

Excerpt from Oral History Interview with Marianne Barbanel

Marianne Barbanel was interviewed by Lillian Levy in 1979 as part of the Jewish Family Service Oral History Project. Marianne was born in Berlin, Germany in 1927. Her family left Germany as anti-Semitism rose in Europe before World War II. They went to Holland, then Cuba, and eventually Los Angeles. In this clip she discusses language challenges as an immigrant attending high school, and her childhood awareness of local Jewish aid agencies.

Transcript:

LL: Did you ever have any feeling that you, uh, your family were ever treated as immigrants at school? Did you have that feeling when you went to high school that you didn't make friends? Had it anything to do with you being an immigrant?

MB: Um, I'm not really sure. I have to say maybe somewhat, it wasn't so much an immigrant. It's just you don't have patience with people who can't speak your language. So, it, there's a difference, you know. I never felt, you can't talk fast. It was very uncomfortable.

LL: Weren't people interested in your background?

MB: Yes. But once they got that background that was it, you know, Exhibit A, and that's what's left.

LL: Were you aware when you first arrived here, of any agencies, Jewish agency, that did help immigrants? Did your family ever talk of that?

MB: I must say that my parents may have. I'm not sure. You know, my family, and so many people of that particular environment, and not others necessarily, are very proud and they'd rather have a lot less than get it for free. And, so, I really wasn't very much aware. I never belonged to an organization because I went to work so fast and um, I'm really not sure.