

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Josephine Datz

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Immigrant Stories Oral History project

Interview # IM-A-L-2012-025

Josephine 'Jo' Datz, who grew up in a Jewish family in South Africa during Apartheid, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1990, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Immigrant Stories* Oral History project

Interview dates & location:

Date: June 7, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL

Date: July 5, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:46 + 2:30 / 1.77 + 2.5 = 4.27 hrs

Session 1: Family background and growing up in Apartheid era South Africa

Session 2: Marriage, emigration to the United States and views on Jews in world today

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 16, 2012.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Josephine Datz, *Immigrant Stories*, IM-A-L-2012-025

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Josephine ‘Jo’ (Gon) Datz was born on February 4th, 1963 in Johannesburg, South Africa, the daughter of a Lithuanian immigrant father whose family had fled Jewish persecution in the 1930s, and an English immigrant mother, also Jewish. Jo grew up in a segregated community in Johannesburg, attended a Jewish school during her grade school years, and public schools for the rest of her education. Her family was not religious. She discussed the complicated nature of South African history, its politics, ethnic, racial and language mix during the years she grew up during the height of South African Apartheid.

Jo graduated from high school in 1980 and attended the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, majoring in industrial psychology. Following her graduation in 1984, she traveled to Israel, England and Italy for several months, before returning to South Africa and working for a labor relations consulting firm. In 1987 she met Rabbi Michael Datz, a Reformed Jewish Rabbi who was on a sabbatical in South Africa. The two were married in a traditional service in May, 1989. In 1990 the couple spent several months on the island of Curaçao, and in 1991 they moved to Houston, Texas and lived with Michael’s parents while he awaited a call from a Jewish congregation. In 1992 he accepted a call from Temple B’rith Sholom in Springfield, Illinois, where the couple has lived ever since. Jo is currently the executive director of the Jewish Federation of Springfield. She spoke at length about living in the United States, about the impact of the War on Terror, about growing anti-Semitism in the world, and about the current situation in Israel.

Subject Headings/Key Words: South Africa; Jewish life in South Africa; South African history and politics; Apartheid in South Africa; Afrikaans in South Africa; Johannesburg, South Africa; labor relations in South Africa; life in Curacao; Orthodox & Reformed Judaism; Zionism; end of Apartheid in South Africa; impact of 9-11 and War on Terror; contemporary Israeli situation; growing world-wide anti-Semitism;

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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