Biographical Note

Elisabeth "Libby" Lorryayne Solomon, nee Willer, was born in Russia in 1909, in an area that is now part of Ukraine. She came to Portland, Oregon, with her family in 1914. She attended Reed College, but had to quit school due to an illness. When she recovered, she had the opportunity to act as a lab assistant for a doctor and take classes at medical school. She attended the University of California San Francisco, but again had to quit due to illness. She returned to Portland and continued to work in a medical lab. She also joined the Democratic Party and became a precinct committeewoman. She met Gus J. Solomon through her political activities and they were married in 1939; they later had three children. She was a civil rights activist and a writer. She died in 2004.

Other Descriptive Information

Forms part of the United States District Court Oral History Project.
Content Description

This oral history interview with Libby Solomon was conducted by Jim Strassmaier at Solomon's apartment in Portland, Oregon, from October 25 to November 22, 1989. In this interview, Solomon discusses her family history and early life in Russia and Portland, including assimilating to American culture as a young child; the death of her older sister, Roza Willer; her Jewish upbringing; and her education. She then discusses her brief education at Reed College and her love for microscopic work. She briefly discusses her Democratic politics. She talks about working in medical labs with various doctors, particularly Edmund Sears. She discusses her involvement in the Democratic Party and the Oregon Commonwealth Federation, as well as the people she met through those organizations, including Monroe Sweetland, Ruth Haefner, and Gus Solomon, who became her spouse. She speaks at length about Gus Solomon's appointment to the U.S. District Court of Oregon. She discusses some of her later activities, including taking classes at the Portland Art Museum School, and serving on the Portland art and zoo commissions. She also talks about her and Gus Solomon's decision to quit all clubs and organizations that had discriminatory admittance policies. She closes the interview by discussing her work on integrated housing.

Use of the Collection

Alternative Forms Available

Audio available online in OHS Digital Collections.

Preferred Citation

Oral history interview with Libby Solomon, by Jim Strassmaier, SR 1231, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

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Administrative Information

Related Materials

An oral history with Gus Solomon, spouse of Libby Solomon, is designated SR 1226 at the Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Detailed Description of the Collection
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Names and Subjects

**Subject Terms:**
- Civil rights--Oregon--Portland
- Jews--Oregon--Portland
- Judges--Oregon
- Political activists--Oregon--Portland

**Personal Names:**
- Haefner, Ruth E., 1894-1988
- Solomon, Gus J. (Gus Jerome), 1906-1987
- Solomon, Libby (Elisabeth), 1909-2004

**Corporate Names:**
- Democratic Party (Or.)
- Oregon Commonwealth Federation

**Form or Genre Terms:**
- interviews

**Other Creators:**

**Personal Names:**
- Strassmaier, James (interviewer)

Sarah Stroman
2020

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