

AVERY FISHER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Nancy Fisher

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

2019

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Nancy Fisher conducted by Gerry Albarelli on April 23, 2019. This interview is part of the Avery Fisher Oral History Project.

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

ATC

Session: 1

Interviewee: Nancy Fisher

Location: New York, NY

Interviewer: Gerry Albarelli

Date: April 23, 2019

Albarelli: Okay. Today is April 23, 2019. I am sitting here with Nancy Fisher at Columbia University. Why don't I ask you to start by telling me where and when you were born and a little bit about your early life? It is the life history approach.

Fisher: [00:00:28] My birthday is February seventh. I was born 1945, and in New York City, the second child of three of my parents, Janet and Avery [Fisher]. My sister Barbara is older, two and a half years older than I am, and my brother Chip is about eleven years younger. I know that I have memories of growing up at an apartment at 145 East Ninety-Second Street, which is on the northeast corner of Ninety-Second and Lexington Avenue, and we had Apartment 8A, and it was across the street from the Ninety-Second Street Y, which played a great role in my growing up.

I know that I went to public school. I went to the Ninety-Second Street Y Nursery School, although I don't have memory of that—I just have photographs—and then I went to PS [Public School] 6, the original PS 6 which was on the northeast corner of Eighty-Fifth Street and Madison Avenue, until fifth grade, and then my parents applied me to Ethical Culture [Fieldston School], which I started in sixth grade, went there for one year, and went to Fieldston [High School], graduating from Fieldston in 1962. Then I went on to Skidmore College where I graduated with an English degree and a Spanish minor—so it was a BA diploma—and then I

took Portuguese at Columbia University for a year during, actually, a very contentious year in New York City history. My classroom was in Kent Hall when the police were sent in to take out the protesters protesting the Vietnam War, and I remember having to have my final exam someplace other than Kent Hall.

So, I didn't have any further academic education, and we moved. I know that I shared a bedroom with my sister, Barbara, and then our family moved to 1185 Park Avenue. I came home from summer camp, and my parents had moved to 1185 Park Avenue, Apartment 2G. And then, my brother came along. My brother Chip was born. So those were the three that were brought up at 1185 Park Avenue.

Albarelli: So, could you go back and tell me just a series of early memories? I mean, you sort of gave me the map of where they took place, but not the memories themselves, some of your earliest memories.

Fisher: [00:04:11] Well, my earliest memories involve my mother, who was a very involved, hands-on mother, and doing things with her, more than my dad, but that's—I have an image of myself, [laughs] dancing around the living room, thinking that I was the ballerina Maria Tallchief, whose long-playing record of *Swan Lake* my parents had, and there she is on the cover of the record, and I can describe the apartment. I don't have memory of my relationship with my sister, Barbara. I do have loving memories of being at the Ninety-Second Street Y for various things when I was growing up, and the importance that that building played in my development. I was in that building every day after school.

Albarelli: What are some of those memories, the Ninety-Second Street Y?

Fisher: [00:05:43] Pottery, the swimming pool. I have a visual memory of the—they had a scout program, a Boy [Scouts of America] and Girl [Scouts of the United States of America] Scout program at the Y, and they had a log cabin that was built on one of the floors, but other than that, other than swimming and I know pottery, I don't remember what else I took, but I knew that my mother—maybe that's not true when we were living at 145, but then later on, I knew that my mother was on the board of the Y, and the importance of her, of the institution, and my mother's dedication to it.

I have memories of PS 6, the old PS 6, the wooden desks, the woman who cleaned at the school in this housecoat that she used to wear, and then I remember the day after the new school was built and we marched ceremonially down the east side of Madison Avenue into the new school, and there's an apartment building now where the school used to be, and I remember my teachers at PS 6. I remember **Rose Amediato [phonetic]**, with her red hair, and her bright lipstick, and her – which had to have been the original platform shoes, and I think Pat Tighe was one of my teachers—she became the principal of the school—but I don't remember others. But I do really remember the old school and those wooden desks.

As far as music is concerned, and where music came into my life, other than that memory of pretending I was Maria Tallchief—but it was the music, not the ballet, really; it was the music that I knew, as a child. I never studied music as a discipline. I don't remember if my parents had

a piano at 145, but I do know that there was a piano at 1185, and music, mostly classical music, was just around. Where do I have awareness that my father started a company, for which he's considered the founder of high fidelity? I can't tell you, but there was always a Fisher radio sitting in the bookshelf of 1185, and at some point, I have obviously a memory of my father coming home for dinner, not every day but frequently, with a brown, square paper bag in which there would be a new long-playing record which he had purchased at Sam Goody, and another dad would have had a sliced, seeded rye, of which he was extremely fond.

The visual memory is of an enormous long-playing record collection, and hearing classical music played. He had a Fisher radio that was built into a bedside table, and that he would listen to, and it was sort of absorbed, I gather. He didn't push me one way or the other. I loved *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and the famous music from it, and I see the long-playing record in front of me, with the ballerina from the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company as the courtesan, and there was also Gilbert and Sullivan, of which he had many of the operettas.

So I learned; I came to classical music such that it was through *The Tales of Hoffmann* and through Gilbert and Sullivan. And of course, I was brought up in the rich tradition of Broadway musicals, which my parents took me to, and for which I had long-playing records. And off I went to college, where I took an opera course my senior year as a buffer to my heavy English literature major, and my father did not like the opera, at all, although *Tales of Hoffmann* is an opera, but you never heard opera being played in the house. It was always chamber music or symphonic music, but there was—so I took the opera course in college, and that started me off

on an exposure to the major operas, and I really loved it. Again, I came to it through the music. So it was music connected, but not because of my dad.

I have a memory of my parents going to the Ninety-Second Street Y to attend concerts at the Y, but I was never taken along, and my parents, it was their thing. They did not take me along to concerts at the Y, nor to Lincoln Center [for the Performing Arts]. It was what they did together. So I would assume that I came to my love of classical music naturally, not because it was imposed on me because of his love, but I remember the magic of the substantial record collection in the living room, and his—I think it was *Groves* [phonetic]. It was some multivolume on music, music history whatever, and classical music was in the house, either in volumes in the library, or in music that I heard.

I was living in California. Took a year off, and was living out in Tiburon, California, and I happened to have come back in to visit my parents. My father comes into the living room, in his pajamas, and he tells me about the hall being renamed. I had absolutely no knowledge about it, and I do remember that I came out with some explicative [phonetic] about it, and he's sitting there in his pajamas, telling me this. I just see the chairs, and I'm sure at the time, I really didn't understand the enormity of it, as a gift, and the decision-making process that was behind it. He just told me, and I remember when I went back to San Francisco, having the *New York Times* on my lap, with this banner headline about the gift my father had made, and wondering whether anybody knew who I was, and how I was connected to the story, because it was across the front page.

And, so I lived; I was away from it in the year I was out there and now I came home in 1974, and I don't have memory of how the Avery Fisher Artist Program developed, because I certainly wasn't told about it or consulted or anything. That was my father's pride. I don't know if it was his idea, but it just seemed to have evolved, and I joined as an advisor. My brother was already an advisor, and I became an advisor in 2004, according to Véronique Firkusny, along with my mother, which I found somewhat incredible, that my mother hadn't been an advisor beforehand, but, she wasn't, also including why, and I don't have the answer, why the hall was named for him and not for them. That's an answer probably Mary Lou Falcone has, but I don't have that.

Anyway, I lived my life in New York as a single woman, and also, not fully able to wear this aura of the hall comfortably with—in my social life, it was really quite a big thing, but that was something that I struggled with for years. I have loving memories of the musical evenings that my parents had in their living room at 1185, and the artists that were there, and the dinners that followed, but I don't have memory of sitting down and being in the living room when the music that the artists were brought to play was played. I don't have memory of that. But—

Albarelli: But, when you say you have loving memories of the evenings, what are the memories that you have of those musical evenings, since the music being played isn't part of the memory?

Fisher: [00:18:19] I remember the people. I remember Alicia de Larrocha, and Emanuel ["Manny"] Ax, and Yo-Yo Ma, and of course, it's all documented in these gorgeous black-and-white photographs that I have, but, there are photographs of me at the hall, certain evenings, but other than that, it's pretty foggy. I remember my father's eighty-fifth birthday party that was

given on the stage of Avery Fisher Hall, and I got off on either side, it's some poem I had written—it was very funny—and then, somehow, it goes from there to when he died, and there was a memorial concert in the hall.

So, in the time before my father died, up in Connecticut, in the winter that preceded that, it was a hugely snow-stormy winter, and my mother and father were up in the house, and my father broke a hip, and was in the New Milford Hospital, and it was very difficult for me to get up there during that winter to see him. If I would say, it was impassable. It was a two-hour drive under good weather, but there was storm after storm after storm, so they were stuck up there, and he was in the hospital and he had the surgery, and then had a stroke at home. He was recuperating in their house in Washington, Connecticut, and he had a stroke, and then that was, days later, the end of his life.

And my brother was there, and my sister came in from France where she was living at the time and has lived most of her life, but we would go back and forth from the hospital every day, and at some point, he was removed from intensive care—he had a living will—and was put into a private room, where he spent the last few days of his life, including a remarkable gesture by Yo-Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax who were in New York at that time to do a recording, and they had wanted to come up and play. Well, Manny couldn't come with a piano, but Yo-Yo, of course, would have had his cello with him, but they couldn't get there, and I remember my father, who was really not responsive, in his hospital room, in the private room, and the telephone receiver was laid down on his pillow, and Yo-Yo and Manny played for him from the studio where they were recording, and he opened his eyes.

So that was the first response that had been witnessed in days, and that was the best that they could do—they couldn't get there—which, of course, is an example of how fond they were of him, and he was of them, and then he died, but that was quite remarkable, and just this afternoon, ironically, Yo-Yo's name came up because my daughter, who is an '06 [graduate] from Dartmouth [College], sent me an email to say that Yo-Yo Ma is going to be the commencement speaker at Dartmouth this June. So I called his assistant, Brooke [phonetic], to tell her I just learned that, and just to touch base with her, and to ask that she tell Yo-Yo how thrilling that sounds to me.

So, he died in February, and then the memorial at the hall was sometime in the spring, and there were these two enormous vases, bigger than vases, of spring flowers such as you would see at this time of the year, and then the huge photograph of him that was, at that time, also on the wall of the hall, that everybody was familiar with, and it was open to the public, the memorial concert. So, I remember Nat [Nathan] Leventhal speaking at it, and Marty [Martin] Segal speaking at it, and of course, Mary Lou Falcone, and Yo-Yo, and Manny, and it was a dinner after, I remember that. And, that was the end of his life. That's a synopsis.

So, I love classical music. I have classical music on in my home all day long. I listen to it in the car. It's never left me. I attend concerts and other things at Lincoln Center, and my father's death preceded my mother's, and so I was the one with my brother who really took care of her in her final years, and his presence just never left the apartment, never left the apartment. I had driven her home from Connecticut after he died in the hospital. I drove her home the next day, and it

was awful, profound and awful. And one of the first people I called was Terry Mark [phonetic], who knew my dad, and who was the head of the Patrons' Desk at Lincoln Center. He was quite adored, respected and adored, at Lincoln Center.

Albarelli: Say more, if you would, about his presence never leaving the apartment.

Fisher: [00:26:15] Well, it would have been in the equipment that nothing changed. My mother didn't do anything. It was, you know, if you call it a shrine. Everything that was his, was theirs, remained in place: the thirteen-volume *Oxford English Dictionary*, which now comes on a disc, if you can imagine a dictionary of that many volumes, and all the books, and the records, and the Fisher equipment. She would never have moved anything during those years. It would have been some sort of betrayal of who he was to her, I gather. She didn't remarry. And, all the things that—you know, his dresser with all the whatever it was, his closet, the things that were him, as if he were living there, she just never moved any of it.

Albarelli: Would you go back and tell me some early memories of your father—you've told me early memories of music, but just some anecdotes to get across what kind of person he was?

Fisher: [00:27:42] We had this thing called the Thunderbolt Society, which meant that he took me out to Coney Island, and we would ride the rollercoaster. That was the name of the rollercoaster. I had summer jobs at Fisher Radio when I was a teenager, and I remember the factory out there quite vividly. I have photographs of it. So I knew the people who were part of Fisher Radio, which, my sister didn't work there, and my brother, I doubt it. I don't know

whether he was born before my father sold the company, but I'm the one that had the summer jobs there. I remember his coming up to college to Skidmore. It was Father-Daughter Weekend but it was called Happy Pappy Weekend up at Saratoga [Springs], and my father was somewhat, I wouldn't use the word snob, but he did not consider himself to be like some of the other fathers who were there: you know, 'drinky' [phonetic]. He wasn't loose, in a sense. He didn't do sports. He didn't stop me from doing sports, but he didn't do sports, and he didn't see himself like all those fathers.

So, that was my dad, but then again, it was a really big gesture in the world of philanthropy what he did, so, he was up there, and the hall was well known, and the name was well known, but I remember that, and having—I don't remember other things that he took me to, whether it was movies, or whatever you did with children in your home, but he worked, he came home, with records and the rye bread, and the television was always on at the dinner table. That was the original iPad. He wanted to watch the news at dinner. I can't say that there was active conversation at the table about anything. So, that's the way the household ran.

When I got married, and ultimately had children, he loved the children. He loved the children, but my father, unlike my role now as a grandmother, my father didn't come over and visit and play with the children. You had to go there. You had to go to 1185, and he adored my son Philip, but he was really nuts for my daughter Diana. He would play tic-tac-toe with her on three-by-fives in his Barcalounger chair. We had these trays. I still have them in the house. He used to give out these gifts at the holidays at Christmas to his salesmen, and there were all sorts of things that said "Fisher Radio Corporation" on them, or "Fisher Radio." I had lead pencils, a three-by-

five tray—I use three-by-fives to this day to make little notes of things—key chains, and I have my Ninety-Second Street Y little plastic pass that I put in front of whatever to get into the pool every day, that's on a Fisher keychain. Letter openers—I just have all this stuff.

He was an elegant man. I don't think he must have had a lot of fun as a child. [Laughs] My mother was the more fun-loving or looser of the two personalities. I have two wooden hangers from Charles Fischer—that's with a *c*—and Sons. I know that my grandfather, whom I never knew, nor my grandmother, had a clothing store for men and boys, I think at Ninety-Eighth Street and Lexington Avenue. It's printed on the hanger. So I know he came from poor, Russian-Jewish roots, and he just didn't share a lot about those people in his life. He was the youngest in the family, the one who not only made it, but let's say, made it really, really big. Family members, it's sort of like, this is a terrible analogy, **night in fought [phonetic]**, but it just is. The only one I really knew well was his sister Sonia [phonetic], who lived on West Eighty-Sixth Street, and she was married to a dentist named Ned, Doctor Ned Landsman [phonetic].

So, we would go over there dutifully to visit Sonia, that's where I had my dental work done, in this apartment at 340 West Eighty-Sixth Street, and he was a very good brother to her, after Ned died, but I have memories of knowing Aunt Sonia who was really so old, and formal, and she never had children of her own, but I remember that apartment vividly and I can describe it. She was overweight. She wore her hair back in a bun. She was very old-fashioned, let's put it that way. And he took care of her in her later years, and I think much to my mother's anger, would not leave, or take my mother away places, when he certainly could have had the time to or have

afforded to, because he was there to take care of Sonia, who had full-time help. That's my memory.

As much as I remember him and remember what he stood for, I don't have the warm and fuzzy memories of him outside the house. The warm and fuzzy memories involve 1185, and the music, and here's an anecdote for you: I know that my father would test out demonstration records for the Fisher equipment, on dates that I have. They would sit down in the living room and he'd put something on, to test the acoustics, whatever it was. I have a very funny, enduring memory of the neighbor upstairs, **Miriam Rafelski [phonetic]**. The apartments on two and three and probably up to a certain number of floors, were identical, so that you came into a large gallery—one direction was the living room, one other direction was the dining room, and into the kitchen—and there was a corridor, a bedroom corridor.

This is in high school, and I come home one day, and up facing the ceiling: two planks of wood under each of two Fisher speakers, facing up, and my father, who was not a litigious man, nor a violent man, had Miriam Rafelski, who was a small woman of stature, and widowed, and when Miriam Rafelski started going out, and she would come home at night, she used mule slippers which would click along the floor in the bedroom of my mother and father, not waking my father, but waking my mother.

So, my father—I know there were polite letters. There were phone calls. I don't know if the board, the cooperative at 1185 required the bedrooms be carpeted wall to wall as they are now and all of that, but, it got to the point where my father finally got the upper hand, living one floor

below Miriam Rafelski, and I saw the letter that he wrote to her where he promised to play selections from the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ in Chicago, and in addition, selections from what was then the Soviet Army Chorus, at 7:30 in the morning, if she woke my mother up again, if she didn't carpet the bedroom, and he finally got the upper hand. He never did it, but that's the way my father solved that problem. And those speakers stayed there for years, for years.

You asked about another memory. My father installed Fisher equipment at the Kennedy White House, and I think he took my brother along with him, I'm pretty sure, on whatever was involved there, but I remember the wall, in the same corridor where the speakers were above, sitting in the moldings, these beautiful watercolors, Christmas greetings from the Kennedys, [there] was a whole wall of them, plus a couple of photographs there. One other thing: my parents did not indulge in luxuries such as, they didn't collect art.

My father shared a showroom with the Hungarian cabinetmaker, marquetry maker, Andrew Szoeki. That's Hungarian. It's S-Z-O-E-K-E. He shared a showroom on Madison Avenue, Forty-Seventh Street, where the Bear Stearns Building once stood, and the store was on the ground floor, and I remember going there, and there was Fisher equipment in one part of it, and Szoeki—people most often call it Zoykey [phonetic]—furniture in the shared showroom, and my parents had this beautiful collection of his furniture. What I know, whether it's myth or reality, was that my father traded equipment for the furniture with Szoeki, but it was their dining room table, a beautiful set of cabinets in the dining room showing the arts, another beautiful cabinet in the gallery when you walked in the door, with a—I wish I had thought about it today, but it starts off, “Who walks with beauty need not fear, the sun and the moon and the stars keep

pace with him,” and you open up the cabinet, and it had shelves in it in which the little liqueur glasses were kept.

Anyway, all of that furniture came to me when my father died, everything, and I’ve acquired other things from, that were made by Szoeker since then, on my own, that were not part of their collection, but it’s gorgeous, and so my talking about the Kennedy Christmas cards brings up this memory. That was—and then, I just don’t know how or why he acquired the Stradivarius violin, but on the occasion of his eighty-fifth birthday, on the stage of the hall when he got up to speak, he gave the Stradivarius to [The] Juilliard [School]. Nobody knew that was coming, except my mother, and Joseph Polisi was understandably shocked, and speechless, and so he donated the Strad to Juilliard, saying that it was more important for him to give than to receive on his birthday, and that’s what he was doing to give, and the Stradivarius is in the possession of Juilliard in their valuable stringed instruments department.

I recently heard a Juilliard senior using the violin. They always let me know when it’s going to be used, and part of the gift was, importantly and significantly, was that it should be played, not just—and of course, for the life of an instrument like that, that’s how you keep it alive, and Max Tan was the senior who played it most recently. So, at that level, even as a Juilliard senior, we’re not talking about an Avery Fisher Prize winner. You’re just sitting there. You could see this young man as a [Avery Fisher] career grant winner and then maybe a prize winner someday, but he would have to be performing, and then his name would have to come to the attention of the committee. It awakens the connection to my dad to go to hear the violin, but I’ve heard it played at Carnegie Hall, and then I heard it played most recently in Morse Hall, at Juilliard.

So, there was that. He did several magnanimous things. He was not the kind of man who was open to showing off in ways that one could name today. It was all music related, and the artist program, the history of it, as I said, I didn't know about. I didn't know about its evolution, and I can't remember which of those events I went to. I remember specifically Joshua Bell, but this is so much later, and Gustavo Dudamel, coming in as a surprise to tell him about it, and Joshua Bell talking about the fact that he had also been a career grant winner and how he used the money to buy a bow, and I'd have to look at the list of the winners just to remember them, but I do specifically remember my mother being there for the awarding of the prize to the Emerson String Quartet, because it was the first ensemble that had ever gotten the prize, and I remember bringing my mother and I have pictures of that night at the hall.

But after that, as I said, I'd have to look at a list to try to remember which ones I attended, but it's a wonderful thing that in these last years, it's moved from the [Samuel B. and David] Rose Building down to The Greene Space at WQXR because of the acoustics being better. It's very special. The program acquired the elegance and the aura of QXR by being at The Greene Space, as opposed to the room in the Rose Building, which was all glassed and really a terrible performance space. And let us not forget also that my dad endowed the Avery Fisher Listening Room at NYU [New York University] where he graduated from, and that's been recently renovated, and the beautiful picture that used to hang in the Avery Fisher Hall now hangs in a smaller version at the Listening Room. It's been updated. Things change so, so quickly, in terms of technology, and how you reproduce music, and how you listen to music, but that is there, and

at the moment, the winners of the Avery Fisher Prize, that wall still sits in the hall, although it doesn't have his name anymore.

So that's there. It's an enduring gift. The artist program and the career grants and the prize are an enduring gift, which will always be associated with Lincoln Center, and promote talented men and women who are artists, although they've also branched out a little bit more in terms of the music. So, he comes alive once a year in terms of the artist program, the prize winners, or the career grants, and the importance is that there are always career grants. They're given out every year. That's not going to go by, but they don't always have prize winners to meet that standard. So, there could be a couple of years that go by where that doesn't happen. And also, his wish not to have this done by competition, but by recommendation, because, what I remember: What's the difference between number one and number two? Maybe number one and number four, but not between number one and number two, but most people could assume.

The name still resonates with people, who tell me, to them, "it's always Avery Fisher Hall," but it's sort of like the Triborough Bridge, which is the Triborough, and not the RFK [Robert F. Kennedy] Bridge, to me, because that's what I grew up with. Anyway, and for me personally, it's hard for me to be in the hall. When I'm over there, I don't look at the building. I look down. I look away from it. It's very hard for me to be there, because it looks the same. Not much of it has changed since the name was taken off.

Albarelli: Could you tell me, backtrack a little bit, or maybe a lot, and first tell me some of—you said you have vivid memories of those summer jobs, working for Fisher. Could you tell me a little bit about that, and then, I also wanted to ask you to tell some memories of your mother.

Fisher: [00:51:30] Well, I don't remember what it was I did, what I was paid for, but I do remember being in the international department with the head of the department at the time, Ben Buxton, and his young assistant Allen [phonetic], I think it was Gladstone [phonetic], something like that, and that—no, there was a Liberty Music retail store—we would call it a retail store—that sold Fisher radios, not just the individual pieces but the big pieces of furniture that would have Fisher equipment in them, on Madison Avenue, around the corner from Saks Fifth Avenue. So that would have been Fiftieth [Street], on the southwest corner of Fiftieth and Madison Avenue. I remember Liberty Music.

That would have been national, but I remember the international business where my dad sold Fisher radios to servicemen. So, I remember the APO [Army Post Office] addresses, and these things, you could buy them, I guess, at the PX [Post Exchange] or order them. The reach of the equipment and the desire for the equipment was international. And as it comes back to me about people's parents owning it, that it was, to have a Fisher, was that like having a Chevrolet [automobile]? I don't know, but in the industry, it was a prestigious piece of high-fidelity equipment, and I do remember a letter that came in, with a Polaroid [photograph] of a rhesus monkey sitting on a piece of Fisher equipment, and the soldier was asking for new tubes, because the monkey had urinated on the equipment which had a grillwork on top; that's how that went

from the animal down into the equipment. I can see that Polaroid with the monkey sitting on the Fisher equipment.

I'm sure there were more stories than that. But, whatever it meant to be the boss's daughter working in the company, I don't have—I just remember the people who were there, their first names, last names, and most beautifully, the icon, if that's what you would call it, of the company, which was this bird with a musical note in its beak, which my dad designed. That was the trademark of the company. And my father—here's another anecdote—of course this is what happens—used to test the United States Postal Service from Long Island City where the factory was, he had the *Fisher Handbook*, which was like a catalog today, of what he was making, and he would mail them. He would mail postcards to himself, and he would mail postcards to me, to test how long it would take to have those things arrive at the recipient's house. He kept tabs on the post office, so, that's something that he did, just to check them.

My father had a very distinctive penmanship, and I still have the postcards, when people traveled. When he traveled with my mother on business, of course then, so that you could tell your children where you had been, you'd send home postcards, and I have a stack of them, not because I care where they went, but because they are a document of his penmanship. I still have them on my desk. I can see them now, and my mother had very unusual penmanship, which I've never been able to emulate.

My father, in terms of what he liked, I see us sitting at the dining room table, and his favorite dessert was a McIntosh apple, which he would peel himself, at the table. It would be brought to

him with a knife. Although he came from a Jewish family, he did not indulge in Jewish cooking. I don't know if that was pushback to his roots, but he did not eat anything that I would have called necessarily Jewish. He would dutifully take my mother, and I was in the back seat because I remember this, down to Russ & Daughters on Houston Street where my mother, who loved the stuff, whether it was whitefish or salmon, or herring—and he would sit in the car, and she'd go in shopping, and he never touched the stuff. He couldn't stand the smell of it. So, he was, I guess in that sense, rigid.

I remember, having nothing to do with food, he had a car, an English car called a Rover, which he loved, and it had magnificent, a wood interior, and then I remember he bought a Jaguar, and he returned the Jaguar with a typewritten list of what was wrong with the car. He was not only a man who understood high fidelity, but he was interested in and knew everything about cars, and how they ran, so he was a Renaissance man, in ways.

So I remember that about him. And he had maps. I remember the road maps he had. He loved reading road maps. Of course, preceding the days of the Waze [GPS navigation software application] and anything like that, that's the way you got from here to there, and his collection of airline tote bags that you would get when you booked tickets on airlines, he had a collection of those. He had a collection of cameras. He loved photography, and taught me never to do anything with a camera unless it was over a bed, and all of the things that we, my brother and I, looked at, were on actual slides. That's the generation of the time in which he took photographs, not prints.

He was an elegant man, and really beloved by many people. I said that before, but I also think he didn't know how to—what would be the phrase—loosen up and have fun. He wouldn't, that wasn't my dad, but he didn't have to, but that's just an image. He loved chamber music and orchestral music, but he didn't like the opera. So when Jed Bernstein, who was the chief executive at Lincoln Center when there was movement afoot about the hall, brought us in to his office and out came this campaign, this advertising campaign that they had developed, for the Avery Fisher Hall of Fame, as a patron of the arts—my father wasn't a patron of the arts. My father loved chamber music and orchestral music. He didn't have anything to do with the ballet or the opera at Lincoln Center. His name was not associated with them. So they were trying to manipulate us, and the memory of my father, by having this campaign, and they had gone to great expense, and it was disgusting and embarrassing, because that wasn't my father and what he was known for. Things went on from there. That was the first salvo to try to get us to give up the name. Anyway, that's the dark side.

He was very proud of my work for he was alive when I started interviewing with the Spielberg Foundation [University of Southern California Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education]. He was very proud of that, but didn't have long to be proud because he died a year after I started. But he was proud of the things I had done in my life. He was able to express that, but he wasn't a warm and fuzzy guy, that's it, a good man, a great man, gave a great gift to the city, and to the world in terms of what was high fidelity. We don't have that anymore. That's gone. Although, Fisher radios and parts are still on eBay, but that kind of reproduction of music has gone.

Albarelli: So, tell me some memories of your mother, early memories.

Fisher: [01:04:03] Well, I remember my mother was a hands-on mom, and I remember going to the flower show with her, [unclear] the flower show. I remember going to John Wanamaker [Department Store] with her. They had a train that ran around that was attached to the ceiling that would come out at the holidays. My mother did her own marketing, and I remember going down Ninety-Third Street with her with a marketing cart to the A&P [Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company] on Third Avenue, when the elevator was still there, and my mother being a homemaker, although she had somebody cooking for her, my mother could cook.

And, she was in her own way, a natural beauty. She was not given to fancy things, fancy clothes. It was like, that's not the way she lived or he lived. She was a very simple—the lines of her clothing were very simple. She had her own aura. I look like her, and I dress like her. I remember Yo-Yo Ma's wife, Jill [Hornor] Ma, thinking that my mother had walked into the green room, after some concert when I went back to say hello to him, and some people still call me Janet by mistake, but I, as a child, I remember her association with the Ninety-Second Street Y, and going to board meetings, and she didn't say to me it was important to give back. She never said that, she just did it, and that's how I gather I learned that it was important to do it.

This was wonderful and terrible when, after my mother died, she had a desk in the corner of their bedroom that had every grade I ever had, every envelope. She threw out nothing. Her pediatrician was Julian Rogatz, at 1070 Park Avenue. I found – I was I don't know how many days old, but his instructions for making formula for me. It was remarkable, remarkable. I gave it

to my daughter who became a pediatrician, and all of these envelopes stacked up in this desk, you opened it up and there was all this stuff. She was a hoarder. She was a hoarder. If she acquired new things, she couldn't let old things go, and it was wonderful and terrible, as I said, to discover things that I had given her to give away, and she never gave them away.

There were no mother-daughter trips like I took with my daughter. That was not what she'd do. I don't think she would have ever left my father for any reason to do that. And, she kept so many things that were—it was a nightmare. It was wonderful and terrible, the tactical things, the things I took, but she just never let anything go, and it was really very sad. When my father died, I had to get permission from our attorneys to start giving away the clothing that she wore with my father. She couldn't sit down with me, and I wanted to engage my mother. She was at a point where she was never going to wear these gowns again, and these shoes, and she wouldn't move a thing. I thought it would be an opportunity for the two of us to turn a page in her life, but she never turned that page.

As I told you, he stayed in that apartment, and then I just did it behind her back. When she really wasn't coming out of her bedroom, I had permission to start packing up these things and donating them, so that other people could wear them, because the burden was going to fall on me, not my sister, who was never really helpful in that regard, and she was living abroad, and my brother was helpful in other ways to me, but that burden was left to me at 1185, although my brother was helpful when we had to clean out the house in Connecticut, and that was another nightmare. It was a 5,000 square foot house on the main floor, and the attic, and the basement below, which was filled with Fisher equipment, and not woodworking, but equipment for fixing

things. My father tinkered. As I said before, he was really very skilled at fixing everything, and he loved the house and he loved clucking around the house and repairing stuff that was within his skills, but he wasn't the kind of man that would call somebody to do it unless it was the kind of thing he couldn't do. So, he had beautiful tools, beautiful tools, some of which I have today.

So my mother, we were talking about my mother, but that was my mother, and the thing about the war mentality, I don't know what it was, but it really was very difficult and fruitless to get her to turn the page. She wouldn't move to a smaller apartment. My sister, at one point, started to try to do that, and at some point, we knew that that was where she was going to stay and take her last breath, although it was really in Mount Sinai [Hospital], not in the apartment at all. She was privileged to have great care for her when she started to fail. People really loved her, and took care of her, but then there was all of this, which was more memories of their life together that I was the one that was burdened with the divesting. But she was, as I said, she was a hands-on mother, and loved my children, and was delighted to be a grandmother, but she didn't do what I do. I'm a different kind of a grandmother. I see those kids every single week. I take them to this, that, and the other.

I think what I'm saying is, my parents were the kind of people whom I had to step up to to engage them. They didn't voluntarily call up and say, "Can I go to this"—that's not what they did. It was a much more formal relationship, not less loving, but loving on their terms in their way. As a matter of fact, it's sad for me, but my mother had this huge, three-bedroom apartment. It was 1185. One was the office for her secretary, their secretary, then her secretary, Mary Barnes [phonetic], and then there was one bedroom that could have easily been turned into a bed for

visiting grandchildren. She never did that. She was the person between my children and my father, who would not have endured whatever noise kids made, or maybe she was afraid of my father on that level, but she did not do that. She didn't do that. She had this space in the country, and welcomed the children there, but not at 1185, and I'm sorry if, because of his personality, they didn't have the kind of—they didn't take us away anywhere. They didn't take the family or the kids away on vacations. Maybe they did, but certainly not the grandfather, the grandparents and their children, and the grandchildren. That, they didn't do.

So I would say they missed things, but the kids, the children were pretty young when my father died, and they were older when my mother died. So I didn't have two ailing or aging grandparents at the same time. He preceded her.

Albarelli: What did they tell you, or what did your mother tell you, about how they met, your mother and father?

Fisher: [01:14:23] It's a question I always ask my survivors. My mother went to Goucher College, and was returning to school, and the train left from Penn Station, and my father was there with, I don't know, some other young man or woman. I don't know why he was there in the group that was saying goodbye. He met my mother, introduced to my mother, and then as the legend goes, proceeded to call every Cane in the phone book in Westchester [County], until he found her. Her parents lived in Tuckahoe at the time, and that is what I know, that he tracked her down.

So, today, would he have found her, on a dating site? I don't know, but he met her, and dated her, and they had a very small wedding with family only, and my father, who was really subtly humorous, my father was working at Dodd, Mead and Company publishers, designing book covers. He designed the *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* which was about Churchill, and he had used the cartoons of Otto Soglow, which dotted the *New Yorker* magazine for years, to make a wedding announcement. There were no invitations. This one film, of course, would have brought all this stuff, but the little—it was somewhere between a three-by-five and a four-by-six size, and on the front of this announcement was an Otto Soglow cartoon.

Otto Soglow was fascinated about male/female relationships. All of his cartoons, no tagline, were devoted to that. I have a collection of them in my dining room that my father gave me, of artwork that Soglow had done when he had a relationship with my father, and Dodd, Mead, and the cartoon is of a bride and groom. She's much taller than he is, and inside, when you opened it up, it said, "Janet and Avery Fisher were quietly married on August 9, 19"—yikes, probably '42, and, I have subsequently taken that cartoon and had a rubber stamp made out of it, and used it in my life of gift giving and congratulating people, that same cartoon. It's not one of the ones on the wall, but it was their wedding announcement. So he was subtle. He had a very dry sense of humor, dry sense of humor. That was an illustration of it.

Albarelli: Can you think of other examples?

Fisher: [01:18:37] Some of these other things I've mentioned, like the speakers for Miriam Rafelski, they came up because it fires off in my brain, but that was my father's particular sense

of humor. He used a fountain pen. He had a collection of fountain pens, but he loved using a fountain pen, and there's a story told by his attorney about how the day, whatever he was signing, he offered his fountain pen to a young attorney who had to sign something, and of course, the attorney didn't know how to use a fountain pen, and it's the stupidest thing to do. If you have a fountain pen, you don't lend it because everybody's pressure on the nib is different, and this young—my father just sat there aghast, and didn't say anything, but the story was told to me, not by my dad, but by his attorney, Ronald Stein, about this funny little story that I remember being told to me, but, other—no. I mean, I'm sure there are, that's not fair, but, the wedding announcement was his dry sense of humor.

Albarelli: And, your father more or less distanced himself from his background, his family background, you mentioned, right?

Fisher: Absolutely. He had—

Albarelli: What about your mother, [crosstalk]—

Fisher: [01:20:16] No, no, no. I knew my grandparents. I knew her mother and father, and my mother's mother died when my mother was three, and my grandfather married the sister, which is Jewish tradition. So, my mother's mother's name was Gertrude [phonetic], and my mother's stepmother was Fritzie [phonetic], so my mother had a brother from Gertrude, and then when my grandfather remarried, they had another child named Betty, who's still alive today.

So, I remember my grandmother. My grandmother was terrific with me, terrific. They lived at 171 West Seventy-Ninth Street, which I have passed by, because two of my grandchildren live on the West Side and I took pictures and sent them to my Aunt Betty, and we had Thanksgiving there, we would have Passover there, and my grandmother had a cook who was four feet nine [inches tall], if she was an inch, named Louise [phonetic], who made the most wonderful cookies, and when I went over to the apartment, either to visit or to stay, I would always go into the pantry, and pull out these tins of cookies that Louise made.

But my grandmother was really warm and wonderful. She was a knitter. She spent her life knitting booties for the orphan children at the [New York] Foundling Hospital. I have a distinct memory of her doing that. I have the instructions for making those booties. My mother never knit, she said, because my father didn't like watching her do it, but the truth would have been, if my mother wanted to do it, my father was working all the time, so she could have done it when he wasn't around, so that wasn't a good excuse.

My father was disdainful of the background of my mother's parents. They belonged to a country club. My father wasn't comfortable in the country club, I know that. He considered himself more of an intellect than those around him. That, I can recall very clearly, but there are all these lusty—my mother's stepsister, Betty, and her husband who's no longer alive, they were fun-loving people, but my father was above all that, just very sad, but, the laughs were with my aunt, and even to this day, she's remarkable. She's remarkably funny, and we email all the time. So she's, except for her daughter Peggy [phonetic], she's the last link to the family.

I didn't have those memories with my father's parents because they were deceased for me growing up, and Aunt Sonia, my father's sister, was, as I said, as old-fashioned a woman as you can imagine, although her husband, Ned, was funny. He was. He had a great sense of humor, that I remember, and Sonia was just very staid, old-fashioned and staid, and didn't have kids. So the warmth came from my mother's family, and unfortunately, with my father's siblings except for Sonia—somebody was mentally unbalanced—these are things, he didn't talk about them. He didn't talk about his mother and his father, and I never would have questioned him. I wouldn't have known to ask about them, "Tell me a story." I could do that now, but I didn't venture down those dark corridors then. God.

Albarelli: Some more memories of your grandparents, your mother's parents?

Fisher: [01:25:12] My grandfather, George Cane, had a business, George Cane and Sons, and he was called Opa, and Fritzie was called Omar, Oma, O-M-A-R, or shortened to O-M-A, which was German for grandmother and grandfather. He had a business selling supplies to bakers. Now what did that mean for me? That's how I knew about what we call chocolate sprinkles, which people call "jimmies" today, but I always knew them as chocolate sprinkles. There were always chocolate sprinkles in my mother's pantry, and, almond paste from which she would make macaroons, not just at Passover, but she had almond paste. I don't know; that's my memory. He couldn't have had a business just having chocolate sprinkles and almond paste, but that's what came into our home from them, from George Cane and Sons.

I went sailing, my Uncle George, my mother's natural brother, was a sailor, and I crewed for him when I was in my twenties, and he was very funny. He was very funny. So there was humor, and then there was sadness in the family too, because my mother's mother had died, and my aunt was my mother's stepsister, so there's all that, those relationships or lack of there. That's family history, but I have very warm memories of my grandparents, and my Aunt Betty, my Uncle Dick, and Uncle George, especially in that apartment on West Seventy-Ninth Street. And of course, the building, it's a prewar building, so those memories are very, very clear, and I could draw that apartment. I could diagram that apartment, and one looks back at the architecture and the construction of prewar apartments versus the kinds of things that are put up today.

Albarelli: Describe the [unclear].

Fisher: Huh?

Albarelli: Describe the apartment.

Fisher: [01:28:01] You walked into a small entryway, and straight ahead was the living room, and off the same entryway was the dining room, which led to this kitchen in the back, and the pantry where the cookie tins were, and then off the living room, there was a bedroom corridor where there were three bedrooms. And my grandmother, what I remember from that apartment, my grandmother did not use nail polish. My grandmother buffed her nails. What did that mean, to a child growing up and spending time in that apartment? There was the tray on her dresser with a chamois buffer—some women do that today—and this pink paste. It's still the same paste!

If you go to a nail salon today and you ask to have your nails buffed, it's the same product, in a small container, and she would put a little bit on her nails, and just buff them. She never used polish, and yet her fingernails looked as if they had been polished. So, when I've ever had it done, it's a memory of my grandmother.

And, my grandmother and grandfather moved from that apartment to the East Side, to 207 East Seventy-Fourth Street, which was a postwar building, and the buffer's paste moved with her, but my grandmother, when she wasn't in street clothing, you would walk in and she would be wearing what was called a model's coat, as in fashion model. They weren't bathrobes, but they functioned that way. It's what you would put on, and it had a zipper down the front, and I imagine it got its name from the model's coat, because models could step out of it and do whatever they had to do, but my grandmother always had a model's coat on. She would have a piece of jewelry on the label, and very prim and proper, but she did things with me. She bought things for me.

She was really a loving, attentive grandmother, which I never had on the other side, and probably, it would have been like Aunt Sonia, not that warm and fuzzy, but I'm grateful that I had it, because I learned to knit from her, and I'm sorry my daughter doesn't knit. She's never shown any interest. So, I don't know what I'll do with those instructions, but, she must have made thousands of pairs of those booties for the Foundling Hospital. They were double-point needles, and she always had—her hands were busy knitting, and my grandfather didn't care, unlike the story I told you about my mother.

Albarelli: Were they religious?

Fisher: [01:31:35] I don't know that my maternal grandparents belonged to a synagogue. I don't have memory of going to synagogue with them, but they did have Passover, the Passover meal. I have a wonderful memory of the Macy's Day July Fourth celebrations when they were on the Hudson River—that's where they started—that's where they were when I was a child—and going from that apartment, which was between Columbus [Avenue] and Amsterdam [Avenue], over to the river to watch them. I do remember that. No memory of where my grandmother got her food, or anything like that, or even that my grandmother was a cook, and she probably wasn't. Louise probably did all the cooking. But, that was the place that either I was plunked—my brother wasn't alive then—and my sister and I were plunked when my father and mother went on the business trips together, and I went back and forth on the public bus.

Albarelli: What are some other memories of holidays?

Fisher: [01:33:03] They really were confined to Passover Seders and Thanksgiving. My parents were not that religious. They joined [Temple] Shaaray Tefila on Seventy-Ninth [Street] and Second [Avenue], I guess because Chip had been born, and my brother had a bar mitzvah, which by today's standards, was a funeral, grim. But, it's all tied in with food and tradition, both at Thanksgiving, and for Passover Seders. My mother had a wonderful Hanukkah menorah, which I remember, but my parents did not light yahrzeit candles for their parents, and I only started doing that myself when I started interviewing for the Shoah Foundation.

So, the first time I did that was a year after my father had died, because I had walked into the home of a Holocaust survivor for whom I was going to do an interview. It was the pre-interview, and I saw a yahrzeit candle burning, only to discover that it was the birthday of her sister, which is not when you light a yahrzeit candle, but she and her sister were prisoners in Theresienstadt [Ghetto], outside of Prague, and her sister was deported to the east and gassed in Auschwitz, so the only thing she knew was the day that her sister was born, and I came home from that experience and started lighting yahrzeit candles, but that's not something my parents did. This is a terrible expression: they were three-day Jews, probably two-day Jews, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but other than that, we were Jewish, let's say, by education and culture, not by religious practice.

Albarelli: What about politics, their political—did they talk about politics and the values that they—

Fisher: [01:35:45] I know that they were Democrats, and I have a glass jar of buttons. One says "I like Ike." Well, Ike [Dwight David Eisenhower] wasn't a Democrat, but, maybe she voted for Ike, I don't know, Eisenhower, and then, I have a whole bunch of them. People wore little buttons then. That's not something we discussed, and my father died in '94, I guess it was. I don't remember any discussions, disagreements. The whole world of politics was not in our house, but somehow I knew they were Democrats.

Albarelli: I ask partly because you mentioned your memory of '68, at Columbia, and I was just wondering, were you involved with the antiwar movement, or no?

Fisher: [01:37:07] The only thing we did at Skidmore: we had water fights. I was unknowing and uninvolved, and not politically active, and so that what happened at Columbia was—I mean, we would have gotten into trouble for sitting in the president's office. This was something that was violent, and disrupted my year at Columbia. No. It didn't prompt anything. And of course, I'm not the child that did anything politically active or outside the line. I was the one who toed the line, as it were.

Albarelli: You said that your father was proud of some of the things you did. What, besides Shoah, what were some of the other things?

Fisher: [01:38:24] Well, before Shoah, I founded a child abuse and neglect treatment program in 1977 called SCAN New York, which was a child abuse and neglect treatment program. It was the first of its kind in the city, where we recruited, screened, and trained volunteers to work with parents where child abuse and neglect had taken place, and the families came to us from the [United States] Bureau of Child Welfare, which is what it was called then, and the evolution of my work in that area was not because I went to social work school or anything, but because when I was living in San Francisco, during the time that the hall was renamed, I'd heard this story on the radio about a child being discovered having been locked up. Anyway, that was the seed that, this was terrible, and I started to volunteer for Child Protective Services in Marin County. I stepped up, but in my twenties, I was very pro-child and anti-parent. I didn't have the understanding of the dynamics of child abuse and neglect.

Anyway, I came home. When I came home from California for good, I started to volunteer for Vincent Fontana's Foundling Hospital, his child abuse and neglect treatment program, which was housed in the Foundling program, which was then on Third Avenue and Sixty-Eighth Street—the building is gone—and the program was called Temporary Shelter. Fontana's was the name in the city that was associated with efforts to work with abusing and neglecting parents, and he was very visible, and very famous in that field, and that's why I started volunteering when I came back from California, and then, was, I guess, volunteering.

I don't know how I went from the Foundling Hospital to the New York State Select Committee on Child Abuse, but I was there, and I was commissioned to write a booklet on the roles the volunteers could have in child abuse and neglect treatment programs. I was commissioned by the federal government, so I had to travel around the United States looking at other programs doing that same thing. So I had already had my experience of working at the Foundling Hospital, and then I traveled, and I met other program directors, and a citizen who herself started a huge program in Arkansas, and when I came home from doing that, I knew that that's what I wanted to do in New York. That was.

So, it's not like I woke up one day and said, "Well, today, the social issue that I want to be part of is child abuse." I came up from the ranks, as it were. And today, I sit on the board of the Museum of Jewish Heritage – a Living Memorial to the Holocaust, because I was first an interviewer for Spielberg, and then became a gallery educator at the museum, and then I was asked to join the board. So, I've had, in the things that I've done in my life, of which my father and my mother were proud, were boots on the ground, from the inside out, so to speak.

Albarelli: Did your parents give you a sense of their own experience of history, or their families' then history?

Fisher: You mean in the historical events that they lived through?

Albarelli: Yes, yes.

Fisher: Not at all.

Albarelli: No?

Fisher: [01:42:51] Not at all. They didn't talk about it, or I wasn't interested, or didn't know about it, and certainly my father was not forthcoming about his roots, except, he was born at home, to this family that had come over from the former Soviet Union, at the turn of the century, escaping pogroms, I'm sure, and they were poor, and then they lost everything in the Depression. So, he was the only one that achieved, really achieved, and I don't think that—I mean, I use the word forgiving. He wouldn't share that part of his life, at all. I don't know if my brother ever found out more than I did. There weren't a lot of pictures around of his relatives, his family, not at all. It was a closed book.

Albarelli: And your mother's family came from Germany?

Fisher: [01:44:12] I think they were American born. I believe they were American born. I know they were American born, but they called themselves Oma and Opa, based on their background.

Albarelli: How about some of your memories of the house in Connecticut?

Fisher: [01:44:33] I'll give that to you. I know that they were American born because there was no German. There was no German accent to the way my grandparents spoke. There was no trace of anything, so I can confirm they were American born. The house in Connecticut was their pride and joy and love, and it was on a large piece of property, and they bought the house after my father retired, and spent probably about thirty years there, when Washington, Connecticut, was a nowhere, and my father, it was rare, if ever, to see my father going up to Connecticut or returning from Connecticut without wearing a tie and jacket. He didn't golf; he just never let go from that formal image of himself, not that golf is the only thing you could do, but tennis, nothing like that.

And my parents were not great renovators of their spaces. What they bought is what they lived in. The living level was on one level. It was a T, so the front of the house looked like it was a very small house, and the bedrooms in the back you couldn't see from coming up the drive, but the property was exquisite, just exquisite, and my mother loved growing and drawing flowers there, and my father, as I said earlier, tinkered, repaired things, tinkered, loved going to the local hardware store. They made many great friends there, had dinner parties there.

But I was in my twenties when they had that house. I wasn't going to bring guys up there, and there wasn't anything there to do for me, except, I did play tennis, but I didn't bring friends there. I would always go up there to visit them, but it was just exquisitely beautiful, and the house was mine to sell, and after my parents died, I did use it with my husband and his grandchildren, and it was just wonderful for them to come up, and the house was set back from the road. They could run around and be safe and it was very beautiful, but it wasn't my history. It wasn't my house, so that when I had the chance to fix it up—

My husband and I had had a house in Pound Ridge, New York, which we sold, and fortunately, I didn't put down roots in Washington because they were their roots, not mine. But I took a lot of photographs before, the way the house was before it was sold, so I can look homeward angel when I look at the photographs, but it was really wonderful for them. They had many happy years there, but I did a good thing by not trying to make it a new house or tearing it down and building a new house. Nobody would have come to see us. It's very hard to get to on the train. You can't, so, where we are now is much better, and I have my children visit.

Anyway, it's hard to describe how exquisitely beautiful it was, and how much they loved that house, but boy, there were games that were ours. It's what I meant about the wonderful and terrible. You can relive your childhood, and then you have to get rid of it, and my mother was as much a hoarder up there. I remember that my mother would take things up there that she—she'd just move them. It angered me that my mother couldn't set these things free that she no longer wore, so that somebody else might have pants on their legs, or a coat on their back. So, it was

wonderful, I'll repeat it, and terrible: wonderful to discover the games and the things that I remembered from my childhood, and terrible to have that chore to pack it up and set it free.

Albarelli: What were some of the games like?

Fisher: [01:50:14] They would have been wooden things, all wooden games. The original—when I say original, *Monopoly*, and [*The Game of*] *Cootie*, and *Candy Land*, and other things that my mother would pick up when she traveled with my father in Europe, where there were great things made out of wood, or children's toys that she would bring home. I know there was a pair of lederhosen that she brought home for somebody, [laughs]. I remember seeing those. But it was just quiet and beautiful and in the middle of this gorgeous, gorgeous country, and it was good to them, and fortunately, the year when my father was out of the hospital and before he had a stroke which was the end of his life, it was about two months, and my mother and father stayed there, and their apartment on Park Avenue was on the second floor, so it was dark. Not much light ever came into that apartment, but the country was beautiful and pretty.

So that was a gift to them, and as I said, all the bedrooms were on the ground floor. There was no upstairs, downstairs, and having to make a bedroom so my father could be in a hospital bed in the living room or something like that. They stayed the way they were, living in that house the way they were. It was very 1942, and here I say 1942. I don't mean that as the year they got married, but there was something about that community which was really very small and sweet. The local supermarket, which is tiny, and where you would go to get ice cream, was like the movie, *Summer of '42*, that's what I'm thinking of – very, very sweet. So, they would go back

and forth, leave on Thursday, and then they'd leave after lunch on Sunday, go back to the city, and they had a wonderful life, of a rich cultural life in the city, and then relaxing and my mother puttering and my father puttering up in the country.

[END OF INTERVIEW]