment houses, one room and a kitchen with a kitchenette. When my, when my

husband, after three months, I guess, made money, we paid the rent there and everything, and then we moved around the corner in a, in a two-room apartment. So with two children. And I started, I went to the, again, to the Committee, and I told Paula that I'm making hats. She said, "All right, I will see if I can recommend you here." You know, she was already in with the society, acquainted, you know, because she, they gave her money, you know, the, the Jewish people here in San Francisco. They were very good, very good. So I got the one lady, Mrs. [unclear], she doesn't live any more, she was at this time already a elderly lady. She was my first customer. Never forget. She, at this time, they had the hats, you know, they were, how do you call that, the whole thing was done by machine, you know. We had to, to . . .

**Paul Feitler:** Trim?

**Alice Bloomfield:** No, *waren gesteppt*, you know, they had, lots of work.

**Paul Feitler:** I know nothing about hats. [laughs]

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, I know that, yeah, that was a . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Well, anyway . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** She was very satisfied, she came back, she recommended me, and I had the society. In my little apartment, the nights, my children slept. During the day, it was the, the, the hat, the hat salon, you know?

**Steve Hochstadt:** You were doing this with your husband?

**Alice Bloomfield:** No! My husband couldn't make hats. He was a night, night watchman. Nights he was there, during the day he slept in the other room. And the children, my daughter was in school, my son was in kindergarten. There was a beautiful woman, Mrs. Henry, she felt sorry for him, she never had seen a *Kind*, a child from Germany, a Jewish child, and she was so good-hearted, she was so good to him. So that was a relief, too.

**Steve Hochstadt:** She helped to take care of him?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, in the kindergarten, yeah. He slept there, I think, he had slept there in the afternoon. When I had time, I, we had, we had to go by streetcar, it was a little bit further. And either I got them, or my daughter, after she came home from school. So, and I made hats there. And I can show you my list, I still have the book. I had many Gentile ladies. And one said, “Oh, did you ever work in Paris?” I said, “Of course.” Yeah, I knew Paris, but not making hats. [laughs] So, you know, I mean, that is something. And, she said, “You, oh, yeah, we can tell, yeah, that, yeah.” And, because I made a name, you know, the big stores didn't get any more from Paris all the expensive hats. And I wasn't even, I was, I wasn't cheap at all, yeah. I made good money. I saved that money, we lived on my husband's salary from the night watchman, and the money, money I made and, from this money, we bought the first cleaning store. And my husband learned how to press garments. And that was too much, I guess. The whole thing was too much on him.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Too much physically?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, physically, physically, too much. And mentally, too. He never got used to it, you know, he never, yeah. Physically, yeah, both. And then, later on, we bought a second, it was already '50, a second cleaning store, it was a, was big as a market. And, I liked, I had mostly black people, they were so nice to me.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Working in the store, you mean?

**Alice Bloomfield:** No! My customers.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Your customers.

**Alice Bloomfield:** They respected me . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Customers in the cleaning store?

**Paul Feitler:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Did you stop making hats when you got the cleaning store?

**Alice Bloomfield:** No, I, wrong, I, right away I quit. No, no, that was, that I couldn't do any more, you know. Yeah. Oh, yeah, the black people respected me, they were very nice, and, you know, the whole, like it is, you know, the whole, a window, you know, those big windows, they were full of laundry, you know how that was at this time. They looked for their number, and brought it over to the counter that I do, because Sun-, Saturday sometimes the whole store was full of people. They were very nice and very good to me. And that, that I would like to be in the book, yeah, that they treated me very well.

**Steve Hochstadt:** And so your stores were successful?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. And I, my husband died, I had the store for four and a half years, and, no, I don't, it's all right, yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** You were thinking of something?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, I don't want to mention that, no. Yeah. No. Yeah. I even had a very nice man who worked for me, he was also from Shanghai, but he died. He died in, I guess in December of that year, I forget now, or was it before? He had retired already from my store, he couldn't do it any more, and the help I had was not too good. Now union wages were too high for me, you know, that should not come in the book, what for, not, I don't want anything mentioned like that, for heaven's sake, you know? But it . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** What was this man's name, who worked with you?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Karminsky, Franz. Franz Karminsky. He retired, but he came still everyday, looking how I was doing. And then I sold, I sold the store. Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Is this right? Karminsky, is this spelled right?

**Alice Bloomfield:** I can read it out by the, K-R-M-I-N-S-K-Y.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Okay.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. Franz. F-R-A-N-Z. I think his wife still lives in San Francisco.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Could I ask you a question?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** You mentioned that in, when you moved to Shanghai you had a White Russian landlady?

**Alice Bloomfield:** In, later, in, in the city of Shanghai . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** In the city . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** . . . in the French Quarter, French Concession, yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** How did you get along with your, with the White, White Russians sometimes don't like Jews.

**Alice Bloomfield:** They didn't like it at all, they liked only the money. I'm sure that she charged plenty, what she wouldn't have gotten from other people. And she was not very nice. She had a child in the age of my daughter. She didn't let her child play with my child. She was a big, fat woman, who was sitting all day, drinking, I don't know what, yeah, yeah. If there was a husband, I don't know. They were just, you know, very low people.

**Steve Hochstadt:** And I have another question. In Shanghai, when you and your husband were both working, did you have someone to take care of your children?

**Alice Bloomfield:** When, no, yeah! In a sense, yeah. I, I didn't work very much, you know? I didn't want to, to open a business there, you know? Just for a few people I knew. Because my husband said, "I don't invest a penny here. We only should see that we come out here, that we get out here." And I had to go to the Consulate to talk to the, to the secretary and so on, my husband wouldn't go.



**Steve Hochstadt:** The American Consulate?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. We got the last Polish quota numbers at this time. It was in August, August 14th. And we left, it was on [unclear], if you know what that is. It's a holiday, Jewish.

**Steve Hochstadt:** I don't know when that is, no.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. This is a well-known holiday, and we left on that day. And my husband had to, I don't know, he had to do something in Hongkou in the morning, and he met people we knew all our life from Berlin, they didn't even talk to him. Everybody was so jealous, that we could leave. Nobody could leave.

**Steve Hochstadt:** What month was that, that you left?

**Alice Bloomfield:** October.

**Steve Hochstadt:** October. And what ship did you leave on, or you said already.

**Alice Bloomfield:** "Tatu Maru".

**Steve Hochstadt:** "Tatu Maru".

**Alice Bloomfield:** Beautiful ship. Beautiful. Once, we were looking at the big ballroom there, gorgeous, gorgeous. You should see how the Japanese chased us, us out from that room there, because we looked at it. Yeah. And when we left, the first stop was in Kobe. Kobe is beautiful. And there were German Jews, I forgot, Altschul or Altschuler, I don't know any more, they had sons already in America, going to college. I never knew what became of them there. But we were afraid. In Kobe, we were staying two or three days. Ship didn't move. The next stop was, we stopped again, but Kobe was, was it Yokohama, I don't know any more. I know Tokyo, Yokohama, but I forgot that. This ship was there again for several days in the harbor. I say to my husband, "For heaven's sake, I hope the war did, didn't break out yet." Because, you know, we were, and then, we went to Hawaii. And Hawaii, of course, we were on American soil already.

[laughs] But 'til then, you know, I was always afraid for some reason, the ship would turn around.

**Steve Hochstadt:** But once you got to Hawaii, it was okay?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh, yeah, sure, then we knew, you know, we were in America, with a, with a, with a visa, with everything, you know, so, yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Did you see other signs of jealousy, that you were able to leave Shanghai and other people weren't? You mentioned this thing with your husband, did you see that also?

**Alice Bloomfield:** We, we did not speak to many people before, because we lived in the city and they lived in Hongkou. It was expensive to take the bus, you know? So we avoided everything what was expensive, you know? Oh, you should see, we, when we went over the Garden Bridge, you heard of Garden Bridge, you know, we could go through like this. The Chinese had to bow and to bow, that was when we were there. And later on, you know from people there, you, you heard about Ghoya, I guess . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Yes.

**Alice Bloomfield:** . . . and all that in the meantime, yeah, that's why our friend. But here is somebody I don't know. This man can tell you more than anybody else. Martin Goldstein. He is the, him you should look up.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Where does he live?

**Alice Bloomfield:** In Gate 1.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Ah-ha.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Martin Goldstein.<sup>13</sup> He's in the telephone book, in the, yeah. Martin

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<sup>13</sup> See interview with Martin and Ruth Goldstein, Laguna Hills, CA, June 25, 1991, Shanghai Jewish

Goldstein. You can tell him that I told him, yeah. He can tell you. This man, he went through hell in Berlin. He told me a story, I wonder that he is still alive. Tell him that I told you that, because he told me that. Yeah. He can tell you quite a lot. He was there, you know, he came to San Francisco, with the rest of all the, you know, when . . .

**Paul Feitler:** After the war.

**Alice Bloomfield:** . . . after the war, yeah, yeah, yeah. After the war, our little store, we had only the little store then, was a, I always said, a corridor to all the other cities in this country. Every, almost everybody who came, you know, by went by there. Came one ship, another ship, again a ship, in one week. They called up, “You don't know my name, but Mr. or Mrs. So-and-So told me to call you. And Mr. Blumenfeld,” what the name was, “I hope you can help us.” So my husband was a very good-natured man. Everybody came to the store for advice. Where to look for a shop, where to look for an apartment. There were no apartments at this time, but my husband was good for so many people, they did, did, did him a fav-, a favor. And we had one friend from Vienna, he became a millionaire, multi-millionaire, in San Francisco. He is retired now, and his wife died. He had already a big apartment house, a two-room apartment house. And he took several from our friends in, gave 'em places to live there.

**Steve Hochstadt:** What was his name?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Mr. Weinstock. Weinstock. He should be really, yeah, he should come in this book, because he did very good. Yeah. Weinstock, what was his first name? I even went on a trip with him to Israel and all of that, much later, after my husband died. Yeah. Weinstock.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Where does he live?

**Alice Bloomfield:** In, close to San Francisco, in San Mateo, I guess. He lives there in a retirement condomin-, condominium, a very expensive place, what I am heard. Yeah, he was very, very good. He even guaranteed for friends of ours. He got the money back, but not everybody gives a guarantee, you know? But people knew, when we recommend somebody, they

would see their money, you know? There was not such, such a thing as . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** So lots of people came to visit you?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Ach. People did, I later on, I think a few years ago, I met somebody, he said, "You know that I had my first Friday night dinner in your place?" I said, "I don't care, I don't even remember." Because when we lived there, it was a very modest place, and then we were able to buy our first house in '50. And that was already a very nice house. But my husband died, but, died eight years later, and I was thinking, I have to make money, how, how? I give up this place, I sell it, I could make already \$5000 on the house, it was fourteen-five when we bought it, we paid down 3400, I guess, and then my husband died two years later. I still stayed there for a little while, but I knew that is not the right thing. I sold it, I made already \$5000 on this house. And I bought an income house for 30,000, 34,500. I didn't have enough money, a friend lent me \$3000. I paid him the \$3000 back, I was still working then, in two years. And this house I sold for, I don't want to mention the amount. A . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** More, though, than the 30,000.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Ten and a half years ago, in a good neighborhood. I got a very, very good. More than you might think, yeah, yeah. But in the meantime . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Is that when you then came to here?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Came here, yeah. I bought this here.

**Steve Hochstadt:** You were about to tell me, I think, about someone who took, helped take care of your children . . .

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh yeah, in, yeah, no. My child-, my son, where do you mean, in . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** In Shanghai.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, in Shanghai, yeah. You see, well, in, we lived in the French

Concession. You didn't go with your child to, to a, how should I say, to a public playground. There were playgrounds, but only the *amahs* went with the children. You had somebody for that. And you didn't wash garments or anything, you know. So with the little money we had, I think we paid a month 10 Shanghai dollar, Shanghai dollar, that was maybe one or two American dollars. And I had, I showed you, the little, little woman. She was with me all the time. She even knew how to cook, well, she knew how the American people, she must have been before with American people, because I wouldn't know, I couldn't talk to her. She only could say, "Missy, Missy, *no how ga*." *No how ga* was, I don't know, it was everything. I never knew where she lived, or, I didn't know anything. She came in the morning with, you know, with her food, and my children ate from her food with, they learned that, with the, with the . . .

**Steve Hochstadt:** Chopsticks?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Chop-, sure, yeah. And she even cooked. She never tried, but she cooked. There was never too much or too little salt on, that woman was perfect. But you could not communicate with her. It was impossible.

**Steve Hochstadt:** How did you find her?

**Alice Bloomfield:** That I forgot, I wouldn't know. I guess through somebody in, in the house, I guess. And then they said, you know, the Chinese were like at this time, a cousin, uncle, you know, there were so many, you wouldn't even know. She never took a penny. She washed my children's garments and mine, too, you know, everything. She pressed 'em, beautiful, beautiful. She must have been with American people before, because everything was excellent, what she did. Yeah, the children were with her, yeah.

**Paul Feitler:** The Chinese are famous for laundry.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Sure, yeah, yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Was it unthinkable not to have an *amah*?

**Alice Bloomfield:** I couldn't answer that, because in the French Concession or in the English, everybody had one. I don't think so. I think, no, I couldn't stay with that Russian woman in the

kitchen, uh-uh, I would lose face, no, no, that, yeah. It was so inexpensive, I guess, one or two dollars, American dollars a whole month, maybe three dollar. But for us it was lots of money at this time, you know, even so.

**Steve Hochstadt:** But worth it, worth it.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Did your daughter go to school in Shanghai?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah. My daughter went a short time to the Kadoorie School that was in Hongkou. And then she went to the, that, that was a, that school, what was the name of that, it was an English or American school. I forgot that now. That was in the, in the English, yeah, we lived in the French, that was in the other Concession, yeah. And in the morning, I always told her, "Go straight in the middle of the street. Don't go left and don't go right." Because they were lying there, the poor Chinese, you couldn't sometimes recognize the face any more. Sick, you know, from all kind of sicknesses they had there. Awful, just awful. Just awful. I am not surprised that, that they, you know, were, that they became Communist. I am not surprised. Terrible, just terrible.

**Steve Hochstadt:** What did you do for fun?

**Alice Bloomfield:** That's a good question, yeah. Since everything was so inexpensive, and my husband was always a man who liked to live, you know, and to have lots of fun. We both were very good dancers, and in Germany we lived in Berlin, you know, here they call it a hang-out, we had a certain bar where we went, and after that to, goulash, to an, an, a game place, where you went, one o'clock, you know, nights. And it, I gave you that name, Gumpatts, he went with us, oh no, different. We had a friend there from [unclear] .

**Steve Hochstadt:** From where?

**Alice Bloomfield:** [unclear] , that was close to Berlin on the Müggelsee, I think it was the Müggelsee, I hope I don't mix it up. He had a beautiful country home there. And he was also on

the stock market, he was very known with his white car, I don't know, I forgot that, open, and it was, everything was red-lined, I guess, in leather. This man lost everything '29, when the stock, you know, the stock market crashed. All what was left was that house in [unclear] , now I know, [unclear] was a, was a little town. And he made a, and, what did he, how should I explain, you know, people could think, we all went there, Friday nights, over Sunday. We played cards, there was lots of drinking, and it was just beautiful, you know? The, how should I say, the *Confection*, you know what that means, went there, you know. All people that had money, you know? And, we went there, too. My son wasn't even born then, it was '30, and '31, '32, you know. And he had one son. Gorgeous boy, but he was no, no good. I heard he is now in America. But he lived quite a while, I don't know where, I think in Israel. They both, I could say something about them, but I don't want to upset anyway now.

And, later, yeah, what happened, '36 was the last time that I went with my husband to Switzerland. And we had money left. And my husband said, "I leave it here." I said, "No!" I was so scared, you know, that was one thing. So we took the money back, out, in, like that. And my husband, of course, was angry with me. But what could he do?

And I was pregnant with my son, that was July '37. We couldn't travel any more abroad, it was already started, you know. And we went with my daughter, July, June, July, I guess, to, to the Teitlers. And one morning, she said to me, "You know something, Alice? Last night was the police here." They always, you know, it was not that they were looking for somebody, it was a routine. "And they wanted to get in your room. And I told them, 'Listen, there is a woman who is pregnant, and she might get the baby any time. She would be scared to death.'" And they didn't knock at our door. But that was the police, that were not the Nazis, that's a big difference. Yeah.

But another thing what my husband had under Hitler, that might be of interest. My husband had a criminal suit against him. It was all when I was pregnant with my son, was about February, March, I get a call from the police, from our station, you know, from, they were very nice with us, they came by, they got the cigar, you know how that was. And, "Is your husband home?" I said, "No." But, "When is he coming back?" I said, "Tomorrow night, Saturday." "Tell him he should come over." I said, "For heaven's sake, what's wrong?" "*Ach, Mrs. Bloomfield, nichts, gar nichts. Er soll mal rüber kommen zu uns.*" My husband goes there, and said, "Listen, we have here," it's very hard to say in English.

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Sie können auch auf deutsch . . .*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Kann, ja? “Wir haben hier einen Bericht”, nein, “Waren Sie in Schneidemühl vor zwei Wochen?” “Ja.” “Wo waren Sie da?” Hotel, wo mein Mann immer ist, “Hotel So-und-so.” “Wen haben Sie da?” Mein Mann hatte nur grosse Einkaufskonzerne, I know [unclear], what was the name of the . . . ?*

**Paul Feitler:** [unclear]

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Yeah. “I was there and I was there.” “Did you pass this in the street?” My husband said, “No, I don't remember.” “Ja? Da liegt etwas vor. Da hat ein Kind ausgesagt, Sie haben es belästigt. Und Sie haben ihm candy gegeben.” Mein Mann, “So viel wie ich weiss, war ich gar nicht in der Strasse.”*

*Und mein Mann [unclear] Leute haben mein Mann gekannt, er, dass er Interesse hatte für Frauen, aber nicht solche Sachen. [laughs] Und, ja, “Wir verstehen das”, und Blödsinn, haben die dort gesagt auf dem, die waren also richtige alte deutsche Kriminalbeamte. Eine Woche später bekomme ich einen Anruf, von . . .*

END TAPE 1, SIDE B

BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A

**Alice Bloomfield:** *. . . hat immer gesagt, “Maria, bring mir ein glass of”, “Maria, bringen Sie mir ein Glas Wasser.” [unclear] Ach, Gott, wir war denn das? Ach, Gott, jetzt habe ich das immer wie man doch vergisst. Ich habe's leider vergessen. Also die war ein Factotum, you know. Ich hatte sie bei der ganzen Ehe als Hauptmädchen. Sie hat mehr zusammen [unclear] wie ich im haus mit den Kindern.*

*Und, ja, diese Sache hier, und, ja, ich würde auch gerne erwähnt haben, dass die, ich bin auch gegen Chinesen sehr dankbar. Sonst wäre ich, ja, wären wir umgekommen, wo sollten wir dann him? Also. Even sometimes Chinese people I don't know, but ich habe jetzt sogar einen chinesischen Augenarzt hier, der was wunderbares ist. Ihre Eltern mal sowas brauchen.*

*Und, ja, das sollte ich zu Ende erzählen, ja, was war das? Wo war ich da steckengeblieben? Ja, mein Mann wurde bestellt zur Kriminalpolizei zu der grossen*



*Alexanderplatz. Meine, eine Schwägerin, die war ja noch da [unclear] und habe ja später weggegangen. Und ich ging dort mit. Das muss im Juli gewesen sein, Anfang Juli, denn mein Jung ist August [unclear] unter Umständen können sich denken was für alle mein Mann, was mir auch passieren wird. Also mein Mann ist doch runtergekommen, die haben ihm nicht behalten. Und das waren damals noch, auch noch Kriminalpolizei. Da waren noch nicht so die Nazis drin.*

**Paul Feitler:** *Keine SS, keine SA.*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Richtig, noch kein SA zu der Zeit. Und die Beamten oben haben alle gelacht, haben doch gleich gesehen, "Wir haben einen Kinderverführer, so sehen sie da nicht geradeaus," also wie die Berliner so gesprochen haben. Und nach zwei Wochen, ja, "Wir müssen aber von ihm Bilder nehmen." Also mein Mann kam in das Verbrecheralbum, von vorne, von der Seite, von da und da, stellen Sie sich vor.*

*Und nach zwei Wochen wieder die Polizei. Ein Kind in irgendwo da draussen, wo ich gar nicht überhaupt hinkommen, ist vergewaltigt worden auf der Treppe. Und dem Kind hat man die Bilder gezeigt, Kind von drei Jahren, vier Jahren, und der hat's auf mein Mann gezeigt. Das gibt. Mein Mann wurde, ich habe Dir das nie erzählt, mein Mann musste wieder hinkommen, und da haben die Kriminalbeamten da gesagt, "Nanu, kommen Sie man, wir nehmen, wir also mussten raussuchen." Da haben sich vier, fünf Kriminalbeamten hingestellt, und mein Mann in die Mitte, und das Kind wurde reingebracht, und sollte nun auf den Verbrecher zeigen. Und da zeigt das Kind auf den Beamten neben meinem Mann. Kinderaussage. Da haben sie es mal.*

*Also dann ist mein Mann zu einem grossen Anwalt gegangen, und der hat zu ihm gesagt, es war eine geschäftsmässige Sache, "Sagen Sie, Herr Blumenfeld, haben Sie ein reines Gewissen? Dann kann ich Ihnen helfen." Der Mann hat ihn doch nicht gekannt. "Wenn daran was wahr ist, kann ich es nicht übernehmen." Mein Mann gesagt, "Können Sie sich darauf verlassen, es war doch vollkommen absurd." Also der, das war noch ein jüdischer Anwalt, wie der überhaupt noch arbeiten durfte, weiss ich nicht. Er scheint irgendwo [unclear]. Also der hat das fertig bekommen, dass die Bilder von meinem Mann aus dem Verbrecheralbum kamen. Stellen Sie sich vor.*

*Und jetzt kommt eine Sache. Viel, viel später, das muss ja gewesen sein, ach, mein Junge wurde ja geboren an einem Sonn-, ne, da, da war die zu, Sonnabend, da musste mein Mann auch da noch mal hin. Da wollte er mich nicht aufregen. Das Kind war doch gerade geboren. Und da*

*hat er, er muss das im Geschäft erledigen. "Sonnabend ins Geschäft? Hast Du noch nie gemacht." "Ja, ich muss, ich habe das vergessen." Da musste er noch mal hinkommen, irgendeine Sache.*

*Viel, viel später haben wir erfahren wer das aufgebracht hat. Von der Firma von seiner Hauptfirma ein christlicher Vertreter, der nichts war, ein Niemand, und der natürlich eifersüchtig war auf meinen Mann. Da ist rausgekommen, dass er das war. Hat wohl der Anwalt dann, nachher den Namen gesehen. Der Mann hat das aufgebracht. Stellen Sie sich vor. Das kann ruhig in das Buch rein. Ja, keine Namen.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Das haben Sie in Shanghai erfahren?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Nein, alles noch in Berlin. Das war ja '37. Mein Sohn ist '37 geboren, also das wäre ja wohl Ende '37, Anfang '38. Dann gehört, was an der Sache war. Aber was mein Mann ausgestanden hat, was ich ausgestanden habe. Ja.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *War das wegen, war das weil Ihr Mann jüdisch war?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Natürlich, nur. Sonst wär doch was die ganze Polizei gar nicht interessiert.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Und war das vielleicht ein Grund, dass Sie weg wollen?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Nein, nein, das war sowieso. Das hat bei meinem Mann, nein, um die Zeit haben wir noch gar nicht daran gedacht. War ja alles noch '37. Und mein Mann hat doch immer nur mit den Einkäufern von Konzernen zu tun gehabt. Die waren doch alle, die waren alle nicht jüdisch, alle christlich. Und die haben alle gesagt, "Herr Blumenfeld, was, Sie wollen nach Shanghai gehen? [unclear] verrückt geworden." In der Familie, sie wollen das [unclear]. Ich kann ja schon, ich wäre Sie jetzt gar nicht mehr besuchen können, in ein, zwei Monaten. "Ach, so lange werden Sie's ja durchhalten können. Die Sache ist doch ein-anderthalb Jahren vorbei." Es waren alles deutschnationale, sehr feine Menschen, sehr feine Menschen. Wir haben sehr gute Erfahrungen gemacht.*

*Nur nicht mein Portier. Der wurde gleich Nazi und hat uns schrecklich schikaniert, sowohl er konnte.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Portier im Haus?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Im Haus. Ja, ja, oh, ja. Ich werde nie vergessen, das wird der Henry Lewin noch wissen. Sein Vater ist mit ihm und mit seinem Bruder an einem Sonnabend bei mir erschienen. Und da habe ich gesagt, "Kinder, kommt hier blos nicht rein." Mein Mann war bei Polen schon, das, und hat er geschlafen. Mein Mann hat gar nicht mehr zu hause geschlafen. Bei Polen, wo der Mann schon abgeholt war. Hoch anständig von den Leuten. Eben haben die drüben [unclear] Schlesinger abgeholt. Das habe ich noch gesehen. Gleich wird die hierher kommen. Nehmen sie Euch mit.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Das ist nach Kristallnacht jetzt.*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Ja, ja. Das war so nach, ja, so, ja. Ja.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *So jetzt, Frau Bloomfield, was denken Sie über Shanghai, über diese Zeit, es war eine kurze Zeit . . .*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Sehr kurze Zeit.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Aber was, hat das Ihr Leben irgendwie beeinflusst?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Ja, definitely. Was ich schon vorher wusste, dann muss ich zurückgreifen auf April. War das '33, die Hitler die Judengesetze erlassen hat, oder '35?*

**Paul Feitler:** *'35 auf der Parteitag in Nürnberg.*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *April.*

**Paul Feitler:** *Nein, das war September '35.*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Nein, das weiss ich nicht mehr. Ich wurde . . .*

**Paul Feitler:** *Da habe ich die Entscheidung getroffen, auszuwandern.*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Es wurde über Lautsprecher gesagt, dass man keine Angestellten mehr haben kann, christliche, nur über 35.*

**Paul Feitler:** *Die Judengesetze, ja.*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Ja, die Juden. Und mein Mädchen war zum Glück, dieses Mädchen war über 35. Die andere konnte nicht bleiben, die war jünger. Das ist schon nicht mehr so wichtig für mich gewesen. Und ich weiss zu der Zeit hatte ich schon die andere nicht mehr. Und dann bin ich mit dem Kinderwagen war ich weg und bin nach haus gekommen. Es war noch an der Ecke, wo wir gewohnt haben. Und da habe ich das gehört, und da habe ich mir gesagt, mein Mann wird nicht gut sein im Ausland. Mein Mann wird das nicht. [unclear] das ihn machen können, das wird nicht gehen. Ich muss sehen was ich machen kann. Und da bin ich auf den Gedanken gekommen, Hüte lernen, Hütearbeiten zu lernen. Und das habe ich dann auch gleich bei einer jüdischen, einen jüdischen Dame gemacht, die war, bei einer Modisten, die war, hatte ein, in der Étage ein Salon, eine Jüdin, da konnte ich heimlich, hat keiner gewusst. Christen hätten mich sowieso nicht mehr genommen, und . . .*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Das hat Ihr Mann auch nicht gewusst?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Mein Mann war nicht da. Mein Mann war auf der Reise. Mein mann war ein Paar Wochen, er konnte noch reisen, zwar ja '35. Mein Mann dann ein Paar Wochen weg, ich habe ihm auch nichts gesagt. Und wie er nach haus kommt und rein kommt, und kommt, es wird erst im salon reingegegangen. "Was ist denn hier los?" "Das habe ich Dir nicht erzählt. Ich habe mir überlegt, ich muss was lernen, ich muss was, irgendwas können. Weg werden wir hier müssen, das sehe ich schon." Und da erzähle ich ihm, ich habe das angefahren. Also hat er furchtbar gelacht und fand das auch sehr amusant und " [unclear] Dir Spass macht." Und ich habe während der Zeit, innerhalb, ich bin schon zu dieser Frau lernen, hat aber schon ein Paar Bekannten gesagt, dass ich es anfangen und ich wurde mich freuen [unclear] auch nicht nötig, wenn ich üben kann, ich wollte doch nicht, muss doch eine Übung bleiben. Und da habe ich schon angefangen im Jahre '35 in meinem französischen Salon, Hüte zu machen.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Was meinen Sie, "in Ihrem französischen Salon"?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Das Zimmer war ein, in French style ein . . .*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Ach so, im Zimmer von Ihrer Wohnung.*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Von meiner Wohnung, ja, mit kristall Lustern, mit, mit französischen Möbeln. Da habe ich da, und dann sind schon nicht viel, es wollte man doch auch nicht so, so publik machen. Aber da ich immer vorsichtig war, ein Angsthase mein ganzes Leben lang, habe ich ein Gewerbe angemeldet. Ich habe doch gearbeitet und etwas Geld verdient, war doch gar nicht viel. Und dadurch, dass ich mein Gewerbeschein hatte, und ich habe auch Vollsteuer gezahlt, ich muss mal nachsehen wie es aussieht, es, habe ich alles mitgenommen, die Papiere. Ich habe auch alles von meinem Mann geschäftlich mitgenommen. Sehen Sie, weil Leute immer sagen, "Ach, Gott! Wieso kriegt die so viel?" Oder, "Wie hat sie das gemacht?" Ganz reel. Ich habe die Papiere gehabt, das kann ich Ihnen zeigen. Und die habe ich, die Abschriften habe ich nach Deutschland geschickt, und da haben sie doch gesehen, dass es ganz legal. Ausserdem mein Mädchen, die in Berlin war, die konnte doch alles aussagen. Die hat, die hat noch jede Gardine bewusst in meinem Salon, war's pink, velvet, und im, auch im Esszimmer und im Schlafzimmer und dann war das und dann war das, was weiss ich, schon doch alles, ja. Die hat das selbe ausgesagt was ich ihm geschrieben habe. Und unsere taxes waren zufällig auch noch da. Das war nicht ausgebombt. Aber das hat sich gelohnt für mich, dass ich gearbeitet habe, trotzdem ich's nicht gebraucht habe.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Das hat sich in Shanghai und auch hier . . .*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Nicht, Shanghai, nicht, no, no. Da war das, ist erst die Gesetze gekommen von der Wiedergutmachung doch viel später.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Ja.*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Ich habe das alles hier. Ich kann das alles zeigen. Ich war von haus aus, business gewöhnt. Ich habe immer business gedacht. Mein Vater war ein sehr guter businessman.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Und hat die Zeit auch, hat die Zeit in Shanghai auch Sie beeinflusst irgendwie?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *In Shanghai habe ich mich treiben lassen. In Shanghai wusste ich nicht was kommt. Ich wusste ja noch nicht mal, können wir überhaupt nach Amerika gehen? Wenn wir es noch schaffen, die Nummer waren noch gar nicht da. Das war alles nicht so einfach. Heute erzählt man das.*

**Steve Hochstadt:** *Und sie wussten nicht, wann . . .*

**Alice Bloomfield:** *Keine Ahnung, ich musste warten wie alle anderen. Wie alle anderen musste ich warten. Das war der Zufall. Ich bin raufgekommen, und die secretary, glaube ich, konnte mich ganz gut leiden, hat ihr aber auch hat Leid getan, Kinder, kleine Kinder. Und da hat sie gesagt, "Ich habe jetzt nichts im Juli. Wir kriegen überhaupt gar keine Nummern mehr [unclear] war doch schon alles nicht mehr so, war doch schon alles in einer Kriegsstimmung. Der Krieg hat doch schon begonnen, '39, gerade wie wir da waren. Es ging doch die Post, alles schon nicht mehr richtig. War noch alles schon in einem Aufruhr, keiner wusste, was wird jetzt werden. Wird der Hitler die Leute überrennen oder, das also, wir haben doch, man hat besonders dort, wir waren ja doch isoliert. Wir haben nicht gewusst.*

*Ich weiss nur, wie ich runter kam vom Konsulat. Da hat sie zu mir gesagt im Anfang August, "Ich werde noch ein Paar Nummern bekommen. Kommen Sie her, Sie werden die bekommen." Die hat sie uns auch gegeben.*

*Und wie ich heruntergekommen bin an dem Tag, wie das alles erledigt war, wir mussten da noch hingehen, das werde ich nie vergessen, habe ich unten gestanden, das war ein riesen building, ein Hochhaus, und da konnte ich so durchkucken und sah ich dem Yangtze, diesen schrecklichen Fluss, der dunkel, der so gelb bis grün wie Ihre Tasche, schmutzig, dreckig. Und habe ich gesagt, wenn ich hier rauskomme, und wenn noch mal Leute irgendwo decken müssen, werde ich versuchen mit meinen kleinen Mitteln, wie ich ihnen helfen kann.*

*Und wie die Sachen mit den Ethiopian Jews war, das wissen Sie doch, wor ein Paar Jahren, nicht, dann habe ich hier gesagt, "Kinder, lass uns ein charity bridge machen," habe immer gern Geld gegeben für das Shaare Zedek hospital, dass so schlecht war, aber ein gutes hospital inzwischen, ich habe's nicht gesehen, ein wunderbares neues hospital da sein. Und da habe ich gesagt, "Kinder, lass uns spielen dafür, das Shaare Zedek hospital, habe ich gehört, bekommt die Leute aus Ethiopien hin. Und da habe ich hier drei mal hier unten im recreation room ein bridge gehabt, and da habe ich drei mal \$834 bekommen von nur ein Paar Bekannten. And da waren auch Gentiles dabei, möchte ich. Aber nicht ein Amerikaner ist erschienen. Und das hat mich, ganz ehrlich gesagt, das ist etwas, geht das herein? Das möchte ich nicht, ja.*

## BREAK IN RECORDING

**Steve Hochstadt:** *So wie heisst . . . ?*

**Alice Bloomfield:** Farrens, Farrens.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Farrens.<sup>14</sup>

**Alice Bloomfield:** Farrens, F-A-R-A-I-N-S. Here the nightclub, beautiful.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Where was the nightclub, do you remember?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Outside, Great Western Road, I guess, ja, outside, a little bit outside from Shanghai. And I, when I went to him, you know, I didn't even know, and he said, "Listen, I don't know even, actually, we have an affidavit for America." And he said to me, "What do you want in America? You think the money is there lying on the street? You know something? I like you. I would like to have you for my nightclub. I think you would understand how to handle my customers and so on." And I said, "Listen, I have a husband and two children." "They can move in with you," like it is nothing, you know. "You are the one." And I was thinking, uh-oh. So I didn't take that. By the way, I heard this man died under terrible circumstances. They killed him after the war, the Chinese, ja.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Why?

**Alice Bloomfield:** Listen, [unclear] I don't know. Not the Chinese, pardon me, Japanese, not the Chinese. The Japanese, not the Chinese, for heaven's sake. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's what I heard here from people, yeah. He was a very nice man, yeah.

And I brought 10 or 12 model hats with me to Shanghai. And I got acquainted with a certain business, I couldn't think of the name, she was from Vienna, and he was a, what was he?

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<sup>14</sup> Born Josef Pollak in Vienna, Joe Farren was an exhibition dancer who came to Shanghai in the late 1920s. He built a dancehall and casino in the "Badlands", which he ran with Jack Riley.

Doctor of what, I forgot, not medicine, I don't know, something else. Something that belongs together a little bit with medicine, but I forgot what kind of doctor he was in Vienna. And she made lipsticks. And she knew a certain Mr. Kann, who was also from Vienna, but way, way back, and he had, he was a banker.<sup>15</sup> And she recommended me to him, and he said, "Listen, I give you the address", I don't know any more how we did that. "See my wife." And then I went where they lived. It was just, you know, out of this world. From outside, nothing, like everything in China, you know. Dense bushes, you know, you can not even, could not even look through the bushes, you know. A home, gorgeous. And I showed her the hats. In five minutes, she bought all the hats. And she paid me very well, I don't know any more how much. Ja.

That was Shanghai.

**Steve Hochstadt:** Well, I think maybe we're finished.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, I think so. [laughs] I mean, you can hear much more interesting things from people that lived longer there, you know. They can tell you what happened there. Mr. Goldstein, he will tell you.

**Steve Hochstadt:** I will ask him.

**Alice Bloomfield:** Yeah, I think he is a man you really should contact.

END TAPE 2, SIDE A

END OF INTERVIEW

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<sup>15</sup> Eduard Kann (1880-1962) was born in Austria. In Shanghai, he was a banker and the chair of the Emigration Department of the Committee for Assistance of European Refugees in Shanghai. His wife set up a workshop for producing women's clothing in the Pingliang Road Heim.



Alice Stern was born in Berlin in July 1902. Her father had a wholesale food business. Her mother died when she was 8 years old, and her father remarried. She married Herbert Blumenfeld (1899-1957), born in Leszno in Posen, in 1925, and they lived in Berlin. They had two children: Irene (1929-) and Ernst (1937-2013), and a business in ladies' hats.

Herbert was arrested before *Kristallnacht* and falsely accused of molesting a child, but eventually released. The family sailed on the "Giulio Cesare" of the Lloyd Triestino line on 20 April 1939 and arrived in Shanghai on 15 May. They lived in Hongkou for 6 weeks, then moved to 333 Cardinal Mercier in the French Concession. She designed ladies' hats and owned the Salon-Chapeau-Chic. Herbert worked as a night watchman.

They were able to leave Shanghai on the Japanese ship "Tatu Maru" and landed in San Francisco in November 1940. They opened two cleaning stores there. After Herbert died, she moved to Walnut Creek to be closer to her family, and later to Laguna Hills. She met Paul Feitler (1904-1999) there, who appears in the interview. Alice Bloomfield died in 2006.

This transcript is part of the Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, an effort to collect and transcribe interviews with Jews who lived in Shanghai, directed by Steve Hochstadt at Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois. It was prepared with support from Bates College, Illinois College, the Littauer Fund, and the Memorial Fund for Jewish Culture.