



## Interview with Frances Donowitz

Under the Auspices of the  
Monmouth County Library Headquarters  
125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, N.J.  
Flora T. Higgins, Project Coordinator

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**Name of Interviewer:** Lauren Ordene  
**Premises of Interview:** Ms. Donowitz's home,  
Manalapan, NJ  
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**Ms. Ordene:** Can you tell me a little bit about how you ended up here and why you came to live in Monmouth County?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I am a Canadian, but I was not born there. I was born in Russia, but we immigrated to Canada and I went to school there. Then I got married and that's how I came here.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did your husband have any affiliations to this area, or did you just happen to move here?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No, he was born in Russia also, and then he moved to Canada. He then moved to New York and then sort of remembered me and we got married. That's how I came to Monmouth County.

**Ms. Ordene:** Oh, that's wonderful. When you first arrived here what were your impressions? Were you happy that you came?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No, I was not happy because there was nothing here except the potato farm, fields and fields, and it was just very discouraging. I used to run to New York several times a week just to get myself sort of in action, so that I



Frances Donowitz and her husband, Saul



Frances and Saul Donowitz on their wedding day

wouldn't be so unhappy, but it took many years for me to get used to this kind of life. Of course, our libraries were not the best in those days, so it took quite a number of years for me to get adjusted to it. Of course, I soon had children and I got so busy that I concentrated on bringing them up.

**Ms. Ordene:** That's great. When did you move from Russia?

**Ms. Donowitz:** In 1939.

**Ms. Ordene:** So you were there for a little while when you were growing up.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes. We lived under the most difficult conditions and we were delighted to get out. We were the last ones to get out of Russia after we got our passports. They closed the quota, so nobody could get out for years, and then of course the war was there. And I guess we would've all been killed, but my mother was quite a strong and courageous woman. When we got our passports, they announced that they closed the quota and nobody could leave. But she said, "I'm going to take a chance. I'll call there anyway." Just like that, she went there all by herself. My father did not go, and they gave it to her, and she was the last one to get it. And then at night we just went. We took a train and got out of Russia, and my kids and my grandchildren think that we saved the whole family because we would have all been killed. We feel very, very fortunate.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you have family that was still there that didn't come to Canada?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, many people who lived there.

**Ms. Ordene:** So were they killed?

**Ms. Donowitz:** We never heard from them again.

**Ms. Ordene:** So they could be living somewhere right now.

**Ms. Donowitz:** They could be, but I think they probably would remember our name; and you know with e-mail now they probably could get in touch with us.

**Ms. Ordene:** So you came to America after living in Canada.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, that's right. After I graduated high school, I got married.

**Ms. Ordene:** I hear that you and your husband began a chicken farm when you came here.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Right, we still have the coops down here. My husband passed away a couple of years ago so I run the farm now.

**Ms. Ordene:** Very good.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well I don't know how good that is, but I'm in it and I can't get out of it.

**Ms. Ordene:** It takes courage to sustain something like that all by yourself. When you had the chicken farm, did your children help you at all as they were growing up?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well they really did not ...I never wanted them to be chicken farmers, so I discouraged that. But, one year my eldest son, Mark, was home from college, and for the lack of anything better to do, my husband said, "Why don't you go on and help with the chickens?" So he did, but he couldn't stand it. He would go in the morning and pick up the eggs, and then run quickly and take a shower and then read his books and then go again and then come back and take another shower. So he scratched it off his list. It wasn't the thing he wanted to do for the rest of his life.

**Ms. Ordene:** But they went to school in this area?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, they all graduated from Freehold Regional High School. My eldest son and my youngest son graduated from high school in Freehold. One year they were rebuilding the school, so for that year my daughter went to the Township School.

**Ms. Ordene:** Is it the one that's currently there or was it rebuilt?

**Ms. Donowitz:** The one in Freehold Borough was rebuilt and they closed it during the rebuilding so all the students had to go to the Township School, and that's where she graduated.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did they like school here?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh they loved it. They had honors classes in those days. I don't know whether they have them now.

**Ms. Ordene:** They still do.

**Ms. Donowitz:** They liked it because they were always in honors classes. They enjoyed that very much. The schools in Freehold were very good. You know, some people thought that they weren't, but they were very good.



**Mark (left), Arlene, and Gerald, children of Frances and Saul Donowitz**

**Ms. Ordene:** Were they the only Jewish children that went to the school, or were there others?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh no, there were many.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you participate in any synagogue or religious service once you came, or were there no synagogues around here then?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, I went to the synagogue.

**Ms. Ordene:** Where was the synagogue?

**Ms. Donowitz:** On Broad Street. It's still there.

**Ms. Ordene:** On Broad Street in Freehold? Were they Bar Mitzvahed there?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes. And my daughter Bat Mitzvahed, up there.

**Ms. Ordene:** That's wonderful. So when did you start getting involved in the public life in Monmouth County?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Maybe twenty-five years ago when my kids started using libraries and doing research. I decided that something had to be done. I went around Freehold getting petitions signed to improve the library. I didn't have any trouble getting signatures because it was such a popular subject. So we collected about 5,000 signatures.

**Ms. Ordene:** Oh wow, that's pretty impressive. Were the petitions used to improve the library?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No. They built the Eastern Branch Library, and then they promised to build one in western Monmouth County, but in the meantime, they forgot about it. Or the money ran out or whatever and so The Friends of the Monmouth County Library Association had to sort of start all over again in order to instigate it, so that's what we did.

**Ms. Ordene:** When did you become president? Was that recently?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes. It was maybe five years ago.

**Ms. Ordene:** Have you enjoyed it?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh, I love it. I really love it. I love the library and working with the people, they're just wonderful and so helpful.

**Ms. Ordene:** Was there a process when you were passing the petitions? Did you go door to door and walk around?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I went from door to door, and sometimes people would be scared to let me in, but they did anyway. I didn't think I was so frightful. And then I took the petitions over to one of the meetings at the Eastern Branch, and that's how it all started.

**Ms. Ordene:** That's great. In terms of your chicken farm, how did you market the chickens and the eggs?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, during the war time we sold eggs to Fort Monmouth. They had to be processed a certain way; they would not be accepted just any old way, and my husband was very good at it. I actually never worked on the farm. I was too busy.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you have to actually go down to Fort Monmouth?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No they would come and pick them up. The only time I did work or manage the farm was when my husband went to work for the Department of Agriculture; then I took over.

**Ms. Ordene:** Was your husband working the chicken farm during the war?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I think he got a deferment because he was producing something for the soldiers. He never went to war, but he did supply the army with the eggs.

**Ms. Ordene:** Could you name a few things in the past since you've lived here, or perhaps while your children were growing up, that you can recall doing that was fun?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, it was always fun here because there wasn't much to do in the town. The children developed very good friends and played with other children. It was sincerely fun; they enjoyed it and loved it. And we would always go to Montreal for excitement because my family lives there and they're still there. The children really enjoyed growing up here; they have very good memories. It wasn't exciting, but it encouraged them to read a lot and to create their own excitement and have many good friends. The only thing I had to do was transport them, bringing their friends here, bringing the friends there.

**Ms. Ordene:** You were the car pool mom.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, well, you know. Of course they went to school in Freehold, so they were tuition pupils all the time. They were supposed to go to a one-room school house in Millhurst.

**Ms. Ordene:** That was still in working order--the one room school house?

**Ms. Donowitz:** When they were going to school it was. It isn't now, and but they then were always tuition pupils in Freehold. So I always had to drive them until they went to high school.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you have your house built, or was it here when you got here?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, we built it ourselves right on Route 33, and then they decided to put a ramp over there, so the house was moved.

**Ms. Ordene:** How did they go about that one?

**Ms. Donowitz:** We lived in it during the whole moving process.

**Ms. Ordene:** As they were moving it?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, as they were moving it. They put it on huge airplane wheels, and then they slowly moved it back and we lived in it all the time.

**Ms. Ordene:** So the town moved it for you?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No, we had special movers. They cut our land in half. The new Route 33 also was a part of our farm, so we have acreage on this side of Route 33 and across Route 33.

**Ms. Ordene:** Are there any places in Monmouth County that that you really take pride in? For example, the library?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes! The library of course is the most important thing, because a place without a library is not very impressive. The library is right up with the schools. I really think the schools were great.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do you still think that the schools are great? What do you think of all the things that are going on now in terms of the school system?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well you know I certainly don't approve of them. I think there is no place in schools for violence, but in those days the schools were wonderful. The kids made many friends and had all kinds of activities, and I still think the schools are great.

**Ms. Ordene:** Obviously Monmouth County has changed a lot since you've been here.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh, absolutely it has. It became, I think, more like New York.

**Ms. Ordene:** You don't have to go there for the action anymore.

**Ms. Donowitz:** I don't have to go back to New York, because it is like Freehold. When people discover Freehold, they love it and they want to move out here.

**Ms. Ordene:** What was the extent of your schooling when you were growing up?

**Ms. Donowitz:** High School, and I had one year of business education.

**Ms. Ordene:** How did you find growing up as a women? Did you encounter any problems or any obstacles?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I'm not a career woman, but I know that women have a very difficult time. Even when my daughter went to medical school, some of the students there thought that she should not be there and that she should get married and stay home. She had different ideas.

**Ms. Ordene:** Where did you go to business school?

**Ms. Donowitz:** In Montreal.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do you have a hero?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Eleanor Roosevelt to me is a hero, because she had so many obstacles to overcome. I think Franklin Roosevelt was a hero too, because he was handicapped, and even so he did so much for so many people.

**Ms. Ordene:** How were you affected by prohibition? Did you see any effects of the ban of alcohol while it was going on?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I was not affected because I never drank.

**Ms. Ordene:** What was your favorite music, for example?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I really like classical music and I like Garth Brooks.

**Ms. Ordene:** Garth Brooks the country singer?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, I really like him, because I like his philosophy on life.

**Ms. Ordene:** Why is that?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, he does a lot of good. He gives money away to charity and he's involved with different things, and I like that. It's not only making money. He's interested in what he's doing.

**Ms. Ordene:** How were you affected by the issues of segregation and black rights growing up?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, of course, I'm delighted that they are getting what they deserve: more freedom and equal treatment. But, you know, I never discriminated. We always had black people working for us, and they were always our friends, and they weren't any different. They're just human beings.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you see or witness any discrimination against minorities that discouraged you in this area?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I'm sure there was. It's just that when they came to the farm or they helped me in the house, they were just treated as one of the family. And my husband helped them whenever he could and they're still my friends. Sometimes I go to Freehold and I hear someone say, "Hi, Frances," and I see that they have grown up. I say, "Do I know you?" They say, "Yes I worked on your farm."

**Ms. Ordene:** It must have been startling to you.

**Ms. Donowitz:** I like the idea that they call me Frances.

**Ms. Ordene:** What are your hobbies?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I love to read.

**Ms. Ordene:** What is your favorite book?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I have so many.

**Ms. Ordene:** Right now.

**Ms. Donowitz:** I love Russell, anything by Russell.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do you like to cook?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I'd rather bake.

**Ms. Ordene:** You like baking cookies for example?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, I like to bake. I entertain a lot and I like to bake, but cooking is not my favorite thing.

**Ms. Ordene:** So what is your favorite thing to bake?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I bake cookies and cakes and different things.

**Ms. Ordene:** I've heard about your famous soup recipe.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, I do like eating vegetarian, purely vegetarian.

**Ms. Ordene:** Would you like to share the recipe for that on tape?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I would if I knew exactly. I just put in all the vegetables I have. Its just pure vegetables, no fats and no meat, just pure vegetables. I'm glad that I have people who appreciate it. It's so much fun to do when somebody likes it, really.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do you still participate in the synagogue?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No. Although I do belong to different organizations, you know, Hadassah and The Workman's Circle, and a few others. I belonged to it for so many years.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do you participate in activities through them or is it more of a ceremonial type of thing?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Only if I can get to it. It is difficult for me to get around.

**Ms. Ordene:** All right, let's get philosophical here. If you could choose a symbol for your life what would it be?

**Ms. Donowitz:** A symbol for my life-- to help other people. Young people, especially.

**Ms. Ordene:** Through the library and things like that. Are there any other avenues through which you helped people over the years?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I like to help people if they have difficulties. I just like to help them. Their life should be a little easier.

**Ms. Ordene:** Have you been involved at all in the arts?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Only in that I appreciate them. I love museums and I love art. We've worked hard for the arts at the library, like the statues there now. We donated them to the library. We have had fundraisers for maybe more than ten years, to which I donate money because the artwork was were so expensive.

**Ms. Ordene:** Is there something that you still want to accomplish in your life?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I do want to see my grandchildren become something very special.

**Ms. Ordene:** How old are they?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, one is twenty-nine, one is twenty-six, one is twenty-one, and one is nineteen.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do they live in the area?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No.

**Ms. Ordene:** Where do they live?

**Ms. Donowitz:** One is in Boston, one is in India right now, and the other two are in Charlottesville, Virginia.

**Ms. Ordene:** How did your grandchild end up in India?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, he is interested in Tibet, and he likes to travel. He wants to become an international lawyer. So, now that he has gotten into law school, he is going to look around and see what he is interested in.

**Ms. Ordene:** That's great. Did he go to Freehold Township High School?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No, he is from Boston and Baltimore, so he went to school there. He went to private schools and he graduated from the University of Wisconsin.

**Ms. Ordene:** What places have you traveled to?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, you know I lived in Russia.

**Ms. Ordene:** Have you gone there since?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No, I have not gone there, but I have traveled through Canada, and part of the United States.

**Ms. Ordene:** So your ancestors all came from Russia?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, they're all from Russia.

**Ms. Ordene:** Were you affected as a Jew in Russia?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh, absolutely yes. There was a lot of anti-Semitism in Russia, and as I understand, there still is. That's one of the reasons I have never gone back there. My childhood was not that happy there, so I never wanted to go back.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you encounter a lot of prejudice and things like that?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh, yes, absolutely. They had something else which was even worse than anti-Semitism; you had to belong to the Communist Party if you wanted to have a good job, and if you didn't want to belong to the Party, you were just rejected.

**Ms. Ordene:** What were your parents' occupations?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, my father had a lumberyard and he was considered to be a capitalist, thus he was not treated very well. I think because he was a capitalist, they were looking for him and were going to send him to Siberia. But in the meantime, we had to do something, so we disappeared.

**Ms. Ordene:** You could've been in some serious trouble then.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, we would have been, because they didn't like people going distances.

**Ms. Ordene:** So, when you were leaving Russia, did you go through Europe?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, we went through Riga, Latvia. Then we landed in Le Havre, France, because our papers were not completely correct. We had to be there for quite a number of months, and we stayed in Paris, I think, for six months.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you learn French?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, we learned French. My brother and I would go to the Louvre everyday and every evening; we knew Paris before we were finally able to leave.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do you remember what year you were in France?

**Ms. Donowitz:** In 1940.

**Ms. Ordene:** So things were already heating up in the war then.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, we left just before.

**Ms. Ordene:** Was it scary?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, it was really scary. You could tell the tension, and we knew we had to get out.

**Ms. Ordene:** Is there any other historical event in Monmouth County you would recall as being significant?

**Ms. Donowitz:** It was just horrible to know that so many people were getting killed all over the world. It wasn't peaceful because when you see all the people suffer, you yourself don't enjoy life that much. We were glad when it was all over.

**Ms. Ordene:** And how about more recently?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, with all the tension in Kosovo or with Adolph, and all that sort of thing, you feel it dreadfully.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do you know how long the hospital has been here?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, probably fifteen or twenty years.

**Ms. Ordene:** What was here before that? What was the medical facility before that?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, the nearest hospital was Jersey Shore Medical Center, I think, or Monmouth Medical Center. That's where my kids were born--in Jersey Shore-- so it's nice to have a hospital closer.

**Ms. Ordene:** Was there a local doctor that you would go to, other than going to the Jersey Shore?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, actually, we had a family doctor.

**Ms. Ordene:** Do your children live in Monmouth County?

**Ms. Donowitz:** My children do not live in Monmouth County. They lived here while growing up, but when they got their education, they never lived here. So they never practiced here, but I use them. I feel they know me well. So they help me by telephone.

**Ms. Ordene:** Is there anything that you expected the future to bring that may have happened or that did not happen?

**Ms. Donowitz:** It happened beyond my expectation. With all the different technologies and computers and Internet and e-mail, it's beyond anyone's imagination. I think it's wonderful to live with this. And I imagine, the next century is going to be even better.

**Ms. Ordene:** The next century is coming up, isn't it? What would you say are the milestones in your life?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well I think the greatest accomplishments are really my children. They have accomplished so much, and I am deeply grateful, because they did it on their own. I'm very proud of them. And the nicest part about it is that they do so much good. They do a lot of good and they go out of their way to do it, and for that I'm very grateful.



**Frances and Saul Donowitz  
with their three children**

**Ms. Ordene:** Is there any part of your life that you would want to relive?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No. I would not like to relive anything. It was wonderful going through that, but then I look forward to something even better, so anticipation is there.

**Ms. Ordene:** Are you doing anything special for New Years?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, my kids are going to be here.

**Ms. Ordene:** You're going to have a New Year celebration together?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes. They're all getting older too, but traveling is not going to be that great, so they're going to be around.

**Ms. Ordene:** Is there any story or song or anything that has been passed down, maybe through your family through the generations, that you still have?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well not so much song, but the philosophy of their life. How they lived was always best: do good, don't be mean, do your best, have honesty and truthfulness. Don't be greedy. Money doesn't mean anything.

**Ms. Ordene:** What advice would you give to the present or future generations from all the experiences that you've had?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I would tell them to get their education, the best education they can get, because this world is for educated people. The more education you have, the better this world will be.

**Ms. Ordene:** What are your feelings now that we're entering the millennium? What do you think about all the terrorism and all the press?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, yes. Well, I think it's horrible, and I think the year 2000 will be much better, because people realize that violence and terrorism do not do anyone any good. I think its going to be much better in 2000.

**Ms. Ordene:** I see that you have this map of the United States in your kitchen.

**Ms. Donowitz:** I have two, one of the United States, and one of the world in the other room, because the kids travel so much that I just want to know where they are.

**Ms. Ordene:** So you point it out and figure out where they are.

**Ms. Donowitz:** I wear out the maps by them traveling. And my daughter sent that one to me, because she said the other one was just so torn. She said, "You have to see where we are."

**Ms. Ordene:** During the summer, did you ever go to the shore when you were living here?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh, yes. I used to take the kids, too. In those days, many years ago, we used Rockafeld Park in Lakewood. I think it was renamed Ocean County Park. They have a little lake, and we would picnic there and swim and so on. And then, of course, we always used the shore. The shore is beautiful.

**Ms. Ordene:** Was that your main summer activity?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No, we would travel to Canada.

**Ms. Ordene:** Where in Canada did you go? Did you go mainly to Montreal?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes. Because my family was there and the kids were so excited about a big metropolitan city, we would just stay there. They loved the trolleys, the street cars, and they would ride them.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did they learn French because of that?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I doubt that they learned French, but they loved the city. They know the city pretty well.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did they learn any languages when they were in school in Monmouth County?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes. German and Latin.

**Ms. Ordene:** I don't think they have Latin anymore in the schools.

**Ms. Donowitz:** I don't think so, but in those days I think you either took Latin or German for medical school.

**Ms. Ordene:** Now they have French and Spanish.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh well, that's good.

**Ms. Ordene:** Have you ever been to Israel or England?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No, France.

**Ms. Ordene:** Have you gone back to France since you were staying there?

**Ms. Donowitz:** No.

**Ms. Ordene:** What was your most recent vacation?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Hawaii. We stayed in Maui. We went in a submarine and then helicopters that went into the craters.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you love it?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh, I love Hawaii. I tell you, it's paradise on earth.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you ever attend Manalapan Day?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh, yes. I went and helped the library a little bit, because they always have the exhibits there. I love the park. That's where all the kids played. We lived across the street right in the house connected to the park, and of course they always played there. So that park means a great deal to us.

**Ms. Ordene:** So are you also a member of the Friends of Battlefield Park?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes I am. It's a very historical place, where they had the Battle of Monmouth.

**Ms. Ordene:** Have you ever gone to the re-enactment of the Battle?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Oh yes, I always do. It's really fun, and of course the kids always played in the park, so it means so much. I still go walking there. And when the kids come here, they jog there. That park is really a part of us.

**Ms. Ordene:** Would you like to comment on the political process, or how it's changed? Have you been involved in the local government at all?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I'm not involved in it, but I think in Monmouth County they have done a great job. I really like what the Freeholders are doing. They're very supportive, and I think they're doing a great job. Monmouth County is doing well and is prosperous and has some good people.

**Ms. Ordene:** They've renovated that old Inn that's near the hospital, and also there's another historic house that they're moving that's right across the street from the hospital; are you familiar with either of these houses?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I'm familiar in that it belongs to Bernard D. Hochberg. He went to school with my eldest son Mark. I understand they're going to make it the historical shopping area. I don't know, though. The owner is a very good businessman. He wants to make something interesting of it, so I'm looking forward to it.

**Ms. Ordene:** You were still living in your house when they were moving it; you were actually inside your house?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, we never got out of it. And, you know, we left all the glasses in it.

**Ms. Ordene:** Nothing broke?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Nothing. They did a very good job.

**Ms. Ordene:** That must have been funny, just sitting in your house while it's moving.

**Ms. Donowitz:** However, I was glad the kids were all out. They were all in college. So that was good.

**Ms. Ordene:** You said that your grandson went to the University of Wisconsin. Where did your children go?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Both of my sons went to Brandeis. My daughter went to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She went to George Washington Medical School. My eldest son went to Johns Hopkins Medical School, and my younger one went to Pennsylvania Medical School.

**Ms. Ordene:** They're all pretty smart kids. They went to some pretty good schools. I hear that your daughter has an airplane.

**Ms. Donowitz:** Yes, she does. She's got a long distance flying license, and her husband does too.

**Ms. Ordene:** Okay, I want to ask you, how do ordinary citizens affect change in this area?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, I think if you decide what you would like to have done in the county, you go to the Freeholder meetings and sometimes there is a special day on which you can speak out and can tell them what you would like to have done. For example, we wanted to have the library built, and we went practically every week to the meetings, and they were so tired of seeing us. I think they built the library just to get rid of us, because we were just sort of annoying them. But we

would not go away, and now I'm sure they're very happy that they built it, because it's just the greatest thing in this county. It's just wonderful.

**Ms. Ordene:** Did you take part in the library once it was built?

**Ms. Donowitz:** I don't work for the library, I just belong to The Friends of Monmouth County Library Association, and help the library in whatever they would like us to help them with. We don't run the library. We have nothing to do with the library except helping them. We don't work for the library. It's very important to know that. We're just there to help them and get things that they can not get from the county budget.

**Ms. Ordene:** Have you ever met anyone famous, maybe a political figure, or somebody that's in Hollywood, or somebody you know in the music industry, maybe Bruce Springsteen or someone like that?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, actually when Itzhak Perlman, the violinist, was very young, around thirteen, he played in Lakewood High School, and I did meet him.

**Ms. Ordene:** Wow. Did you speak to him?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, briefly, and I'm sure he would not remember me. But I do remember him, because he was so good. Of course he was a little boy playing so beautifully under such difficulties. I was very impressed by him.

**Ms. Ordene:** Was he famous at that point?

**Ms. Donowitz:** Well, he wasn't as famous as he is now. He just was beginning his career.

**Ms. Ordene:** I just wanted to thank you for letting me interview you today.

**Ms. Donowitz:** You asked many intelligent questions. Thank you for including me.



**Frances Donowitz and Bart Walter at the dedication of a statue now located at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters**