

The Latinos Project Oral Histories  
The Historical Society of Pennsylvania  
with the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies

Rosa Goldstein

Interview Date: February 6, 2003

Location: Beth Shalom Synagogue, Elkins Park

Interviewer: Joseph Gonzales, Project Ethnographer

*Interviewer*

... Rosa Goldstein, Tape 1, Side 1, and today's date is February 6, 2003. Okay, so the

questions start out very basic and easy, and then we'll move to more –

*Goldstein*

Um-hm.

*Interviewer*

Okay? What is your name and your age?

*Goldstein*

Rosa Goldstein. I am 67.

*Interviewer*

Okay. How many people are in your immediate family?

*Goldstein*

Do you count your grandchildren, too, I suppose?

*Interviewer*

Yes.

*Goldstein*

Seven, nine, ten.

*Interviewer*

Ten?

*Goldstein*

Yeah, counting my husband, my two sons, their wives, my five grandchildren, expecting

two new ones soon.

*Interviewer*

Oh, that's great.

*Goldstein*

It's going to be beautiful. Thank you.

*Interviewer*

A beautiful, happy family. How, how do you describe the work that you do, or, or what

you do?

*Goldstein*

I really enjoy what I'm doing. I volunteer at the synagogue, and it's always good to hear

new people. I like to work with people. It's definitely a fulfillment. You can always

find something you have to do, you can do. We cook here for once a month, the

synagogue cooks for the homeless, not the homeless, but the people who are house-

bound, and I'm part of this, and I feel like I'm, I'm accomplishing something. And I'm

part of the Cuban Club where I help to serve when the time comes, and it's interesting

because sometimes they're asking to make a Jewish traditional meal because we mix the

Jewish and Cuban together, so that's happened once or twice, and I enjoy it. It's a good,

it's a good, friendly group to work among.

*Interviewer*

Great. And so you work here at the, at the Synagogue Beth Shalom?

*Goldstein*

Um-hm.

*Interviewer*

Where are you originally from?

*Goldstein*

Cuba.

*Interviewer*

Cuba. Which –

*Goldstein*



Havana, Cuba.

*Interviewer*  
Havana, Cuba.

*Goldstein*  
Old Havana, Cuba. Havana Vieja.

*Interviewer*  
Oh, a beautiful part –

*Goldstein*  
I lived in the same street that Jose Marti was born, and the street was called First Paula, and I don't know exactly which president, changed it Leonor Perez, which was Marti's mother's name.

*Interviewer*  
Oh.

*Goldstein*  
So everybody knows Leonor Perez.

*Interviewer*  
That's a nice, that's nice. When did you come to the United States?

*Goldstein*  
1964, in November 1964.

*Interviewer*  
And what were your reasons for leaving your home country?

*Goldstein*  
Change of political views, lack of freedom of expression, and we feel, we felt like we cannot really develop ourselves, only for the country, she's oppressed, and still oppressed.

*Interviewer*  
Right. You had mentioned to me, too, that, that one of the things that happened after the Revolution was that people had their businesses confiscated.

*Goldstein*

There's, there's a lot about that, and what happened is that the first year that Fidel was in power, he had offered, and he said that it's going to be a national country, everybody's going to be the same as, there are going to be changes, and he wanted to bring in industries and businesses and make a prosperous country, blah, blah, blah. When he came to the United Nations, after, he declared himself a Communist, and as he came back --- we knew --- everybody knew that his brother was a Communist from day one, and don't forget he was assisted by Che Guevara, which was a known Communist, and also by Celia Sanchez, which was supposed to be his strength, but also was the supervisor of the Socialist Movement, Vilma Espin, who was the wife of Raul Castro, she was a member of the party, or the supervisor of the party. So anyway, she, and they, when he came back and declared that, the first thing he did was nationalize every industry, and in the meantime what happened is that the people who had the money, they went and created in Cuba industries because they trust him, they believed in him. And it was lie, a changing government. There was no questions asked because the people was very corrupted, but \_\_\_\_\_ his regime. And when they brought their industries and they brought technicians from the United States to help and to create new technology and banks and so on, once he changed his mind and nationalized everything, the whole thing fell apart. So most of the people have invested most of their money into the new machineries and the new buildings and everything. They had no choice, so they left the country, with nothing, most of them. They had, some of them were lucky enough that before the Revolution, they had business with people in the United States and Mexico or other countries, and they had some money there. Their banks and their industries and the business all friendships, but the ones that didn't, left with whatever they had and they



started a new life. Very depressing for some of them. There was also censorship, was very interesting because he right away closed the Catholic churches. He said the priests and the nuns were just preaching against --- just Catholicism and nothing ---and against his philosophy. \_\_\_\_\_ was created, that the children that went, that were going to Catholic schools – we’re talking about young kids between the age of 8 and maybe 14, 15. 8, yeah. No, before. Eight and, and 10 and 12. Before they go to high school. They will be sent out to the churches here, but it’s interesting because the HIAS, which is a Jewish organization, in conjunction with the Jewish community, and the Catholics and the Jews, sent all their children, without the parents, most of the time.

*Interviewer*  
Was that Operation Peter Pan?

*Goldstein*  
Something similar to that.

*Interviewer*  
Similar to that, okay.

*Goldstein*  
And they flew them out and they brought them to, either to churches or, or an orphanage. I don’t know exactly where they took the kids for homes, and the Jewish people, most of them, seeing some of them have families here, they were sent to their families. Our dissenters, they managed to bring in the parents, and this would be like two or three years before they could leave. But it was very sad because you never knew if you were going to see your child again. If they don’t let you out, how do you do? But it had to be done, and it was done, and that lasted, I think the managers sent out about four or five airplanes. It’s not cheap, and money, they ran out of money, and they couldn’t do it anymore. But

the nuns, what happened is, nuns and, and, and priests were going with the children, plus some of the Jewish educators to make sure that the kids were safe and –

*Interviewer*  
To protect –

*Goldstein*  
Well, that they were safe and they would know, they, they should know where the kids were going.

*Interviewer*  
Right.

*Goldstein*  
I mean, you don’t send them on the flight and say, “Hey, you’re in United States Just go.” They, they, and I think there were pre-assigned places where they would go so the parents will know where the children were going to be.

*Interviewer*  
Okay.

*Goldstein*  
And they reunited after, most of them. All of them, I guess.

*Interviewer*  
Where was your point of entry into the country?

*Goldstein*  
New York.

*Interviewer*  
New York? And was there a particular reason, why New York? Why you chose New York?

*Goldstein*  
When we left Cuba, we couldn’t come straight to the United States because my husband, being a physician, they would, they would deny him a Visa. I worked at the Israeli Embassy in Cuba for years, and we got the letter asking us to, to go to Israel to study, we



needed to be trained extra in Hebrew, and my husband to be trained as a physician because he was a doctor for the Embassy. And with that, we went to Israel, and from Israel, the only entry place was New York.

*Interviewer*  
Oh, okay.

*Goldstein*  
We were there for almost three and a half months.

*Interviewer*  
In Israel?

*Goldstein*  
Yeah, waiting for the visa for the United States. And the reason to come to the United States was mostly because my parents were here already, and my brother, his family, and my husband's family, so we felt that we couldn't stay in Israel by ourselves, and I was having a child, so it was becoming too complicated.

*Interviewer*  
Yes. How, how were you able to get out and go to Israel?

*Goldstein*  
Well, we got the permit from the government because we were going to study, and there was a letter from the Embassy inviting us, I mean, from Israel, inviting us to study there, and we got the permit for one month.

*Interviewer*  
Okay.

*Goldstein*  
You close the door to your home, you give the keys to the landlady, and you say good-bye. So our flight was a Cuban airline, but it was first to Gander. Gander is the highest point in Canada –

*Interviewer*  
Oh, okay.

*Goldstein*  
The coldest one, too.

*Interviewer*  
Wow.

*Goldstein*  
From Gander, the plane was going to Czechoslovakia. From Czechoslovakia, we went to Paris, and from Paris, we went to Israel.

*Interviewer*  
Wow.

*Goldstein*  
So it was a long trip.

*Interviewer*  
You took the long way.

*Goldstein*  
With no cent. We didn't have one penny to our name. Not even one cent. And so, we were hungry, and it's interesting because when we went to Czechoslovakia, in, in Gander they gave us like water and I think they gave us like some rolls or something, as I recall. But in Czechoslovakia, and since I was pregnant, my husband asked the guy if he could give me like a, a few drops of milk because I had a lot of heartburn, and he said, "Are you coming from Cuba?" And he said, "Yes." He says, "You have no money. You don't, you don't get a thing." I'm serious.

*Interviewer*  
Wow.

*Goldstein*  
So what happened, and we didn't eat, of course. And the plane, I don't have to tell you the meals on those Cuban planes are not caviar.

*Interviewer*  
Right.



**Goldstein**

Or a steak. But we went to Paris, I called a cousin of mine, and she had family in Paris, so we contacted them, and we just asked for a few dollars so we can eat something. And El Al, and we missed the flight because the flight from Czechoslovakia was delayed, so we went to Paris to fly to Israel, it has left already, and so El Al paid for the hotel that night, and the next morning we left.

**Interviewer**

Okay. When you, when you were leaving, did you know that you were leaving –

**Goldstein**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

For –

**Goldstein**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

Since my husband was a physician for the Air Force, his situation was becoming literally unbearable because at the hospital, my husband was too honest. He had students, and he expected his students that, there were sick people, that if they would have the American penicillin or antibiotic, that patient would be safe and well. He didn't realize that some of his students were writing down all the notes – notes and conversations. And one day he was called into the auditorium, and they read him a whole –

**Interviewer**

Transcript.

**Goldstein**

“And that day you said this and that, it means you're ---” because the people who are against the regime or do not approve of the regime, they're called traitors, gusanos,

worms, you name it. And, so since they accused him of that, in reality it was becoming a little bit dangerous for him to stay because sadly enough, a dentist who was working with my husband at the Air Force, he expressed himself, I mean he probably had some activities against the regime, and there was not too much jury or questions, and he was sent to the firing squad.

**Interviewer**

Oh my God.

**Goldstein**

He was killed. So we realized that there's not too much, there's no point of going back anywhere or trying to stay too long or, we're going to protect the house, the car? We're going to say good-bye.

**Interviewer**

Right. And he was following his professional oath.

**Goldstein**

Well he's, yeah, he said, “Look. This patient is not responding because this is not as strong as it should be.” And these people --- and it's sad because the first really, I mean, worst of all was one of his students who he helped to come into medical school, when he was his tutor privately, and his mother called the next day, and she cried, and she said, “Please forgive my son. He is confused.” Because it's sad for a mother knowing that your son is, is really not following what he should do, is protect the one who's trying to bring you somewhere. Like he wouldn't be where he was if it wouldn't be because my husband said to him, “I'll help you. I'll teach you. I'll train you. I'll be with you all the way.” And then he's the one who turned around and wrote all these little notes He and other ones –

**Interviewer**

That's like family.



**Goldstein**

But that's, that is treason.

**Interviewer**

Yes. That is.

**Goldstein**

But in that case, there was a lot of sad moments when children turned against their parents, and the parents were sent to jail, so, or vice versa, parents against children. And

what do you do? I mean, it's, it's sad. Sad because you, you hope that you're being protected by your parents or by your children, and it doesn't work that way.

**Interviewer**

Trust.

**Goldstein**

Trust. Well, there wasn't too much.

**Interviewer**

Yeah. Okay, you answered that. So how long have you been in Philadelphia?

**Goldstein**

Since 1964 until now.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

It's 2003, which it means 38, it's going to be 38 years.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

39 it's going to be. Wow.

**Interviewer**

And you, you touched on this, but what specifically brought you to Philadelphia?

**Goldstein**

My brother, of blessed memory, he was a psychiatrist, and years before Castro even came to power, he came to be trained at Temple University with Dr. Rosen in psychoanalysis,

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and when the Revolution started, and he realized that the children in school were being taught, even if it was a private Jewish school, and the T.V. was constantly singing praises to Bolshe --- to the Communism and putting down the United States because they are the, the imperialist empire and --

**Interviewer**

Imperialism --

**Goldstein**

And they try to dominate the world, so my brother wrote to this, to Temple, to this professor, and told him the situation, and he says, "Come. Come with your family. We're open." And that was a time that you could leave without having, just without, just closing your door. He left there, he had a beautiful home, and he has four children, so he, he left Cuba through Jamaica, which was a, an organization, again the HIAS, which they can help people, through Jamaica. It was combined again, it was not just Jews, it was everybody who wanted to go, who were allowed to go, or could, or wanted to go because some people thought that they were going to come back the next morning and everything was going to change overnight because, how could you, how could the United States, 90 miles away from Cuba, allow a Communist government? And, so that, and then my parents, when they left Cuba, they came here to Philadelphia.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

So, where do we go? To Philadelphia.

**Interviewer**

They've set up a --

**Goldstein**

Pours and snows.

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*Interviewer*  
Right.

*Goldstein*  
I said to my brother, couldn't you land in Florida? Some place warm? He says, "I couldn't."

*Interviewer*  
Los Angeles, some place –

*Goldstein*  
Yeah. No, I don't know if I'd like Los Angeles as much. I think it's too big.

*Interviewer*  
Yeah, it's, yeah. It has gotten huge. You mentioned HIAS?

*Goldstein*  
Yeah.

*Interviewer*  
What does that word mean? Does the word have a meaning? Or is it an acronym?

*Goldstein*  
It's learning HIAS, I'm sorry, the, it was the HIAS, yes. HIAS is initials, but I don't remember the, excuse me one second, Andrea? Andrea? Hello? She doesn't hear.  
Andrea?

*Andrea*  
Yes?

*Goldstein*  
Do you remember the initials HIAS goes for what?

*Andrea*  
Pardon me?

*Goldstein*  
HIAS – H-I – A-S.

*Andrea*  
H-I – A-S?

*Goldstein*

Yes. It's an organization, but I forgot what it stands for. It's the – yeah, it's like the JEVs similar, but the JEVs is more for work.

*Andrea*  
I, I don't recall it.

*Goldstein*  
Yeah, I don't recall exactly, but it's a, it's initials of some sort of organization.

*Andrea*  
Is it an acronym?

*Goldstein*  
It's a, yeah.

*Andrea*  
H-I –

*Goldstein*  
A-S.

*Andrea*  
A-S. I'm not familiar with it. If it's an acronym, it could be God knows what.

*Goldstein*  
No, I know. So "God Knows What" is its name.

*Interviewer*  
It's, I just, I didn't know if it was a, a Hebrew word or a Spanish word –

*Goldstein*  
No, no, no, no.

*Interviewer*  
Oh, okay.

*Goldstein*  
It's initials for, like the, it is some, another group is called Joint Distribution Center, but this is the one that used to send food and still sends food to other countries. Like now they're organizing for Argentina for the Venezuela and for Cuba. Countries that are



under-privileged, and even in the United States, because we think that there is no poverty here. How wrong we are.

*Interviewer*

Right. There is especially in the city, in Philadelphia, in inner Philadelphia.

*Goldstein*

I, it's not \_\_\_\_\_. Anywhere you go here. I mean, people, and not everybody is, is wealthy.

*Interviewer*

True.

*Goldstein*

Or middle class. It's varied a bit.

*Interviewer*

Yeah. The whole spectrum.

*Goldstein*

Yeah.

*Interviewer*

So where in Philadelphia do you live currently?

*Goldstein*

I live in the area called Wyncote, which is Cheltenham. It's the township of Cheltenham,

and it's, across the street, it's Philadelphia, and on the side of the street, is where, it's

Cheltenham, so.

*Interviewer*

Okay. Where in Philadelphia have you lived previously?

*Goldstein*

We lived in North Philadelphia, and, on Godfrey, and from there, we moved here.

*Interviewer*

Okay. Godfrey –

*Goldstein*

I don't, I don't like to move too much –

*Interviewer*

Godfrey, Godfrey near Fifth Street or --- ?

*Goldstein*

Oh, no. Godfrey and, near Broad Street.

*Interviewer*

Okay, okay.

*Goldstein*

It's a few blocks away. Near the, now it's a dental school.

*Interviewer*

Near the Temple –

*Goldstein*

No, no dental. It's the Temple –

*Interviewer*

Children's Hospital?

*Goldstein*

No, no, no, no, no. It's optometry, school of optometry.

*Interviewer*

Oh, okay.

*Goldstein*

\_\_\_\_\_ I couldn't remember.

*Interviewer*

Okay.

*Goldstein*

It's a couple, two or three, just a few blocks away.

*Interviewer*

Yeah, it's not that far from here at all.

*Goldstein*

No, no.

*Interviewer*

Okay.

*Goldstein*



I don't like to move around too much. And I moved to this area mostly because my brother was living in this area, and because the school, the school system is excellent.

**Interviewer**

Okay. How long did you live in the Godfrey area, Godfrey and Broad?

**Goldstein**

About six years. Six or seven years.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

No, eight years. Eight years.

**Interviewer**

Why did you choose to live there in that neighborhood first?

**Goldstein**

Because we were looking for an apartment house where to move, and I have my, my child and my parents, and I could not afford luxury because I was working, my husband was working. He was, since he was a physician, he had to do the training again in the United States, to earn his degree, and he had to go to school, so money was tight. And there was apartments that a few Cubans were living there and we keep very close, we still are very close friends. So that's why, that's the reason we, that I moved there, and one of the women was moving out of the other area, so she, when she knew that I was here, because she was friendly with my brother – she was friendly with me, too – but I'm saying that she knew that my brother –

**Interviewer**

She knew him first.

**Goldstein**

She says, "Look. If I," my brother said, "If you ever move, let me know because my sister's coming." She said, "Well, when she comes, let me know." So she moved out, and I moved in. So we lived in an apartment with my parents and the child.

**Interviewer**

How would you describe a typical day for you in, in Philadelphia?

**Goldstein**

I always have errands to do because I'm in charge of a lot of things in the house, a lot of, I'm not talking just about organizing the house, but doing all these errands and shopping and making sure that everything's in order and the payments are made and the telephones are made, phone calls. Then I really volunteer at the synagogue, so I feel comfortable, and that's what I do most of the time, but like I said, I'm, I like to, I teach Hebrew once a week here, on Sundays, to adults. That keeps my Sunday, and I go to services, you know, quite frequently, and that, that's most of the time. And I keep in touch with my friends. It's not boring because I always find something to do here.

**Interviewer**

Okay. That's nice. Can you describe a typical day that you remember in your home land in Cuba?

**Goldstein**

I could talk a lot about that. There are, typical days is, if you talk about my childhood, for example, let's go back to there.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

We lived in an apartment and above me was a girl. She went to Catholic school, and I was going to a Jewish school. But it's interesting because when 3:00 clock, and we came back from the school, both of us, her father was a baker, my father was a baker. So they



would have always either bread or crackers for us. We would sit together in her apartment or in ours and do the homework together and talk. She was blonde and beautiful, I remember her as today. Sweet family, I think she was an only child. Then, that was when I was young, and then of course, family affairs, family encounters, family this – bless you. Family always be together and a very relaxed atmosphere. We used to go to the Casa Jose Marti very frequently. It was open to the public. There was no charge, and we'd have, we loved it. I used to meet my friends from the, from the area. We used to go together, like sometimes go a movie – only the weekend. We were not allowed to go to the movies during the week. No – homework.

**Interviewer**

Homework. Study

**Goldstein**

And helping to do the housework because it's a lot for one person to do everything. And she was of the same thing, this girl, her name was Maria – beautiful girl. I liked her because she was, you know, we had the backgrounds. We're very similar in the sense that the parents were interested in her education and they were very quiet, relaxed people, and she was very relaxed. And then, I, we talk about, let's say adolescence, when you, you go to high school. I usually would, did homework with somebody, one of my friends, and she was also a loving person. She lived about three blocks away from me, and we always made the point to walk home together, or we always walked together. The, we, usually don't go to, even here, you know, kids don't like to walk by themselves most of the time.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

Because it's important to talk and to have communication with other people. We used to do the homework, and then I joined a, a youth group. A Jewish youth group. There you become active in different ways because one of the things they used to do is that you have to read books, and the reviews of the books in the group. We used to meet Friday nights after dinner and sing and talk, then walk home, and everybody was like in the same area, so it was, the boys were always escort, escorting the girls to make sure that all of them were safe at home, and then they'll go back to their houses. And you cannot get home after 11:00 at night. That was a big no-no. If you get home after 11:00, you don't go out anymore.

**Interviewer**

Lose your privileges.

**Goldstein**

Yeah, because they would say that you have no business outside. Well, the youth organization was one of them, and always, we have always outing like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts do have, but we had it together. We would have supervisors and educate, educators. About things we learned – survival, daily life, like the Boy Scouts or the Girl Scouts do – and you create your atmosphere of friends, but you don't abandon your other friends that you have in high school.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

It doesn't matter. And even today, I keep in touch with some of them. We talk, we, and it's funny because the, the beautiful part of that is that if I call one of them now, or they call me, it's like we just finished talking the night before. We, like, it's a, like, in your mind, you have been talking to that person, and saying, "Do you remember when we



went to da-da-da?" And she would say, "But you know that, you know, that day I don't why you have to do this," you know, it was like continuous friendship, which doesn't get interrupted because of distance or time. And then I was, I was working at the age of 15, 16. I was going to high school, being a member of this organization, but also working part-time because I felt like I had to do more than I was doing. And I worked until the day I left Cuba, in the same position. First the, I didn't, the, the work I, I did at the beginning was done in the Embassy because, well, it was a Zionist organization always through the day I left. And we got, we had to, I worked as volunteer with no pay or what they called after the Consulate because we needed the, to expose the idea of the State of Israel to the press.

*Interviewer*  
Okay.

*Goldstein*  
So with the man who had the Jewish newspaper, and we worked together, I mean, in the sense that he, I was his secretary – volunteer. He's a volunteer, too. He was, and after that, I got a position to work at the Embassy.

*Interviewer*  
Okay, wow.

*Goldstein*  
I make it very short because I could go on and on and on like –

*Interviewer*  
No, that's, that sounds, your, what you described as your, in your childhood and your adult life, it sounds very fulfilling.

*Goldstein*  
It was very.

*Interviewer*  
Fulfilling experience.

*Goldstein*

Yes. And a family, especially as a child and as a, an adult, and as an adult, like you said before, family was the center of everything. There was no week that we would not see, and I lived across from my grandparents, and when I say across, it means there was a little hallway in between, and the doors usually never closed, only at night time or when I was in school. But I sure that when I came home from school, I look at my grandparents' house first to make sure that they were okay and get their kiss and tell me how beautiful I was. What does grandparents say? Oh, they'd never say, "Oh my God, look how you look."

*Interviewer*  
Yeah. They make you feel better than anyone else.

*Goldstein*  
Yes, but the, the, the beauty of it, it's interesting. When I started to date, I had to take my pretenders(?) to my grandfather and grandmother. Or to my grandfather, because my grand, grandmother was dead already, and he was the one who said yes or no.

*Interviewer*  
Oh.

*Goldstein*  
Because I guess I, he had a, a knowledge. You know, you have sometimes an internal knowledge that it's not taught at school, and he would say to me, "Hm. Are you going out?" "Yes." "Hm." But when I introduced my husband, I saw his smile, and I said, "This is it."

*Interviewer*  
Oh.

*Goldstein*  
Not because I didn't like my husband. It's just that his approval was so important.

*Interviewer*



Right.

**Goldstein**

The approval of family. It's important. It's important because for some reason, parents do have a vision. They know. I said to my kids once, "I don't know more because I'm your mother. I know more because I'm older. And experiences are more important than being Mommy or Daddy."

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

And I guess that they had the experience of seeing how you behave. I can tell you, sometimes you see somebody and say, "This person is so angry always." Because their expression in their faces is tough. It's not a sweet smile, and you even see it in children. Especially you can see that. If you, if you watch people, and I like to watch people. I love to do that, oh yes. *[section omitted at request of interviewee]*

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

Let me stop the tape and I'll change sides. **[END OF SIDE A]** Okay, we'll move on to the next question. How, how, what kind of ties do you maintain with your home country?

**Goldstein**

I went to visit two years, a year and a half ago, and I wanted to visit because I wanted to see some of my friends there, and I wanted to visit the cemetery to see the conditions, and I wanted to see the conditions of the country. We also, when we were there – I went with my family. It was my cousin and her children and her two grandchildren. We brought a

lot of medications, clothing. It's interesting. They don't have any soap, they don't have toothpaste, toothbrushes –

**Interviewer**

Aspirin.

**Goldstein**

We did, we brought that, not aspirin as much because my cousin's son who is with us is a physician.

**Interviewer**

Oh, okay.

**Goldstein**

So he said, "You have to be careful with aspirin because people can be allergic," and, you know, like with other medications, so they took the Tylenol for Children, but more than that. Antibiotics, and what he did was interesting. He called his, his ma, he and the other, and his father-in-law, and they called the different pharmaceuticals and said, "I don't want samples. I want original ones. I want to make sure that I don't bring in three aspirins and four, let's say, antibiotics or cough syrup. I want to send cases." So that's what they did, and they called in, you know, for the \_\_\_\_\_ **[UNCLEAR]**, they sent him soaps for, to give out to kids. Well, they sent cases and cases, and we gave them all out, and we brought a lot of new clothes – shirts for men and blouses and dresses for women. We bought them. And we visited different places, we, we walked around the city because we wanted to see, we went to Old Havana, where I lived. It's sad to say that the only area that's being fixed is the area where the tourists go, and sorry to say that Jose Marti's house, but this could be just his house, and his little bed where he slept and everything, they charge now for visiting – not a small amount – and now you can see pictures of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, like they are part of Marti's life, which they



were, never were, they will never be. And it's, it's difficult. You know, it, you, you, you change a lot and across from me, they made this center, it was, it used to be a grocery, a restaurant, and they made like a, not, not a school, like an educational center, so the kids can go there to get "educated." The streets themselves are very, they are not, cars are from 1940s, 1950s. There's no new cars, but the, these people have managed to make this car work, and every street there's a garage because they dismantle the car, the bring in the parts from I don't know where, and they fix their cars and they're gone to work on it. It's perfect. The, the reason, one of the reasons I went is that I wanted to visit this place that I knew as a child, and my cousin too because she was, she came from Europe before the war, and, but she said, "I want to see where my parents are buried." And, and I wanted to see my grandparents and uncles and aunts and cousins. The reality is, even the cemetery is falling apart because the, the reason is because there is no material to fix. I went to visit the apartment where I used to live with my parents and my brother, and the people were absolutely adorable. They are very nice. Personality has not changed at all. And I knocked on the door where I lived, and nobody was there, so they open the door, across where my grandparents were living, and said, "Who are you looking for?" And I said, "I, I used to live here," and they said, "Oh, please come in. Please come in. Let me show you. Do you remember this?" I said, "Of course. It's the same as my apartment but it's across the other side." So it was funny. He said to me, "Do you remember the dining room?" The dining room was as big as this, not big enough, this table. But it was called a dining room. And I said, "Yes." He said, "Do you remember the window you used to have here?" Because they've got my parents, my grandparents' apartment has a, it's like an opening, so it went down to the patio from the first, to the first, to the down

floor, to the base, first, he was living on the first floor, so the first apartment. And he said, I said, "Yeah, what happened to it?" He said, "Well, termites ate the wood, so I had to put up a wall. I couldn't, I, we didn't have enough wood to make up another one." But he was cute. He didn't say anything against, you know, he didn't, we, it was just like, "Hey. This is life. That's the way I'm going to be living." And then he, he said to me, I said to him, I had my cousin's children were downstairs. He says, "Come to the balcony." I said, "How do you fix it?" He said, "It was falling apart, and we were afraid to go out, so I managed to get some cement." I want to tell you, my heart was pounding, if this balcony goes down, and we go down there. I don't want to be buried there. So we took a picture, and we run right away. But people in the streets, even though that you're a foreigner, especially an American, even when you speak Spanish, they have the sense the way you're dressed and the sense you, you know, the, they don't beg you for money. They're asking for soap, for toothpaste, for maybe a pair of stockings, anything you can give them. And it's a lot to talk about. I don't know if you have any questions related to that, so, but that was the reason, is I wanted to, and we went to, like, they called it a mission, and the mission was really worthwhile –

*Interviewer*  
Okay.

*Goldstein*  
Because we really –

*Interviewer*  
Aside from that, how do you keep in contact with people in Havana?

*Goldstein*  
We call them once in a while, I write to them, and through the people in Miami, which they go more often than I do because if you don't have family there, there's no sense of



going back every year because by bringing dollars, you're helping the regime more, more than you're helping people because the only way they can survive is by using dollars, and they get the dollars from the people that come to visit or from their families.

**Interviewer**

Okay. You've touched upon this, but what are the things that you miss most about

home? About Cuba?

**Goldstein**

One of the things that I miss most is the closeness that I used to live with my family and friends. You see, we used to live in the same area, even if you were living like in a more, a little bit more expensive area, you're only a half an hour away driving. You always find a center to meet, you will always have a place where you can say, "Oh, we'll meet you, let's say, in the movie. We'll meet you for food. We'll meet you at the club, and we'll be together." There was a lot of organizations that you could go, as a Jew and as a non-Jew, they have different centers, and they have, we would go to the ballet, to the opera, to dancing, which was one of the, hey, it, that's, that's part of it.

**Interviewer**

Yeah, dancing.

**Goldstein**

But the closeness to family, like, for example, even if my children were living half an hour away, I could get in my car and go, but I cannot do that because one is in Boston, I'm here. It's five hours' drive. My cousins, ones live in Miami, the other one live in New York. It's not anymore that physical contact that we used to have and make it possible, even though, if you have an affair, or you have something --- we go. We just came back, we went there one month --

**Interviewer**

Baptisms or, not baptisms, but --

**Goldstein**

Three times in one month. We went three times to Florida. One was a family's wedding, there was a, a family's bar mitzvah, and there were friends' something, so we don't stay away, and they came to everything we made and did here. They don't want to come in the winter time, that's difficult. Well, because they get, they're afraid, then they get sick.

**Interviewer**

Yeah.

**Goldstein**

So they, they'd rather not come. But this is what I miss the most.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

The closeness, the friendship, the, my friends. We used to, it's interesting because, I don't know in other countries, but in Cuba, the, when you're young, you stay on the streets and you call your friend who lives on the third floor, "Maria! Vasa vajar?" you know, "Are you coming down? What are you going to do now?" "Hi! I'm waiting for you." "I'm coming, Mama! Don't rush me. We're coming." And, and it's fun because the people don't complain. You know, everybody knows it's going to happen, so if we walk in the streets, it's, "You know. Come on. She's coming. Don't you hear she's coming?"

**Interviewer**

People do, the conversation starts --

**Goldstein**

That's right. It's a conversation, it comes like a, a, a family thing. It's not any more private than the communication between me and my friends.

**Interviewer**



Right. That's nice. What aspects of your daily life do you feel keep you connected to your culture?

**Goldstein**  
My traditions?

**Interviewer**  
Your, yeah. Your, your Cuban and your Jewish culture, what –

**Goldstein**  
Oh, both of them?

**Interviewer**  
Yeah, both of them.

**Goldstein**  
And, yes, you want the combination of both of them, or just –

**Interviewer**  
Yeah.

**Goldstein**  
That, each separate?

**Interviewer**  
Your Cuban-ness and, and your Jewish, I mean, they're, I imagine for you, they're, they're, they're not necessarily separate.

**Goldstein**  
No, no, no. In the traditions.

**Interviewer**  
Um-hm.

**Goldstein**  
The friends that I have here that are Cuban and Jewish and non-Jewish. We talk about everything, about religion, I, we talk openly, I mean, we're not afraid of saying anything in the sense that we respect each other very much. That's the key of everything. The food –

**Interviewer**

Uh-huh?

**Goldstein**  
Uh-huh. In fact, it's interesting because just last week, a day like today, I cooked for the employees of the synagogue. I made a Cuban meal.

**Interviewer**  
Oh, wow.

**Goldstein**  
And they were, I mean, and they were in the life. You can ask any of the people who were here. I had the black bean soup with white rice, of course, I had picadillo, which is the ground meat, I had chicken fricassee Cuban style, with the olives and the capers and you name it –

**Interviewer**  
Tomatoes and –

**Goldstein**  
Yes. And we had the, the what do you call that? The bananas, but I didn't fry them. I made them like flambé bananas.

**Interviewer**  
Okay. The platanos, the sweet? Or the, the maduros, or the tostones?

**Goldstein**  
No, you can, no. For that, you can only use really, because, what happened is the plantains that they bring to the States, for some reason, they're hard. The center is very hard, very dry, so I use the regular bananas. You put them in the oven with, you mix – kind of a recipe – brown and white sugar. We cook it with a lot of wine. I love wine, I mean, I don't love wine to drink but I like because the alcohol evaporates in the cooking. Sherry wine, cinnamon, some margarine and in the oven and when it comes out, you can eat them as dessert, you can eat them with the meat, you can eat them with the rice, you can eat them any way you want, but are delicious.



**Interviewer**

It sounds, it's like I missed, I missed out –

**Goldstein**

And I got some Italian bread that is very similar to the Cuban bread.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

We had fruit, but most, we, that's the way we keep more or less, and most of the Cubans do that. It's the food, the culture, the reading, the talking about a country that you left behind, your families, your, your, everything. Your traditions there. We might, you know, reminiscence of the places you went as a child and as an adult and when you got married and the Paseo del Prado, which was the place, the Malecón, where people would just walk around. We did that. When I went back to Cuba, one of the things we did is walk the Malecón, which is the, the waterfront. I mean –

**Interviewer**

Beautiful waterfront.

**Goldstein**

We started at the National Hotel and we ended up in Old Havana. It's a couple miles.

**Interviewer**

Yes.

**Goldstein**

Not a couple, it's about ten miles, twelve? We walked all of it because it was so beautiful to watch the Morro, the Morro Castle, and just to watch the people and they're still the same. They're still lovers there, there are still children playing. People don't change as much, at least, at least there. I'm not talking about other countries because I don't know what they do, but I know they are, they are very friendly, and they're very receptive of

foreigners. They were even, because when my father had to leave Cuba, he cried more than when he left his nation, country, his –

**Interviewer**

Which was Poland, right?

**Goldstein**

It was Poland, but the Polish people were not as friendly, and when my father came, and it's, I, with my father as an example, but I know most of the population came in with the idea to emigrate to the United States, but there was a quota, and they couldn't go, so they started to, they started their families in Cuba, and the Cubans were not making fun of their accent. They were peddlers, they were people who were selling things on the streets, they were workers, and they adopted them like, you know, like they could incorporate themselves easily into the community. There was no dis --- umm, and they lived together, everybody, all kind of religion, all kind of backgrounds. There was no, there was a group there, there's always, like every place else, that consider themselves better than others, so they moved out from the old Havana, and they moved to higher areas and all that. But that you find in every culture –

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

In every country and everywhere, and when I told my father he has to leave because my mother got very sick, and I didn't want her to, she had, she got better here. She needed some surgery. He said to me, "I don't want to leave." I said, "Well, you have no choices. This is the choice you have." I closed the door of that house, of that apartment, and he was very miserable a long time, but as time went by, and I was here and the children were here and the grandchildren –



**Interviewer**

Right –

**Goldstein**

He felt like, he always talked about his friends there. Always. There was some, some sort of connection that you don't break away from. It's like, I'm sure, your parents, even they were born in the United States, because of the background, they still talk about the parents. There's still something there that you don't forget.

**Interviewer**

Yeah. And they were from a small town.

**Goldstein**

Yeah, even more –

**Interviewer**

High school sweethearts and –

**Goldstein**

That's right –

**Interviewer**

So they have –

**Goldstein**

That's, I have still friends of mine that I remember used to go out with them, and when we see each other, we'll laugh because we're all married, and we kid each other. It's like, not, we friends-friends, you know? It's ties that you don't break away from. I mean, you could, but you don't want to.

**Interviewer**

No.

**Goldstein**

No.

**Interviewer**

Are there places or events in Philadelphia where you or someone can experience or experiences your native culture, or Cuban culture?

**Goldstein**

The Cuban Club. They have, once a month they meet there, and they have, usually they have a lecture of some sort, and then they could have, like last month, this past month, in January, it's, January 28<sup>th</sup>, Martí was born, and they had, they always celebrate, and what they do is beautiful, too. They prepare what they call, besides the program which is dedicated to Jose Martí, we have a beautiful singer, a woman, a, the daughter of one of the members, she's Cuban, too. She sang, and she spoke about Martí and his philosophy and some of the poems, then they have Cuban food, of course. But besides that, what they do is they collect, they ask all the members to bring in a gift for a newborn baby and they call it the "Canastilla Martiana". That's a tradition from Cuba that, I think Battista's wife started, if I'm not mistaken, that a child born that day will receive all these gifts, but it has to be a needy family, so what they do is, they, the Club itself buys, like, a playpen, and it gets full with clothing, toys, carriage, whatever you want to bring, diapers, things that the family will need, and I found out, Nellie called me other day to tell me that the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, they are giving this away to the, to the girl who had the baby born the 28<sup>th</sup> of January.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

And it's a neat, they are, they had, I think this time, they had about three candidates that they were expecting at the same time, but she had the baby, so she gets it.

**Interviewer**

She, she got it.

**Goldstein**

Yeah.

**Interviewer**



Okay.

**Goldstein**

If it would be two at the same time, they would have to divide it. But being one only, it's

not, it's called "Canastilla Martiana". It's a beautiful idea, and everybody's happy to

bring something, and people bring, everything is in pack--- you know, beautiful packed,

and like, like gift packages, and new from stores. Nothing from home. You cannot

bring, I mean, you wouldn't even think of it.

**Interviewer**

Bringing an old, your, your children's old –

**Goldstein**

No. That, you can give it to the, the any welfare. That they could use. I mean, I'm

talking about these, when I came, let me tell you, and I don't know if you want to write it

down, but don't forget, when I came from Cuba, I came to New York to my cousin's

house. I had nothing. Nothing. The three clothes, change of clothes I was allowed to

take out. My husband, one suit and three shirts. And I had a newborn baby. I mean, I

did not have a newborn baby, the baby was going to be born. My cousin has already

children, nine and eleven, or nine and twelve, I don't remember. She called her friends,

and she says, "If you know or if you have a carriage, a portable crib, or clothing,

whatever you have that is in perfect condition, just bring it over." And I lived on that,

and I was very thankful because I would not give something, even for an adult, I

wouldn't give a shirt that it has been mended or it has been dirt, but when I give away, I

give away new things. Things that they can be repaired – or not repaired, I'm sorry – but

can be worn away.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

So I lived with that, and it was, I told my cousin, "My God. I have, I can three

carriages." She said, "Take only one."

**Interviewer**

You had three choices.

**Goldstein**

Well, because people were kind. You know, they said, "Oh, I have one that, you know,

my, my, my daughter just had a baby, and the baby's already eight months. Doesn't fit."

My son sleep, was sleeping in a carriage until he was about four months old because I did

not have money to buy a bed, and I couldn't put a bed in her house, and I couldn't bring

one here. When I came, then we, we bought one. We bought? No, my brother bought

me one. I didn't have money. As far as it gets.

**Interviewer**

In, in what ways, if any, do you feel you've moved away from your culture? From, from

your Cuban culture?

**Goldstein**

I don't think so.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

I don't think so. I still read the Spanish books. I love to read them. I still look for them,

I still listen to the music, the Spanish music. I buy a lot of the records for tapes or CDs,

whatever comes out. I follow, is there anything going on in the city, I go. We went to

see Buena Vista Club twice already.

**Interviewer**

Oh, yes. Beautiful.

**Goldstein**



And I think they're coming in the 18<sup>th</sup> to one of the theatres, I don't even know where it's located, but I'm going to find out.

*Interviewer*

Do they put an ad in some of the –

*Goldstein*

Yes, yes. And we go to the Cuban Club, I speak to my Cuban friends. No, I'm –

*Interviewer*

Okay.

*Goldstein*

I will not forsake my culture. No.

*Interviewer*

Okay.

*Goldstein*

That would be like, only when I'm getting senile and I don't know who I am. Then I can tell you that I, maybe I don't even know who I am anyway. It doesn't matter where I come from.

*Interviewer*

Well let me ask you, what about your children? How, what have you done to maintain with your children?

*Goldstein*

Okay. It's interesting because my two children --- in, at home, we spoke Spanish and Yiddish, which was my parents' language and mine. I learned English also in school and on the streets, and today, my two sons speak Spanish perfectly, even they're married to American girls, the wives know that when they get together, they're going to be speaking Spanish, and in fact, my youngest son, who has a daughter and expecting another one, another child, they insist of me to talk to the child in Spanish, and when she hires somebody to help her out, it has to be someone of Spanish background because she said

it's, "I don't want my child to lose what her father has." And she herself has learned Spanish. My oldest one, she's trying, but she says, "You know, I forget." I say, "It's because my son talks to you in English, that's why." But when she listens, when she's there, and they don't get upset because we speak Spanish, it's, it's a natural, it comes in like a natural, it's not like they're pretending. So they say, "It's okay, they were born here, your sons." I said, "Yes." But they know grammar, they write, write perfectly, and my youngest son who is a pediatric surgeon in Boston, he is always called to talk to the parents when surgery comes for Latin kids –

*Interviewer*

Oh, wow.

*Goldstein*

Because he explains to them with very good Spanish, the situation or the sadness or the happiness of the surgery, and they said that for them it's like they don't let him go. In fact, he trained at the Harvard Mass General, and they told him, then he went for two years to do more training in New York, they said, "Well, when you finish your two years, you're coming back to us." He said, "Well, we see, because if I get a better, you know, if a get a contract." They said, "There is no questions asked." So before he finished, they already sent him a contract to make sure that he signed up with them.

*Interviewer*

Name your price in a way.

*Goldstein*

Yes. Yeah, I mean there was no questions asked because of, I think, beside that he's very good – not because he's my son, but he's very good – and he's very patient with kids. He loves kids since he was born, I think. The language helps a lot, and I, I feel like the



United States, these people who criticize because of ones who, somebody who wants to become bilingual, and they criticize it, I think they're wrong.

**Interviewer**  
Right.

**Goldstein**  
I don't care which language you learn, but learn another language but English. The world doesn't start and end here. Wherever you go, if you, and if you know Spanish, which has a background in Latin, if you travel to Italy, you understand. You might not be able to speak as well, but they will understand if you say you want bread. Because "pan" and in, in that, and in French, it's "pain", and in Italian, it's panello, whatever they call that, so, you know, if you say I want a piece of bread, they say, "Oh, oh. Yeah. Si, si."

*[section omitted at request of interviewee]*

**Interviewer**  
I think you've touched upon this, I don't, I'll ask you the question, you know, are you, there concerns that you have about your home country or friends or family that are still there?

**Goldstein**  
My concern is mostly that they aren't free to express themselves. Freedom of speech is so important. Freedom of movement, to go where you want and visit who you want. Besides being, in a way, they cannot buy whatever they want because there is not the money, and the sad part is that in Cuba, the peso, which is the official money, it's not valuable. When I was there, and it was, I mean, I'm not the only one, in one corner of the same street, you have what they call the dollar store. It's not the One Dollar Store from here. It's the dollar because you buy with dollars. And, in the same street, the next corner, it's the peso store. So, you can go in and buy, with the dollar store, everything you want from perfume to stockings to dresses. With the peso, there is no perfume, there

is no stockings because they are rationed. You, you can buy blouses, but for a blouse, you have to pay 23 pesos, and your salary, even as a physician or an architect, is 80 pesos a month. What do you buy? I was at the hotel, and one of the employees told me, you know, once you start talking to them and they realize that you don't sympathize with the government, he said to me, "Any money I make here in, in dollars that the people give me as a, as a tip, I use it to buy a steak for my daughter or a pair of shoes or something for my wife because with the pesos, I have to go over to the ration list, and usually I don't get anything." And I, I went through that because I was in Cuba when rations started, and believe me --- my husband got sick and I went to buy oranges. I said, "These three oranges only I need." And he said, "No, you have to --- " And my book ration --- I hadn't taken one orange the whole year, but in my book, it did not appear, oranges. So I have to go, walk to the Defense Committee, the center office which was about 15 blocks away from my home and get a letter from them authorizing the store to give me three oranges. When I got there, they never got the oranges. And I mean, oranges because there was nothing. We didn't get any milk. We didn't get any tea, we didn't get anything. So I said, "At least some, something." And everything was rationed from sugar down to whatever you want, so this is what I, I am concerned about and, and if, they try to, to, to hold themselves, Cubans have a very funny, and I think the world itself, the only way you can survive a bad situation is making fun of yourself. And thinking about politics and baseball, because we were standing in the park, and there were about ten men standing there, and my cousin's child who doesn't speak Spanish, said to the mother, he says, "What are you talking?" I said, "Baseball." He said, "What do you mean, baseball? There's so much going on." I said, "No. Problems in the country, they



know. Problem that they don't have what to eat, what do they know." But it's part of them, so how do you survive? Talking nonsense. Talking something that is not really of any significance, but for them, was important to talk, you know, because in Cuba, they used to watch the baseball games, the, the American baseball, that was –

*Interviewer*  
Diversion.

*Goldstein*  
It's a diversion, that's right. Second tape?

*Interviewer*  
Second tape.

*Goldstein*  
Are you serious?

*Interviewer*  
Yes. How are you? Okay with time? Okay. What is your favorite holiday to observe or celebrate?

*Goldstein*  
Jewish or non-Jewish, which?

*Interviewer*  
Whichever.

*Goldstein*  
From the Jewish point of view, I like Passover, because it's a holiday that the whole family gets together. It's a lot of cooking. You stay in the kitchen for three days, you have to scrub the kitchen, you have to change all your dishes, I mean if you're traditional.

*Interviewer*  
Oh, right. For the kosher observance.

*Goldstein*  
It's a lot of work, yes, that's right. I'm observant, I'm kosher observant, so. It's a lot of food, but it's a lot of fun. It's two nights and, and the first night they usually have family, and the second night, I have part of the family because they go to the other part of their

family, and then I have friends over that has no family or they want to come. They want to enjoy food. It's a beautiful service, and that's one of the most, besides birthdays and so on. But holidays, Passover. And the non-Jewish ones, I would say, the way that we celebrate New Year's and the patriots' dates, like October 10<sup>th</sup>, Martí's birthday, the memorial for the seven, the students, the Siempre Siete, the seven – [END OF TAPE 1]

*Interviewer*

Interview with Rosa Goldstein, tape two, side one.

*Goldstein*

There was a sad story about them because they were accused of desecrating a, a tomb of a Spaniard, and even though they were defended and everything, they were sent to the firing squad, seven young kids that, that really did not do that, and they don't deserve to die, anyway, no matter what.

*Interviewer*  
Was this during the Thirty Year War?

*Goldstein*  
No, that was 18, 1890 – yeah, it was during the ten years.

*Interviewer*  
Oh, the ten years.

*Goldstein*  
Yes.

*Interviewer*  
And what is the, the name of that holiday?

*Goldstein*  
The celebration is [La Muerta de los Estudiantes --- de los Siete Estudiantes], and that is always, you know, commemorated by, then they have other ones, but this, the most important ones are those.



**Interviewer**

Okay. I think I know the answer, is, is Philadelphia now home?

**Goldstein**

Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer**

When did, when did –

**Goldstein**

When the weather changes –

**Interviewer**

When it did begin to feel that way for you, as, as –

**Goldstein**

From beginning. For some reason, Cubans and, and Jewish people especially, we're

herons(?). We're always traveling, we're always changing, and unless you make it your

home right away, you get depressed.

**Interviewer**

Be sad.

**Goldstein**

And why be depressed when you have your family with you? You have a bed where to

sleep, you have food, you have friends, and when I moved to the apartment, it's

interesting, there were, one, two, three, four Cuban families living there, and we used to

sit on the patio and talk until there was light, and we still talk. One of them moved to

Florida, the other one they passed away, one is still in Philadelphia, her brother is here, so

we keep close together. I, I don't, this, the problem was that I was starting to tell you

before is that the people, the Cubans, Jews or non-Jews, it doesn't matter, that came from

Miami, to Miami, when they left Cuba in let's say 1961, '62, '63, even a little bit later I

guess, they did not almost unpack. They were sure that they were going back right away.

Because I said that 90 miles from the United States, a Communist country cannot survive.

And it's not true. And it's proven because '59 to now, how many years? You have 43 years almost, 42 years of Fidel in power, so let's pretend that the first year anybody knew when he didn't say, so it's 41 years that he's there, the government is there and the politics is there. But I think that after being, after 1963, they realized, or '65, after the Bay of Pigs and the missile crisis and so on, they realized that they're not going back so fast, so they started really to unpack, and when I say unpack, I, I refer to look for a place where to stay, for real work, not just partial work, and to establish their families. That's all you can do.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

So, you adapt. You, you have to adapt. You have no choices in life. They don't give you too many.

**Interviewer**

No. What, were the, were there difficult things when you arrived in Philadelphia for your family? What were, what were?

**Goldstein**

It was not too difficult because I had my brother here and my parents here. For my husband, it was a little bit different because he has to go out and work, and he was lucky enough that one other hospital that it's today called Elkins Park Hospital, then it was Rolling Hill, my brother knew all the people, and he got a position there as a, not as an attendant physician because he needed, he to renovate his license, but they gave him, like, he could work making house calls or making, you know, rounds at night, being in the emergency room –

**Interviewer**

Like a P.A. almost.



**Goldstein**

Yeah. Like a general practitioner. But in the meantime, he had to study. He had to get credits, because he had to get 60 credits in order to do his license. Also he had to take the ECFMG, which is the exams for renewing the license, then he had to go through the license for Pennsylvania, then he took the national license, and then he took the, not the national, he took the cardiology because he is a cardiologist, and then he took the Florida license. And for all that, you have to prepare an exam, but the, the difficult part of this because when you come and you are a physician for years, and all of a sudden, you feel like you're going to be a nurse, you're not anymore the one who can say, "I'm going to treat this patient this way." You always have a supervisor. That's a little bit hard. Emotionally, I don't think it's physically as much. And that was the only hardship, really. Not having money or being, just living on a salary, that wasn't, my father started to work, too, in a bakery, and between all of us, we managed to, to survive and be very happy.

**Interviewer**

Family.

**Goldstein**

Yeah, family. Family. That's the secret of life.

**Interviewer**

I, I think I know the question, but maybe, or the answer, but do you plan on staying in Philadelphia?

**Goldstein**

For the time being, yes.

**Interviewer**

The time being?

**Goldstein**

Yes, because my son is only an hour away, and my other son, even though he's in

Boston, and the other day he called me and says, "Mom, if we go to New York, would you come?" I says, "Of course." He says, "Well, we might go to New York before the baby's born." That's just like, you know, we says, "Why don't you come here?" He says, "Well, we'll see because then maybe we both," he has all these plans. We go to the theatre, we go for dinner, or I go with my wife while you stay with the baby. "Yeah, okay. Fine." You know, it's an instore babysitter.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

Me and my husband, which is good.

**Interviewer**

Yeah, you get to bond with the babies.

**Goldstein**

Yes, absolutely. I, this child is funny. She said to me, I said to her the other, I called, and the mother said, "Do you want to talk to your grandmother?" and she says, "No." I said, "You don't want to talk to me?" She's only two and a half. She says, "No." Then she comes to the phone, she says, "You have to talk to her. She sent you something." She says, "Oh." She \_\_\_\_\_. I heard her because \_\_\_\_\_ she \_\_\_\_ I said, "Hi! Sarah, how are you?" She says, "Thank you. Bye, Bubbe." Okay? "Thank you. Bye." That was it.

**Interviewer**

Bubbe? She calls you –

**Goldstein**



Bubbe --- It's the Jewish expression because this is the way I called my grandmother, and this is the way my children call my mother, and I want her always remember where she comes from is the reason to use that. It's a beautiful expression.

**Interviewer**  
Yeah, it's nice.

**Goldstein**  
It's like in Hebrew, "bubba" is doll. So when you told the girl, "Oh, you're like a bubba", it's a little doll. So I guess the, the relationship to "Bubbe" which means --- because grandmother is usually, or grandfather's --- it usually means sweetheart, you know?

**Interviewer**  
Right. They've already parented.

**Goldstein**  
Yeah, well, you know, and they don't scream, you don't yell at them, you always give them something. If they are angry, they say, "I'm going to my grandmother's house." Did you hear that many times?

**Interviewer**  
Yes. Smiles, smiles.

**Goldstein**  
That's right. "Oh, poor little child. What did you do? Oh, what." My father always defended my children, always. Like my father used to say, "You don't have to scream at them." I says, "But did you see what they did?" "Yeah, but, you know, he's just a child," and he knew, they knew where to go right away. Right away, they were onto him because as I said, because we, we stayed together.

**Interviewer**

That's funny. Okay. How would you describe yourself in the, in the U.S. context? Or, or what do you consider yourself to be in terms of your identity? If you say I am a, or I am?

**Goldstein**  
Okay, here I go. I'm Jewish Cuban-American.

**Interviewer**  
Okay.

**Goldstein**  
It means I keep the cultures, I keep the traditions and I adopt to the new ones, which is the American traditions and customs and friends and situations.

**Interviewer**  
Okay. What do you think about the ideas or the terms "Latino" or "Hispanic?"

**Goldstein**  
I think they use it wrongly when they use the, the words --- because sometimes they use it disrespectfully, you know, like, not with respect. "Latinos" is too, too, too a general concept because everybody's a Latino. I don't know exactly how, why they, they use that terminology because coming from the Latin countries, you are either Venezolano, Mexicano, Argentino, Cubano, etc., etc., but it doesn't have the, the, the presumption that every, it's Latino. I don't like the expression as much.

**Interviewer**  
Okay. And what about --

**Goldstein**  
I rarely use it.

**Interviewer**  
What about Hispanic?

**Goldstein**  
I don't know where that comes from. Why? We are not from Hispanica. Hispanica was the, the old name for Spain, and even that's our ancestors, let's say, it doesn't mean that -



-- this is, the problem is the way they're using it. That when they say, "No. They are Latinos."

**Interviewer**  
Si.

**Goldstein**  
Too bad, you always get the connotation of well, you know, they're not as prepared, they're not as educated, they are not "*as*" --- from my concept. I might be very wrong.

**Interviewer**  
Right, right. No. I find it to be something very personal. Everyone has a different idea of what it means.

**Goldstein**  
Yeah. And not only that, everybody has a different identity. I mean think the same as Mexican people do, and I, you don't think the same as Venezuelan people do because the fact that you are from a Latin country, it doesn't mean that you are not different.

**Interviewer**  
Right.

**Goldstein**  
You have your own cultures, you have your own customs, you have your own traditions, so when they say that, for example, there is a magazine that I subscribe, I don't even know why, but, called *Latinas*.

**Interviewer**  
Oh, yeah. It's like a lifestyle and fashion type magazine.

**Goldstein**  
But this is it, it's a, if that's the concept of Latinos, they have the wrong concept because Latinos is not just fashion and lovers and short skirts and a lot of make up and hunky men or gorgeous women. Spanish people are educated people, and the concept is that you have to go to school, you have to study, you have to have an education. You can be

gorgeous, you can be so handsome that people just turn their heads to, to look at you, but behind that, there must be something in your brain, and that's what parents are trying to bring into them. If all the Latin countries think the same way, I cannot tell you that. I know how I think, and how most of my friends think, and where do they go? You're gorgeous today, but hey, who knows tomorrow?

**Interviewer**  
That's fleeting.

**Goldstein**  
Well, listen. When people left Cuba, for example, you had people who were doctors, who were accountants, who were engineers, lawyers. If you have somebody to give you a job, and your job is fine, but if you didn't, how many of them went to wash dishes to make a salary to support their, or elevator workers, or doing anything that was needed? Housework, working whenever they can, with the idea to prepare themselves for becoming again what they were. And most of them went back to school at night, they renewed their titles, their licenses, and they're now where they are, or business people make their own businesses. You don't have to go too far. We have them in Philadelphia, you have a whole, you have radio stations, you have everything. It's "La Ora Latina" because they speak Spanish, but it's not "Latino", it's different as "Latinas". "La Ora Latina" "comida latina" --- but it's different. But when you say "Latinos", it's a little bit more twisted.

**Interviewer**  
Do you think the idea Latino-Americano would be any better, or?

**Goldstein**  
Could be, probably a more, better expression system where they use for an American, which they mean that you come from another country, but now you are an American.



*Interviewer*

Right.

*Goldstein*

Could be a little bit easier on your ears, Latino-Americano.

*Interviewer*

Okay.

*Goldstein*

Because we have a Latino America. That's what we call the, we don't call Latino only.

*Interviewer*

Right. Latino Americanos.

*Goldstein*

Latin American because you came from Latin America.

*Interviewer*

Right.

*Goldstein*

Now, Americas is everything.

*Interviewer*

Right.

*Goldstein*

But you're – okay?

*Interviewer*

Um-hm.

*Goldstein*

So why call us just Latino? Why not call us Latin Americanos? Because most –

*Interviewer*

Right. As a geographic marker.

*Goldstein*

Yeah, that's right. It was there. It is there. I mean, we didn't change because of the parties, the political body.

*Interviewer*

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Right. How do you feel similar or different to, and I'm going to use the word Latinos as

a category, how do you feel similar or different to Latinos with, of different

backgrounds?

*Goldstein*

Maybe because I'm Jewish, I have other traditions, too, and even if I meet Jewish people

from other countries, and not always do we have the same way of thinking or the same

traditions. From a religious point of view, yes. But from the point of view of nation, it's

not always the same. And I think that everybody's an, like I said before, we are

individuals, and, but I, the way I think, it doesn't mean that my husband, because he's

married to me, thinks the same way. But, in general, I don't have too much connection

with other Latin people. I have some friends from Argentina, Venezuela, but mostly are

Cubans.

*Interviewer*

Um-hm, okay.

*Goldstein*

So I don't see that, the big difference. Yes, there, not culturally from the country point of view, but as, as a religious point of view? Yes.

*Interviewer*

Okay. Okay. What do you feel Latino-Americanos have to offer Philadelphia or, or the U.S.. in general?

*Goldstein*

They're very creative. Latin people are very creative, and they are entrepreneurs, just

give them a chance. Just open up your doors. They have a sense of humor, they have fire

in their, in their souls. It means that they are, they like to do things. Most of them do

more. They, they can teach you a sense of family, values, that it's very important,

especially today with the situation of youngsters where there's no family connection,

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where divorce is rampage, which everybody goes their own ways and, and maybe because we are created, we were raised in a Spaniard culture, I mean from Spain, divorce is not always the, going out of a situation, because you think of your children, of the, your parents, how would they feel about that, so you keep and you try to fix it, if you can. I think they can offer all that. They can be excellent educators. I have a lot of friends that are teachers, and believe me, they, they have a lot of feelings towards youngsters. They're very much involved in, in the community life. They want to be part of the community. And, in fact, I think that President Bush just named, or was it Rendell, just named Ortiz –

**Interviewer**

Yes. No, Ben. Ben Ramos.

**Goldstein**

Ben, Benjamin Ramos, as a, one of his right hands.

**Interviewer**

Yeah, yeah.

**Goldstein**

But he knows him. He has worked with him for years, so he knows what he can offer.

Even President Bush a few Latinos –

**Interviewer**

He does.

**Goldstein**

Because he knows. If you give them an order, and you says, "I would like this to be done," they don't say this word "mañana." It's very popular, but it's not always used. I mean, it's, it's not always applied because, if you tell me to do something now, I will maybe not do it now, but I will do it in a half an hour, but I will try to accomplish what you asked me because this is ingrown in you by your parents, your grandparents, your

great grandparents. It comes from all the way back because discipline is one of the things that we used to have, and I, I said, 11:00, you're at home. Okay? You don't stay out until 2:00 in the morning. You don't go out from your home at 10:00 at night. If you have to go out at 10:00 at night, you don't go, as a teenager or even, I was dating my husband. We were going to get married. I couldn't get home after 12:00.

**Interviewer**

And you were engaged already?

**Goldstein**

I was engaged. I was going to get married in three months. And my father says, "I don't want you," because one night I was late. I, I went to the movie, and then we went for frozen, which is the, the, how do you call the frozen? It's like ice cream, but it's the, like a shake.

**Interviewer**

Oh, okay. A malt, or a shake.

**Goldstein**

A malt, yeah. So we, I got home at about 12:20, and my father was up. He said to me,

"What happened?" Very angry. And I said, "We just went to the movie, and I went to

have something to drink." He says, "Tomorrow, you're not going out. But if you go

during the weekend, after 12:00, I close the door." I said wow. And I told my boyfriend,

who was my husband-to-be, I said, "Sorry. Either we go for a drink before, or we don't

go the movie."

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

It's true. That's the way we were raised.

**Interviewer**

Respect also.



**Goldstein**

Yes, and the other thing is that I found that it's, was a value is that if I had a neighbor and

I was, pretend I was not behaving, I was answering wrongly, I, I was disrespectful to somebody, or if I was doing something that it was not proper, or I was going out, I was too mushy with somebody, they would tell my parents. It was a way of being safe. In a way, they're protecting you, they're not trying to vicious or anything like that, they just wanted to make sure that you are doing the proper thing as a woman or as a man. If you are smoking on the street, they will ask your father, "Oh, is Juan allowed to smoke?"

"No. Who told you?" "Oh, I didn't realize. I saw him yesterday with a cigarette." They knew that he's not allowed because he was only 15 or 16, but they'll make sure that your father knows that this is not allowed, and that he's doing it behind your back. So the father will go home and not punish him, but says, "I found out that so-and-so, that you were doing this." "Oh, but it was only once." He says, "I don't want to see that again."

You know, there was a conversation, there was not a scolding, there was no, what they call [chisme]. It was more like trying to protect you from doing something wrong.

Today you cannot do that.

**Interviewer**

People get so offended if you –

**Goldstein**

I saw the other day a child in one of these supermarkets on a carriage. She was standing.

And I turned to the mother and says, "Excuse me. Be careful, your child's going to fall out." "I know." No, you didn't know because your back is turned. This child is only two years old and is standing on the top – you know where this, the, where you put your things?

**Interviewer**

Um-hm the seat?

**Goldstein**

Right. From there, it's so easy to fall on the ground. So easy. And she was angry

because I said that. I said, well. And another one was on line with me, she said, "What was that for?" I said, "Well, it's her child. Not mine. I'm just trying to tell her." She says, "My God. What a response she gave you."

**Interviewer**

Right. Scolding you for –

**Goldstein**

Yeah. She was angry because how come, how do I dare to tell her that? And how many times you talk to other women, "Excuse me, you're hand, don't leave your hand," the other day, this woman is shopping, she leaves her handbag on the, on the cart, and then she said, and I said to her, "Don't do that because thieves are faster than your eyes." And she looked at me and said, "Oh, there's not a problem" I said, "No, I know there is not a problem." They take it, good-bye. I don't know where you're going to find it. But they get angry.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

Well, this is, I'm not used to that.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

So that's why I found out it's, we can offer a lot.

**Interviewer**

What would you like people to know about your, your Cuban community?

**Goldstein**



Mostly that they are productive, they are working, they are very family-oriented, they kept their traditions and they pass them on to the children and grandchildren, like I said, New Year's, one of the families, even though it was expensive – not expensive, but considering – he brought his children and the little ones, even the two-year-old ones there for New Year's, because I want to keep close. It's, it's something that they don't want to give up, and I wish that everybody does the same. We'd have less problem with kids today. In school, disrespect to teachers and to parents, and how does, if you, in a public place, or in not a public place, if you try to punish your child, you are accused of child abuse. What all was this child abuse? You know, sometimes a child has to know, and a child, a human being is looking for direction, and the only way you give direction is by explaining, by talking, but if the child doesn't listen, he needs discipline, and the discipline comes only when you say, "Well, now you're going to sit down, and wait until I tell you to get up." That's all. I don't have to spank you, I don't have to kill you. I don't have to scream because screaming doesn't help too much, but just know who is the, like, one physician told me once, very smart, he said to me, "A baby when it's born, the first day he's open up his eyes, he wants to see who is the boss." So you teach them who is the boss. If he, if you have fed him, and the child is clean, and starts to cry, just make sure it's safe. Make sure it doesn't have a stomach ache. Hold him for a few minutes, if everything is okay, put him back in the crib, and then he'll cry for a few seconds. He learns who is the boss. So, it was very interesting. I said, "Well, I'll teach him who is the boss."

**Interviewer**

I'm going to have to remember that one for my time.

**Goldstein**

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You haven't married yet?

**Interviewer**

No.

**Goldstein**

No, but that doesn't \_\_\_\_\_.

**Interviewer**

What, what do you see are the greatest challenges facing the, the broad Latino

community?

**Goldstein**

Challenges is when you try to raise your child into your traditions with the same concept

that you are raised, and it's difficult because you live in a society that doesn't follow all

the rules. That is a challenge, how do you do that. And it comes from, not only, not only

Latin, but let me tell you just, and you can always take it off, I don't mind. I went many

years ago to a convention with my husband, and they had a program for women, which

was absolutely fascinating. It would, had psychologists and social workers, and in

conventions like that, you have people from all over the world. They group you into, you

could be, you sit at a table, and people sit around you, and I was sitting with a woman

from India. Her husband is from India, but they live in the United States now because he

was training here or whatever. And after the lectures and, and not, it was not as lectures

as much in their exchange of ideas, like you're doing now with me, the same idea. They

gave you like an hour for lunch and break, and you can pick one person from the table to

talk to you. And for some reason, we liked each other, and we started to talk, and we

went out for lunch together, and she was telling me their challenge is how to raise her

daughters to be pure, if you call them, until the day they get married. And I said the same

concept we have, the Latin people. But it's difficult, because it's a challenge to, to bring

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into your child's idea that at the age of 15, you don't have to have a boyfriend. You don't have to be like everybody else. You don't have – she says, “I don't like, my, my daughters are supposed to dress, maybe in the own, their native dresses, but I don't want them to wear the short dresses, and I can't because they will look strange in school.” That's a challenge. You don't want them to be involved into gangs, that's another challenge. The challenge of knowing the language so you can work and make a nice living for your family, to incorporate yourself into a society, which is the American society, with your background and feel comfortable, and let the people who surround you be as comfortable with you as you want to be with them. So it's all challenges. Life is full of them, even for the American people themselves, too.

**Interviewer**

Right. Are there adversity, or, I think that probably this is the same thing, particular adversities that we face? I guess it would be the same thing, the same challenges.

**Goldstein**

Yes. The food is not a problem.

**Interviewer**

The food. Have you, have you –

**Goldstein**

Play any music, because, did you realize that? That when you go to anywhere, everybody likes, loves to, to the, every orchestra knows how to play salsa and, and mambo and merengue and all that they think that Celia Cruz is God-given gift, and, what's his name, Ricky –

**Interviewer**

Martin.

**Goldstein**

Martin is another one, and Gloria Estefan, and now, the other day I read in the papers something, it was a sensation. Ricky Martin is making a new CD in Spanish they said, and they put Spanish in a very, in block letters because the last two ones he made were in English.

**Interviewer**

He's made in English.

**Goldstein**

This is, now he's doing that. This one's particularly in Spanish, and I can guarantee it's going to fly, even for the American people.

**Interviewer**

Well even I go, even the DJs now, you go and you hear DJs, and they're, you, you know, Latin beats and –

**Goldstein**

Yeah, because people like the –

**Interviewer**

Oh, yeah.

**Goldstein**

I think tango has become like the in thing.

**Interviewer**

Tango, yes. They're the milongas, I think.

**Goldstein**

The milongas, yes.

**Interviewer**

There have been a lot of milongas around the city.

**Goldstein**

Which is beautiful. It's a very, and you know? Because that music is not a soundless music. It's not a, a rhythmic music. It's very rhythmic. It has a lot of rhythm, and it's follow, it's easy to follow steps to dance, very easy. It's not just jumping. It's very



smooth, and it's, it's really for good friends, for lovers, for, to be, it's an expression of harmony, in a way, if you want to call that. I, I feel, that's the way I feel when I dance, and they call, they said we were, that the Latin are very good dancers because of that, because we feel the music. We, we, I think we dance not just with our feet but with our souls into it, too. I just –

**Interviewer**

No, that's, dance is very powerful.

**Goldstein**

Yes.

**Interviewer**

Have you had struggles here that you feel that have come from being an immigrant or a

Latina, you know, someone of Spanish background?

**Goldstein**

Not really, not as much, no. Even, it's difficult to integrate yourself in a group of people, and I feel like they were, you know, your friends you had when you are young. And when you want to integrate yourself into a group that exists already, you have your little struggles. You have to in a way, sometimes ignores some observation. Sometimes you, like, "Oh, where's your accent from?" I tell them where it's from, but I say, "One thing I can tell you, it's not going to change." That is for sure. So the, so that's, but they rarely be, you know, maybe because I'm in a circle like mostly the, the synagogue or the people, the Cuban people, the, that I know, that I tried to be, always try to be together. You know, immigrants try to somehow to stick together, but also try to integrate yourself into the communities.

**Interviewer**

Right. Okay. What, have you had successes and triumphs, or some of the things that you're most proud of here that you've done?

**Goldstein**

In my private life or social life?

**Interviewer**

Both.

**Goldstein**

My private life, I'm proud of the fact that my husband managed to do what he is doing, the way I raised my children, and I was very lucky because I think that no matter what you do, you have to have luck, and God Almighty was with me, has been with me all the time. Also the way that I have my parents with me and my in-laws, families and friends, that's my claim to fame, and like my sister-in-law said to me when my brother died, she said to me, "Now you're in charge of keeping the family together."

**Interviewer**

Wow.

**Goldstein**

And I said that's true. And that's what I do. [END OF SIDE A OF TAPE 2] And then, from the social part, is that I managed to, first of all, I used to work as a, when the, when Rolling Hill was, my husband was involved with that, and he still is, of course, they have an Auxiliary, and I used to work with them. I didn't work as a volunteer there, but I, not, I mean, in the hospital per se, but yes, as with the Auxiliary. We used to organize dinner dances and we used to do some fairs during the year, so I was involved with that, especially with the synagogue, mostly involved. And I found that I became president of our sisterhood, I am part of the Board, and I feel like I belong. Belonging. It's part of being.

**Interviewer**

And we, we've talked around this. It's just a more pointed question. What was, has been the greatest adjustment that you had to make coming here?



**Goldstein**

Find new friends.

**Interviewer**

New friends because you had such fulfilling and rich and full –

**Goldstein**

I had a great, yes. I was, well in Cuba, I worked the whole time, full time, and then I was involved with my parents the whole time and my husband's life, but when I came here, besides working, which I don't mind because I love to do it, it's trying to adjust yourself to find friends. Not just acquaintances, but friends. And I think I have a few of them. I don't, when I say friends, it's somebody that I, you can talk to. You can communicate. You have a lot in common. But I have that mostly with some of my American friends, and like I said before, I keep very close to my Cuban friends, so maybe that helps me a lot.

**Interviewer**

Okay. Have you ever felt any alienation or, or discrimination here?

**Goldstein**

Here?

**Interviewer**

Um-hm.

**Goldstein**

Not really, no. Some people, like, like everybody else, like some other places, I would say, when you hear me talk, he says, "I don't understand what you said." I said, "Why? What language do I speak?" "Well, you have an accent?" I says, "Yes, I know that. But I speak exactly the same English as you do." And, in fact, mine could be even better because I went to school for that. I went to college for that. But I don't say that.

**Interviewer**

Right, right.

**Goldstein**

That, I keep it for myself. But, you know, some people will like to remind you that you are not an American-born. Too bad. I'm proud of what I am. Very proud. I'm, I couldn't be any prouder, and I thank God that I had the opportunity to come and stay here.

**Interviewer**

Were, were there specific organizations that helped you or your, or your family adjust when you came to Philadelphia?

**Goldstein**

Not really.

**Interviewer**

Adjust to living here or?

**Goldstein**

No, not really.

**Interviewer**

Okay.

**Goldstein**

*[section omitted at request of interviewee]* ...your religion. And you fall back to it. You

always try to, like I guess it happens to any religion. I, I know my friends, they go to church on Sunday, one of them is a deacon in one of the churches. He, I mean, he practiced very profoundly the religion, Catholic religion, and we talk about that and if you call him Sundays, say, "You know, why don't we go here?" He says, "No, I, I have to go to church." I say, "Okay. So I'll meet you at 12:00," when I know he's, when we know he's finished, and his wife and we can meet or something. I think that's very important to have a belief in something and that mitigates a little bit the, the exchange you have to do in your life. Support.

**Interviewer**



Support. Are there things that you feel or experience here in Philadelphia or in the U.S. that, in general, that, that you couldn't feel or experience in your home land?

**Goldstein**  
No.

**Interviewer**  
No?

**Goldstein**  
Not, really, no. If we are talking before Castro's time, no.

**Interviewer**  
Okay.

**Goldstein**  
Because even always, don't forget Cuba was a country that has always some sort of dictatorship, and for reason, there was some kind of corruption, but since I was not involved in politics, it didn't bother me. I mean, directly bother me because I saw what was going on. It bothered me when I saw that they allowed the casinos to go rampage, prostitution on the streets, gambling, Mafia, that was bothering me because I realized if you are educated enough, I mean, that, you don't even have to be educated, but as a human being, you realize that doesn't conduct you too far. It does not give anything to the country to enrich the country. That was the only thing, but in general, I don't see any, no.

**Interviewer**  
Okay. Have you and your family been able to accomplish things that you may not have been able to accomplish in Cuba?

**Goldstein**  
Probably, not as much myself, but mostly my children and my husband himself. In Cuba, as much as you will, you are knowledgeable and you are smart, and you are prepared for

life, unless you have some money or you're connected, as a physician even, you don't get a, a private practice. You don't go wherever you want.

**Interviewer**  
Right.

**Goldstein**  
The children will be going to college to become physicians or architects or, like I told my son once, you can be a trash collector, I don't care, but be, be a man, but a human, be a mensch. That's an expression we use in Yiddish, "mensch".

**Interviewer**  
Mensch.

**Goldstein**  
And my husband, here, at least he has his private practice, he's well-known, he can go out and travel for lectures. That I don't think in Cuba he would be able to do that. I don't think so. And my sons themselves, they have professions. They are, I mean, they're happy, and that's, I'm happy for them. For me, for me, it has nothing too much, yes, I miss my job. I probably would have never left it until the day I become like so old that they would say you have to leave. But –

**Interviewer**  
That was a great job.

**Goldstein**  
This I miss, I miss – yes. And I really started to work --- When I came, I worked with Temple, with the psychiatric inpatient unit, as a secretary there with another girl. I loved it. And when my second son was born, I realized that I cannot work any longer because I had no, my mother was not on my, my father was working, and even when he wouldn't be working, I could not ask them to take care of two little kids. That would be –

**Interviewer**  
Right. Too much energy.



**Goldstein**

Too demanding. Too much demanding, and my husband says, you know, we'll manage somehow, and we did. Hey, we survived.

**Interviewer**

I mean, the next question, you, you've had your aspirations, and I think you, you all have met a lot of your, you and your family have met a lot of your aspirations. Are there any that you're still working on?

**Goldstein**

Oh yes. No, I worked, I wish I could work on it, and I would have the patience and the encouragement or something. If somebody would take me by the, by my hair and say you have to do it. I would love to learn an instrument – piano or guitar. I sat down with the guitar, and I dropped it. I would love to work, but I cannot commit myself to work so much because when my husband goes away for a convention, I go with him. So how do you, so that's why I work for free at the synagogue, as a volunteer, because then my time is mine. But when they need me, like this week, I worked two days in a row from 9:00 in the morning until 5:00, no salary, just a cup of coffee and a bagel. That was the pay. It was good. And the friendship and the, the talking and the laughing and everybody was in a good mood, so that's great. So I feel like this is something that I like to do. I like to work. I like to be with people. I even like to, I always worked with people since I was very young.

**Interviewer**

And it sounds like a lot of that comes from the way you were brought up, the environment –

**Goldstein**

Yes, yes, absolutely.

**Interviewer**

And just being that way.

**Goldstein**

I was telling somebody yesterday, my, my parents' dining room, and I, I think I mentioned it, was as big as this table maybe, and you could only fit six chairs because it has a cabinet. We would get like 20 people at the dinner table for Passover? No problem, no. We managed, we pushed, we, one was sitting a little bit tight, and then one was a little bit wide, but, hey, it was done. So.

**Interviewer**

Right. Okay. This is the last question. It's more, are there any resources or business or organizations that you would like people to know about that serve the Latino community or support the Latino community?

**Goldstein**

From the Jewish point of view, there is nothing in Philadelphia. I think I mentioned when we spoke once before, there used to be a Jewish Cuban Club.

**Interviewer**

Right.

**Goldstein**

But most of the people died already, and just a few moved out from here, just maybe three or four, the rest is gone, they're leaving. There's one woman, that I spoke to her, and I asked her if she knows anything that was left from that club, and she says nothing as far as she knows. Everything just was, disappeared. I don't know if they threw it away when they, you know, they never had a, a history. They never wrote, even if they had the meeting, they never –

**Interviewer**

No meeting minutes, or –

**Goldstein**



It was just like, because most of them were social mostly, like getting together and let's have dinner, and let's play bingo or domino or bridge or whatever and listen to some music. From the Cuban community, the Cuban, is, I would recommend very highly the Cuban Club. I think this is the only one that I know of, there is one that, I tried to join, but for some reason, they don't get together. It's like salt and, I mean like oil and vinegar. It's the, it's the same Cubans, or, they're from a city called Banes, B-A-N-E-S, and they have their own organization. They have their own group, and Nellie can tell you about them because they, I think there was, there was supposed to be a meeting, the, they had a meeting already about a year ago, and they said they will, they will, and then nothing happened. Then, at the last meeting we had, I think they said they were meeting again to see if they can buy the building together and maybe, maybe work their own ways, but I don't know why. They're Cubans, anyway. I, I –

*Interviewer*

Right. Just something –

*Goldstein*

You know, you know, I guess sometimes it's that ego goes in the center. Who's going to be the president?

*Interviewer*

Right.

*Goldstein*

Who is going to be the chief in command? Like all the politics.

*Interviewer*

Internal politics.

*Goldstein*

That's right.

*Interviewer*

Internal politics.

*Goldstein*

I don't, I don't know exactly, that it's for, because I said to, my husband came once for a meeting, and he said to me, "Would you believe that they talked to the people from Banes and they are debating if they should or they shouldn't?" I said, "What's the big thing? They speak Spanish, they have the same background, they have the same tradition, they have the same customs. What is wrong with that?" He said, "I don't know. They cannot, mentally, they are not prepared to give up what they think is theirs." That's the whole thing.

*Interviewer*

Right. The collaboration becomes difficult.

*Goldstein*

Yes. It's not any more the, they're friends, and they talk to each other, but –

*Interviewer*

But their clubs cannot mix. Maybe it's a dominos, maybe they have different styles or something.

*Goldstein*

Who knows? Maybe they play cards different. That's true. Or they cook differently. I don't know.

*Interviewer*

I'm done with my questions, but I would like to ask you one more to describe something that we talked about in our first meeting, and it's a little bit about your family's history to get to Cuba.

*Goldstein*

My parents, both of them are from Poland, and my father left Poland around 19, I think it was 1919 about. He was young, he was 18, and he left with my uncle, they were very close friends, and they were until the day he died, my uncle. He left his bride, who was my mother, in Poland, because he wanted to make sure that he has to make a living, that



they were to come to the United States, but he had landed in Cuba, where, he had a very difficult traveling because it was by boat, and not only that, he was working in Romania. He had to make many stops because he didn't have money to travel constantly. So he worked in the coal mines of Romania, and then, I think he stopped in Belgium and some other place which I don't recall, and then came to Cuba. Luckily, in Cuba --- and he went to Cuba and didn't go to Mexico or Venezuela because my mother had a sister who was already in Cuba, and my mother had a sister who was living already in New York, in the United States, who married an American man, who went as a tourist to Poland and fell in love with her. So they got married and they moved to the United States. So my, my father said that he will come here with the idea, because he didn't have a Visa to go, to go to the United States, but he didn't have it. My father was able to work right away because my uncle gave him a job in the bakery, and after a year, he sent for my mom, and they got married here -- I mean in, in Cuba.

*Interviewer*  
In Cuba.

*Goldstein*  
Very difficult beginnings for both of them because they were not, there was not many other of them. Then my brother was born and I am born, and my father is struggling and working, and my mother is the housewife, usually the woman did not work as much as here. There, they were not career people, my mom or my father, but my mother always said that when my brother gets old enough -- I mean, as a child, you know, talking about that because you go to school -- but, she wants him to have a, a profession. It doesn't matter what. Because she realized that most of the people who come even from Spain or ever, everywhere that you have emigrate your country, that if you have an education,

education and background, you can move around. You can be someone. If not, you're just an employee, or you're the, or you don't get anything.

*Interviewer*  
Right.

*Goldstein*  
My father never saw his family again. They were all, but his sister, he had one brother who came just after him to Cuba, and then in 1939, 1937, '36, I don't recall exactly, my grandfather wrote to my father that he has to do something to bring in one member of the family to Cuba because Europe did not sound safe because then Hitler started to where, the Nazi party was starting already to give their signs of unfriendliness to the Jewish people. Money was not too rampage there, so my father and his brother managed to get some money together, and they brought one sister, and after that, they were broke, and he lost all his family, mother, father, brothers, sister, nephews, nieces, you name it.

*Interviewer*  
Due to the Holocaust.

*Goldstein*  
Yes. They all died. We don't even know how they died, all of them, because my grandfather went out one night, as far as I know. In fact, I wrote it because I would like for my children to know. He went out one night to get some, some bread, you know, you hide during the day, and at night, you try to get out of the --- not the concentration camp, the, uh, ghetto to get something to eat, so he went and it seems like when he walked out, there was a bombardment, and one of the bombs fell near him. So we don't know exactly if he was killed by the bomb or just the debris from the bomb or what, but it was that, and how they found out, he didn't come home that, that night. It was like 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning, so my mother, my grandmother went out to look for him, and he was lying



down there on the floor. So, that's the way my father came to Cuba, my grandparents [mother's parents], and then little by little, all her sisters came, my mother, but she lost a brother and his family and friends during the war also. They, they died. He was in France, and he was fine, but he wanted to go back to Europe, to Poland, to see his father, the parents. He didn't realize that the war was going on, or he felt it's, nothing is going to happen. It's just going to –

**Interviewer**

Travel in and travel out.

**Goldstein**

Um-hm. Well, fate did not have that for them, and they just perished. So, and, you have to make peace with that, and I'm telling you it's difficult. At the beginning, I remember the crying and the pain and the complaints, and if I, and if, if, but then the if.

**Interviewer**

You can't find the answer in the if.

**Goldstein**

No. My father says if I would have money, I could have sent for everyone. And I says, but you did not have the money, and it, it cost money. I mean, to get the visas, the transportation, and like him, there were hundreds and hundreds of families – thousands.

**Interviewer**

So your, your father and his uncle came over for opportunities.

**Goldstein**

Yeah.

**Interviewer**

They were seeking opportunities.

**Goldstein**

Well, because, let me tell you, it's sad to say that in Poland, anti-Semitism was since day one. And one day, my father was coming home from school, and his father was dragged

through his beard through the streets, and all his white hair was full of blood, and my father said that. He realized that the situation in Poland isn't getting better without even Hitler.

**Interviewer**

Um-hm. This is before, even.

**Goldstein**

Before. Even, even, we went to Poland, we were in Poland two years ago, my husband and myself, and some members of, his sister, six people from the family. We wanted to go to the town where his parents were born, and we spoke to somebody, it's interesting, with a nun who saved people, and she introduced to somebody in the town where my in-laws were. She's a Catholic girl who is, her parents, and she herself with her brother and in, are mentioned in the Valley of the Righteous in Israel because they managed to save a few Jewish people. And she was telling us that there's not one Jew left in, in, in that area, not even one. But she said there is still anti-Semitism, don't ask me why, because there's nothing. Who are you fighting? There is nobody here, there's not even a cemetery because they covered everything with the, with the ground. They took out the tombstones and they make it for streets to walk. They collected them because her brother is an, an engineer, an architect, engineer, I don't know. Architect. And her father, this girl's father's parents, he, their parents, he was a historian for the city, so she showed us pictures of what she had saved through the years of how the community was then, and her mother, her parents, were living three doors away from my husband's uncle and aunt. And she remembers them, and she, and my aunt, we spoke to, she said, "Oh, I remember. Yeah, you know, they were so nice and so good," and, but my, she, my, his aunt survived because she went to Siberia, okay? So it's not, it's not an easy life people had.



**Interviewer**  
Right.

**Goldstein**  
That's why I say sometimes people don't realize how do you value freedom? How do you manage to give this generation, I said that the other day, I, when I came back from Cuba, and they asked me to talk, speak to the kids in the synagogue, and I said one of the things you have to value is what you have. You don't realize because you don't, you were born here, you were never negated anything, you have clothing, food, money, you don't have to be rich, but you have the money. You can work in a McDonald's, you can work any place and make even \$5.00 there, an hour, and have your money. I says you don't have to deal with, just value that, not give it for granted. It doesn't grow on trees. And the same thing was with, with my parents. They realized that they cannot be living in a country that denies them everything – the right to live, the right to go to school. They couldn't go to, to public school. Most of the Jewish people were not allowed in Poland to go to public schools.

**Interviewer**  
Wow.

**Goldstein**  
So that's why they formed what they call the yeshivot, just these study centers for Jewish centers.

**Interviewer**  
To educate.

**Goldstein**  
To educate, yes. I mean, you have to have some sort of education.

**Interviewer**  
Is, is your husband's family history similar to yours?

**Goldstein**

Yes, because they left also. They, but they came to Cuba and I don't think my, yeah, my mother-in-law had a sister where they were living in the United States, two sisters, and then one brother came after she came. But again, they were in another, they were in Camaguez, which is another town, and the same thing --- they started to work, they started to have a family. People were very perceptive, people were friendly and warm and they think, why are they going to run?

**Interviewer**  
Right.

**Goldstein**  
Here they have to start scratch to learn another language, and it's funny because I remember there were words that Europeans especially --- I don't know if for everybody, but most of the people from, from Poland could not pronounce. Don't ask them to say "huevo."

**Interviewer**  
Huevo?

**Goldstein**  
They can't. Says "wai-fo" for some reason. My \_\_\_\_\_, I used to say to my mom, "Mama, it's 'oo-ay.'" She says, "Okay, 'oo-ay'." And I say, "So say 'huevo.'" She says, "wai-fo". But it's okay.

**Interviewer**  
That's cute. And how did you and your husband meet?

**Goldstein**  
Since I was working for the Zionist organization, I was in charge of organizing the dances and the celebration, the independence of Israel, and I went to a club to, a youth club, and because I have any other help to, you know, the list of their members so I can sent out invitations, and it, it was open for everyone. So a friend of mine, who was in



medical school at the same time as my husband, they just started, my husband was in his second year of medical school, introduced us. And he asked me what I was doing there, and I explained, and he says, "Well, can I come?" I says, "Everybody's more than welcome to come to the dance. I mean, it's a free country." Free dance. And he came, and we started to talk, and then he said, "Can you dance?" I says, "No because I'm working." And then I was in charge of the dance –

**Interviewer**

Yeah, organizer.

**Goldstein**

He says, "Well, can I wait until you're finished?" I says, "Yes, you can wait. I mean, but why you dance with someone?" He says, "No. I'm going to sit around and just look around." I says, "Okay." I was busy. I don't know what they were doing, but anyway -- - so by the end of the night, he says, "Okay, can I walk you home?" I said, "Sure." So we started to talk, and we liked each other. I never said, "Oh, you ---" and many time, we said, he said to me, "We're going to the movie. Would you like to go the movie?" "Yes." "Can we go this Saturday?" "Yes." Then call me and says, "I didn't finish what I have to do. I have an exam on Monday. Do you mind?" I says, "No." [UNCLEAR] I never mind. Even today, I don't mind. My life doesn't depend on going out. My life depends on other things. I have other values. I value, like, sitting, talking to you. I'm getting the story of my life – most of it, not all of it. [laughs]

**Interviewer**

I think we're done.

**Goldstein**

Okay. Thank you very much.

**Interviewer**

Thank you, senora.

[END OF INTERVIEW]