

Interviewed: Vivian Rakoff

Oral History Clip Title: Montreal Was Hostile

Theme: Arriving in Canada

Interviewer: Naomi Raichyk

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(Vivian)

I'd been in Paris a lot of times [laughs] and I recognized—We looked forward to a city, truly looked forward to a city, which [sic] where it would be English and French. And I'd done some French at university and I really thought of it being a sort of new adventure. And I discovered it wasn't. There was an English-speaking and a French city. And we had minimal contact with the French city. And not intended, I'm certain, but we arrived at the end of May...June...July...and all I know is the job—I arrived to a job at the hospital as a resident in training in psychiatry. I'd been accepted by the McGill program and was at the Jewish General Hospital. And we were, I suppose, a little disappointed that not a single staff person at the Jewish General Hospital said, "What are you doing for the High Holidays?" Nobody. So Gina made High Holidays for a whole bunch of *schleppers* around who also had nowhere to go. And Montreal was hostile. The feeling between the groups was a repetition of what I had known between the Afrikaners and the Brits in South Africa. And we made friends, you know, among our student cohort. And made good friends, but again knew this was not for us. And Montreal—the struggle of Montreal was not for an immigrant Jewish boy from South Africa. It had its own history and for that I hadn't left South Africa. And by then I had completed my training in psychiatry at McGill and I was offered a job in Toronto.

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