

BAY AREA HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW WITH RUTH ~~WILDORFF~~ Wildorff
6/06/01

INTERVIEWERS: PETER RYAN and ANNE GRENN SALDINGER
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- Q: TODAY IS JUNE 6TH 2001. WE ARE INTERVIEWING RUTH ~~WILDORFF~~ Wildorff. MY NAME IS PETER RYAN, INTERVIEWER, AND ANNE GRENN SALDINGER IS DOING THE VIDEO TAPING, AS WELL AS THE INTERVIEW. COULD I BEGIN BY ASKING YOU WHERE AND WHEN YOU WERE BORN?
- A: I was born in Meiern, Germany. It's a small town close to the French border.
- Q: THE FRENCH BORDER?
- A: French border. Near Trier - it's where the Mosel and the Rhine meet. It's a wine country. It's a beautiful little town. And I was born March 28th, 1927.
- Q: AND HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE IN YOUR FAMILY?
- A: There were just the three of us. My father, mother and myself.
- Q: COULD YOU GIVE ME THEIR NAMES?
- A: My mother's name is Betty Rosenthal and my father's name was Arthur Isaac.
- Q: AND WHAT DID HE DO?
- A: We had a store.
- Q: WHAT KIND?
- A: We had a dry goods store. We sold also men's shoes.
- Q: DID YOUR MOTHER WORK IN THE STORE TOO?
- A: Absolutely.
- Q: UH-HUH. AND WHAT KIND OF LIVING ARRANGEMENT DID YOU HAVE?

- A: We had our - we lived above the store.
- Q: ABOVE THE STORE?
- A: Uh-huh. The store was in the, on the ground floor, and we had three floors above the store. The house was pretty narrow. Just the width of the store, and then, upstairs, were the kitchen and then, one stair up, were the living room and some stairs up were the bedrooms.
- Q: SO YOU HAD A GREAT HEIGHT TO GET UP THERE, HEY?
- A: Yes, we had to walk all the way up.
- Q: DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG YOUR PARENTS HAD BEEN IN THAT PART OF GERMANY, OR WHERE THEY CAME FROM?
- A: Um, my mother was born in Meiern, Germany, where I was born. My mother was the last one of nine children to get married. All the other children had left the town, and my grandmother was tired of running the store. So, she decided that my father could buy it from her. And this is what he did. He bought the store from her and he and my mother ran the store together. They got married in 1925. And, I was born in '27.
- Q: DO YOU KNOW HOW THEY MET?
- A: The usual way, in Germany, you get introduced by a matchmaker, one way or the other.
- Q: YOUR GRANDMOTHER HAD HAD THE STORE FOR HOW LONG - DO YOU KNOW?
- A: As far as I know, the store was in existence already with her family, her father, in Germany. My grandmother's maiden name was Loeb. L-O-E-B. And, they lived in Meiern for whatever length of time, I don't know. The records show that they lived there, probably, since the early 1600's.
- Q: HOW ABOUT YOUR FATHER? HOW FAR BACK CAN YOU GO WITH HIS FAMILY?
- A: I can go back to 1260.
- Q: IN GERMANY?

A: In Germany.

Q: WHAT PART OF GERMANY?

A: In the lower Rhine portion of Germany, near the Dutch border, between [Clever?], [Kalkars?], a very small town, [Kalkar?], near [Clever?]. All of my family lived near [Agern, Kalkar, Clever, Buchhold?] - in those areas.

Q: DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR EARLY SCHOOLING?

A: I certainly do. We - I went to a Jewish school in Meiern.

Q: WAS IT BIG ENOUGH? THE

A: No, it wasn't.

Q: WAS IT A TOWN, OR WAS IT A CITY?

A: It was a city.

Q: A CITY -DO YOU KNOW THE POPULATION, APPROXIMATELY?

A: I don't know, but I have a book on it, and I probably could look it up. I was only in that Jewish school for a year.

Q: FOR A YEAR?

A: For one year.

Q: AT AGE 5?

A: Age five.

Q: AND WAS IT LIKE A PRE-SCHOOL, OR A KINDERGARTEN?

A: No, it was a regular Jewish school. It was not a haydah. Sorry. [drinks water]

Q: AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTER ONE YEAR THAT YOU STOPPED GOING THERE?

A: Well, what happened was that - 1933, they started boycotting our store. The SS, ah, the SA which are the yellow shirts started

boycotting our store. They were standing in front of the store, and we couldn't get any customers. Eventually, my father decided that this was no situation to be in, and he wanted to sell the store. But, nobody wanted to buy it. And after about - this was before 1933 already, in 1932, they started boycotting. And he held on as long as he could, by traveling outside of the little town, to his various customers. Mostly by bicycle, and delivering goods there, to them. But they became - these people, became scared of the Nazi's already, at that time, and nobody wanted to come into the store and buy.

Q: DO YOU THINK THAT WAS TYPICAL THAT THEY STARTED EARLIER IN THE PROVINCES, THAN THE BIG CITIES?

A: Yes, in the smaller towns, there were certain selective towns, in Germany, where they had a much larger following.

Q: AND MEIERN WAS ONE?

A: Meiern was one of them. And my grandfather's store in Kalkar, he was getting on in years, he was close to eighty. When his partner, in 1933 they started to boycott the store also. Except, they were a little more violent in Kalkar, and his partner was murdered by the Nazi's. That's when my father decided to give up the store in Meiern, and move the family to Kalkar, to be with his parents and take care of his own parents.

Q: HOW FAR AWAY WAS THAT?

A: About maybe, a hundred miles, at the most, even less than that.

Q: WAS THAT A BIGGER PLACE THAT YOU WERE MOVING TO?

A: Much smaller.

Q: MUCH SMALLER.

A: Two thousand, five hundred inhabitants. One of the redeeming factors in Kalkar was that there was a Mayor in Kalkar, who was very

strong, and he was not anti-Nazi, because you couldn't be, but he was much more....

Q: EVEN HANDED.

A: Even handed. And he was the one that decided not to give the Nazi's the full reign. They did have rallies on the market square. But they didn't give them full reign.

Q: YOU REMEMBER THOSE RALLIES?

A: No. I only remember the good parts.

Q: OKAY, SO YOU WENT TO THE FIRST SCHOOL FOR ONE YEAR AND THEN YOU MOVED TO KALKAR?

A: Moved to Kalkar.

Q: AND YOU WENT TO SCHOOL THERE?

A: Yes, I went to school there. I went to a Protestant School. The only school for the children in Kalkar. There was the Catholic School and the Protestant School. And I didn't stay there long, because they had instituted a law that children could not be educated but in a Jewish school. So I went, I think I was about eight, maybe, eight years old, when, I had to travel by train, to Clever, which was about ten miles, maybe fifteen miles away. And there was a Jewish school attached to the Synagogue in Clever, which was...

Q: WERE YOU TRAVELING BY YOURSELF?

A: Yes. On the train.

Q: EIGHT YEARS OLD?

A: Yes. Because there were four or five other children that traveled with us.

Q: I SEE.

A: We traveled together.

Q: WAS THAT LIKE AN ADVENTURE?

A: It was, yes, it was. My mother took me to the train station or walked me to the train

station, with the other children. There were about, maybe, sometimes four or five of us.

Q: DID YOU UNDERSTAND WHY YOU HAD TO GO TO THAT SCHOOL AND NOT TO THE OTHER ONE?

A: Oh, absolutely.

Q: YOU DID.

A: Oh, absolutely.

Q: HOW? HOW DID YOU UNDERSTAND?

A: Because there were - I was called 'dirty Jew' all the time.

Q: IN TOWN?

A: In town, no, mostly in...

Q: IN SCHOOL.

A: No, in the school that I was before.

Q: THE PROTESTANT SCHOOL?

A: The Protestant School.

Q: THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT THAT HAD HAPPENED FOR YOU?

A: No. no.

Q: NO?

A: No, in Meiern also. I was very much aware of it. That this was a time that was, that when you are Jewish, you just had to be very careful.

Q: WAS YOUR FAMILY RELIGIOUS?

A: Um, yes. Not orthodox. Not the Eastern Orthodox. But they kept every holiday. We kept a Shabbat. We had a - our stores were never open on Shabbat, except for certain times, they were open on Shabbat afternoons, when the non-Jewish employees could take care of it. But, we did keep our holidays, and I learnt all about our religion

Q: HOW MANY PEOPLE WORKED IN THE STORE, WOULD YOU SAY?

A: Besides my father, my grandfather and my mother, and two other people - one Jewish, one not Jewish.

Q: DID THEY STAY FOR A LONG TIME?

A: Yes. We had employees that were trained by my grandfather and my father, before he got married, that remembered us. There's another story attached to that one.

Q: LET'S MAKE SURE WE REMEMBER THAT ONE.

A: Yes, I cannot forget that.

Q: OKAY. NOW, WERE THERE MANY OTHER JEWISH PEOPLE, FIRST, IN MEIERN, AND THEN IN...

A: In Meiern, I don't know the exact amount, but I do have a book on it - I know exactly how many people were there. What happened in Meiern is that there were many families that perished. And, I have all of their names from Meiern, that perished. And, one of the people in Meriern, is, was the father of my girlfriend here in San - actually she lives in Redwood City. Margaret Canner, her father and I were born in the same town. So the relationship - it's a small world, yeah.

Q: THEY DIDN'T GET OUT?

A: They got out - yes.

Q: THEY DID GET OUT?

A: They did get out - yes. They did get out, but her cousin got killed. I shouldn't digress from...

Q: NO PROBLEM.

A: You can edit.

Q: SO HOW WAS IT TO GO TO THAT SCHOOL, EACH DAY ON THE TRAIN?

- A: Each, it was always an adventure. You never knew if there were Nazi boys on the train that would start trouble and...
- Q: DID THAT HAPPEN MUCH?
- A: Often.
- Q: WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE?
- A: Yes. They would hit you and call you names and push you into a corner and do all kinds of nasty things - sometimes, they would take a book that you had worked on quite hard and - or papers or... and throw them out of the train when - you know, etc. etc. These kind of vandals like, they were just being very nasty. And if these things happened, my father would take us all by car to the school, for a little while, until that subsided and then, we would take the train again.
- Q: DID YOUR PARENTS TALK MUCH ABOUT THIS TO YOU AT HOME?
- A: Well, there was always a discussion going on.
- Q: ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING?
- A: About what as happening - yes.
- Q: WHEN YOU HAD TROUBLES ON THE TRAIN, WOULD YOU TELL YOUR PARENTS ABOUT IT?
- A: Oh, absolutely. Well, they could see it, because I was black and blue sometimes. Because, I didn't take any nonsense from those people - I would fight back. Which, was of course, wrong, but I did it anyway.
- Q: IT WAS PROBABLY GOOD FOR THE SOUL.
- A: It was good for me, because I felt that I wanted to have nothing to do with that.
- Q: YOU WEREN'T GONNA LET YOURSELF BE INTIMIDATED?
- A: No. never.
- Q: SO HOW LONG DID YOU GO TO THAT SCHOOL?

- A: Until they burnt the synagogue - 1938.
- Q: WAS THERE A SYNAGOGUE IN MEIERN?
- A: In Meiern, there was a synagogue. They burnt that too.
- Q: AND THEN, IN KALKAR?
- A: Kalkar we had a synagogue which burned, and I saw it burning.
- Q: YOU SAW IT BURNING?
- A: Uh-huh. From our bedroom window.
- Q: WAS THAT [CHRISTANAH?]
- A: [Christanah?] yes.
- Q: DID PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS HAPPENING?
- A: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.
- Q: WAS THERE A LOT OF NOISE?
- A: Oh, yes.
- Q: DID THEY COME TO THE HOUSE?
- A: They came to the house - they picked my father and my uncle up, my grandfather and my other uncle. We all lived together in my grandparent's house, in the same house. And my uncle lived across the street, my father's brother. They picked them all up, put them all into the jailhouse in the main square. They did release my grandfather, because he was already more than eighty years old. And they released my uncle - who was retarded.
- Q: IS HE THE ONE WHO LIVED ACROSS THE STREET?
- A: No, the one - he is the one that lived with us. But they, my father's youngest brother and my father were put into jail.
- Q: AND HOW LONG WERE THEY KEPT?
- A: In there - about five days, and then they were sent to Buchenwald

Q: WERE YOU ALLOWED TO SEE HIM IN THOSE FIVE DAYS?

A: No, no. I have to go back. There is a whole long story attached to this whole thing. I have to go way back. My parents decided, in 1937, to apply for a visa to the United States. My uncle, my father's cousin, in El Paso, he has two cousins in El Paso, were pushing him to come to the United States. They kept on writing - we will provide you with an affidavit. So, my father and my mother finally decided to go and apply for the visa - with the affidavit, that my father's two cousins provided.

Q: WAS THIS EARLY IN 1937, OR LATE?

A: That was late 1937.

Q: BECAUSE THINGS WERE GETTING TOO BAD?

A: They were getting too bad. The reason we did not go earlier, when my uncle's - when my father's cousins kept on talking about it - was because my father felt responsible for his elderly parents. And they could not emigrate. They didn't want to emigrate, because they had a retarded son, whom they wanted to take care of - and nobody would have taken them. And this is why they did not decide to go any earlier than that. But we were very well aware of it, and my father was in the First World War - he got an iron cross - but he never felt that he was attached to Germany, as much as some of the Germans were. Even if my family had lived, during this part of Germany, my father's family lived this part of Germany for...

Q: SEVEN CENTURIES.

A: Yes.

Q: HE DIDN'T FEEL THAT ATTACHED?

A: He didn't feel that attached. He felt that he could have left earlier.

Q: DID HE THINK THAT HITLER WAS A PASSING PHENOMENON, OR THAT IT WOULD LAST?

- A: No, he didn't. He was, he did not think that it was a passing phenomenon. He was one of the very few - because everybody else told him this wouldn't last. But he was one of the very few that said - no, it's going to get worse.
- Q: WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS AT SCHOOL?
- A: No.
- Q: DID YOUR TEACHERS TALK ABOUT IT?
- A: No, no.
- Q: ACTED LIKE IT WASN'T HAPPENING?
- A: Yes. The teacher, there was one teacher. He was a teacher that was not very much aware of things. In fact, I think he perished. And well, let me go back to the story that really matters, is that, what happened in early 1938, they finally started processing our affidavit and we received the visa, sometime in September of 1938, so that we would be able to make arrangements to leave early in December '38, or January '39, depending on what passage we could get. We started...
- Q: FOR THE THREE OF YOU?
- A: For the three of us. Just my father, my mother and myself. My uncle, my father's youngest brother had married, in the meantime, and he had his own separate affidavit, for him and his wife - to come to the United States. What happened was that my mother needed a female operation. So, instead of having it here, she wanted to have it done in Germany where she could pay for it, because it was very expensive. We couldn't take any money with us.
- Q: SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL USE THE MONEY - HUH?
- A: Use the money up - we couldn't take any money with us. We had absolutely no money to take along. We had smuggled out some money - that was...
- Q: HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

- A: My father brought it over the border - to Holland.
- Q: WHEN HE WAS TRAVELING?
- A: While he was traveling. Yes.
- Q: AND LEFT IT IN THE SAFETY OF WHOM?
- A: In the safety of a cousin.
- Q: COUSIN - WHO LIVED IN HOLLAND?
- A: Who lived in Holland, who eventually smuggled it across the ocean, to England. And a brother-in-law, or a distant brother-in-law. Relationships are so mixed up there. And what happened was my mother died, on the 17th of October, 1938. And when...
- Q: COMPLICATIONS??
- A: No, neglect by the doctor.
- Q: REALLY?
- A: Absolute neglect by the doctor. She had an embolism, and the doctor didn't show up until the next morning, when she had died.
- Q: JEWISH DOCTOR?
- A: No. Nazi doctor.
- Q: THE REASON I'M ASKING, IS I THOUGHT THAT TIME IN GERMANY, ONLY...
- A: There were no Jewish doctors in our town.
- Q: OKAY, OKAY, SO THEY RELAXED THE LAW FOR THAT?
- A: They didn't relax the law. This was a Catholic hospital, with Catholic nuns, as nurses, and a Catholic doctor. And from what I can gather, is that he just didn't bother to come when the nurses called him. So that there was something wrong. So she died of an embolism.
- Q: DO YOU FEEL THAT THAT WAS AN ANTI-SEMITIC ACT?
- A: Yes. I always felt that it was

Q: YOU WERE ELEVEN?

A: I was eleven.

Q: THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A TERRIBLE BLOW?

A: It was such a big blow, but the worst blow was that we had to change our visa. And we found out from the American Consul in Germany, that had given us the visa, to begin with, that our visa was completely invalid. We had to start all over again, with a new affidavit.

Q: OH MY.

A: And, we could not leave.

Q: YOU WONDER WHO MAKES RULES LIKE THESE.

A: I don't know. The is why the story becomes even more complicated, because when my father, this was two weeks, three weeks, before they burnt the synagogue. And, since my grandparents were in their late, in their middle eighties, they were scared for me. My younger, my father's youngest brother had married a woman from Essen, and she had a sister, who had married a Dutchman, who had dual citizenship - a Dutch and British citizenship. So, she decided to smuggle me across the Dutch border, to stay with my mother's youngest brother, in Rotterdam.

Q: NOW THIS WAS YOUR GRANDMOTHER WHO DID THIS?

A: Oh, my grandmother decided to ask my...

Q: PARENTS, OR YOUR FATHER, HEY?

A: My father was in the concentration camp. This was on the 1st of December, 1938.

Q: SO YOUR FATHER WAS IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMP, WHEN YOUR MOTHER DIED?

A: No. He was in the concentration camp just after my mother died.

- Q: AH, I SEE. AND YOU WERE LEFT IN THE CARE OF YOUR GRANDPARENTS.
- A: I was left in the care of my grandparents.
- Q: YOUR MOTHER'S?
- A: My father's grandparents - I lived with my father's - we lived with my father's grandparents. And we, they decided that I was not safe, where I was. So they decided to ask a distant relative of ours, who had Dutch citizenship, to smuggle me across the border, to Holland, to stay with my mother's youngest brother, in Rotterdam. Actually, it is not Rotterdam, but Hilbersam, er, Hillhershbehr, near Rotterdam - a small suburb of Rotterdam. And when I came to the Dutch border, of course, we were refused entrance - by the Dutch.
- Q: WHEN DID YOU GO?
- A: On the 1st of December, 1938.
- Q: YOUR MOTHER HAD ALREADY DIED?
- A: My mother had already died.
- Q: AND YOUR FATHER WAS STILL...
- A: My father was in a concentration camp. And they refused me and another young girl, the same age, entrance, to Holland.
- Q: ON GROUNDS?
- A: On grounds that it was illegal to go into - we had no papers. When a Jewish person in Hilbersam, which was the border town, was called by I don't know whom he called - and asked me my name, and where I came from. And as it happened, he had been an apprentice in our store, in Kalkar. And being a very influential person, that he was, in the town of Hilbersam, and in the Jewish community, he was very influential, he personally called Queen Wilhemina, or the office of the Queen, and asked official permission for myself and the other girl that my relative smuggled across the border to stay in Holland - which was granted.

Q: WAS SHE RELATED TO YOU - THE OTHER GIRL?

A: No. She - which was granted - permission was granted. So...

Q: DID ALL THIS TAKE PLACE ON THE BORDER, WHILE YOU WERE WAITING?

A: On the border, while... on the train platform, while I was waiting, with my little suitcase, in my hand.

Q: DID YOU HAVE ANY ADULT WITH YOU?

A: Yes. A Dutch woman.

Q: A DUTCH PERSON.

A: Somebody who had married a Dutchman, a distant relative who had married a Dutchman.

Q: SHE WASN'T HAVING ANY TROUBLE WITH HER PAPERS?

A: No. no, no.

Q: DID YOU HAVE A FALSE IDENTITY?

A: No. No, I had my own, what you called, children's passport. 'Kinderausweis' - if you know the German expression for that. I had just - it's a piece of paper about this big [indicates about A5 size with her hands] and with my picture on it and my name.

Q: I WONDER IF IT WAS YOUR AGE THAT KEPT YOU FROM GOING IN?

A: No, they just did not let any German Jews into Holland, without proper papers.

Q: SOMEHOW YOU DIDN'T HAVE PROPER PAPERS?

A: No, I didn't have any papers. We just took a chance to go, and just take a chance that somebody would be sympathetic enough to let us in.

Q: NOW I KNOW AT THAT TIME, THEY WERE LETTING GERMAN JEWS INTO HOLLAND.

A: Yes

- Q: BUT, LIKE IF THERE WAS A COUPLE AND ONE WAS JEWISH AND THE OTHER ONE WASN'T, AND THEY CAME TOGETHER - THEY WOULD LET THE GERMAN JEW IN, THEY WOULD SEND THE OTHER ONE BACK TO GERMANY.
- A: I didn't know that. I didn't know that, but, I know that I had difficulty, because, maybe I was - because I was alone. I was a child. But...
- Q: SO THE QUEEN...
- A: Well, sort of the Queen's office. I'm sure the queen herself did not...
- Q: THE QUEEN HERSELF WOULD GIVE TO YOU THE PRIVILEGE OF GOING TO HOLLAND.
- A: Yes. So I...
- Q: YOU WENT TO YOUR SISTER'S BROTHER?
- A: To my mother's youngest brother, in Holland. In Rotterdam. And my father finally...
- Q: YOU WERE AROUND ELEVEN?
- A: I was eleven, yeah.
- Q: WAS THAT SCARY?
- A: No, not that scary, because I had my, besides my uncle and his wife and their son, my grand mother lived there - with, my mother's mother lived with them, who...
- Q: AND YOU KNEW THESE PEOPLE?
- A: Oh, yes I did. Yes, I had visited them before.
- Q: OKAY, DID YOU SPEAK DUTCH?
- A: In Kalkar, near the Dutch border, the dialect was Dutch. So I spoke enough Dutch to make myself understood, and go to school.
- Q: THAT WAS A LUCKY BREAK.
- A: So, they immediately enrolled me in the public school there. And I kept. I went to school.

- Q: THAT WAS YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOL?
- A: More or less, yes.
- Q: WHAT WAS THAT LIKE, FOR YOU?
- A: Very nice. I enjoyed it very much. We had a wonderful, wonderful people, wonderful teachers. Very sympathetic.
- Q: DID THE CHILDREN ACCEPT YOU?
- A: Right away. It was no problem at all. In fact, I made a very good friend there - right away. Somehow or another, there were never any problems in the Dutch school at all. In fact, those two years that I was in that school, were actually the best times of my schooling.
- Q: WAS THIS GOOD FRIEND JEWISH, OR NOT JEWISH?
- A: No, no Jewish.
- Q: NOT JEWISH.
- A: There were very few Jewish people living in that area. In fact, there - I don't even remember that there was a synagogue in that particular small town. And, since my mother's brother was not religious at all, we didn't go to synagogue. And I stopped my Jewish education, my Hebrew.
- Q: YOU DID? YOU STOPPED?
- A: I stopped my education in that fashion there, from then on.
- Q: WHAT DID YOU KNOW OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO YOUR FATHER?
- A: My father was released after four and a half months, out of the concentration camp, because he, and my father's youngest brother, received the transit visa to England, to wait for their visa to come through, to come to the United States. These were all done with bribes and things like that. I mean, you had to grease the officials. I mean, the money was

exchanged. I don't know the ins and outs of it; my father never talked about it because, he felt that it was a private thing. They packed up all of our goods, all of our furniture and silver and everything that we possibly could take along, they packed up in crates, to come, and be shipped to the United States. This was...

Q: THEY LET THEM DO THAT?

A: They let them do that. Oh yes, they let them do that very nicely - everything was nicely packed and nicely taken care of.

Q: I KNOW THE END OF THE STORY.

A: I'm sure you do. And they were shipped to Hamburg, to be shipped to the United States. And they sat there and they never arrived. And, of course, they have disappeared.

Q: AND WERE THERE LISTS OF WHAT WAS IN THERE?

A: Everything. Yes, my father had all the lists and everything. And...

Q: SO HE GOT OUT AROUND MARCH OR...?

A: Around March, April. I can't tell you the exact days when he came out of the camp.

Q: OUT OF BUCHENWALD.

A: Out of Buchenwald. He and my uncle, his brother. And they came back to Kalkar, packed up their goods to be shipped,

Q: THEY GAVE THESE PEOPLE A VERY SHORT TIME TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

A: They gave them very short time. And he came by way of Rotterdam, to see me - to England. But he was not allowed to take me along. A single man was not allowed to take a minor child to England, on a transit visa.

Q: ONLY A MOTHER?

A: Only parents. Only a mother, or parents. There was something not quite right with the idea that you could not take a child along. So I

was - stayed with my uncle, and I received a ticket to come to go on the ship, the VennDam, on the 11th of May, 1940.

Q: ON THE 11TH OF MAY.

A: 1940.

Q: OH MY GOD.

A: To go to meet my father in Southampton, to go to the United States.

Q: THE WAR HAD ALREADY STARTED.

A: 10th of May, yeah. 10th of May, the Germans marched into Holland and they never got out. They bound the ship and my father had to stay in London, or England, while making arrangements for another passage to the United States, which he finally made in the beginning of 1941. And I was in Holland. I could not get out. He tried to get me out, at one time, by way of Portugal, which didn't work. He tried to get me a visa for Cuba. It didn't work. He tried - he spent more money, trying to get me out of Holland, legally and illegally, and it just didn't work. One of the reasons that it didn't work was that my uncle, my mother's youngest brother, which I did not know at that time, had blocked my exit.

Q: WHY?

A: Because he was afraid that, when the Germans found out that I was not there, that I had left, he would be put into jail. I had no idea what had really transpired until I found that out later on.

Q: HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?

A: My, a cousin of mine, who also lived in Holland told me about it afterwards. That, she had found out, from her mother and other people that knew about it, which was a revelation that was so shocking that [laughs] - I cannot express the anger.

Q: I WAS GONNA ASK YOU, BEFORE YOU TOLD ME THAT, HOW YOU GOT ON WITH THAT FAMILY?

- A: Let me tell you - I did not. My uncle felt I was an intrusion on his quiet life.
- Q: DID THEY HAVE CHILDREN?
- A: Yes. Yes, they had a son.
- Q: HOW OLD?
- A: Five years younger than I am. He lives now in Italy. I got along just beautifully with the boy. We had a great time together. I loved him, I mean, he was absolutely, a wonderful, wonderful young guy. I mean, I have pictures of him and I really thought he was just wonderful. My grandmother lived there too. My mother's mother lived in the same house. And if it wasn't for her, I think I would not be here today.
- Q: SHE REALLY KEPT THINGS GOING FOR YOU?
- A: Yes, she kept me in...
- Q: HOW ABOUT THE WIFE - YOUR UNCLE'S WIFE?
- A: She was a very sweet person, but had no, nothing, to say in the house, absolutely nothing to say in the house. She was a - came from a very prominent family in Germany. If you've ever heard the department store - [Teets?] and company - well, she was one of the heirs to that fortune. That's why he married her. I can say this of my mother's youngest brother very easily, because he was not a very nice person. And he was - they were - he was the youngest of nine.
- Q: DID YOUR MOTHER LIKE HIM?
- A: I don't know. I really don't know. It never occurred to me. It's the first time you've asked me that - anybody has asked me that. I really don't know.
- Q: COURSE SHE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE - IT'S NOT LIKE SHE HAD FOUR BROTHERS OR SISTERS IN HOLLAND. SO SHE HAD TO TAKE THE ONE THAT WAS THERE.

- A: Well, there was another sister of hers in Holland, but she was the oldest, one of the older sisters. And she had a boarding house in Holland, and she could not take care of an eleven year old. Of course, I spent many a summer there with her. Many - I don't know how many, but it was as if I remember the wonderful times I had with her in the summer, helping her in the boarding house, and...
- Q: WAS THIS BEFORE YOU WENT TO HOLLAND?
- A: No, after I went to Holland. Just so I could get away from my uncle occasionally. She lived in Amsterdam. In fact, the house is still standing there. It's right across the street from the Van Gogh Museum.
- Q: NOW YOU DIDN'T KNOW THE STORY ABOUT YOUR UNCLE BLOCKING THINGS, BUT, DID YOU SENSE THAT HE FELT YOU TO BE AN INTRUSION?
- A: Oh, absolutely.
- Q: HE MADE THAT CLEAR?
- A: He made that absolutely clear. He made that very clear to me.
- Q: THAT MUST HAVE FELT BAD, HUH?
- A: It did.
- Q: HOW LONG WERE YOU ABLE TO SEE YOUR FATHER WHEN HE CAME THROUGH?
- A: About a couple of days.
- Q: WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?
- A: I begged him to take me along. He couldn't. It just was impossible. He could not. And...
- Q: HOW DID HE LOOK?
- A: Bad. Very bad, he had just left his elderly parents.
- Q: WHICH IS ONE OF THE REASONS HE STAYED ON, AND THEN, IN THE END, HAD TO LEAVE THEM ANYWAY.

- A: And, going on with the other story, that, when it happened when that they bombed Rotterdam. You know how they bombed Rotterdam, don't you? They encircled them with incendiary bombs, and I was at that time, part of a Girls Scout troupe. I had a bike and I had, my cousin had a little red wagon. One of those, I don't know, wagon like that. And our group went into the burning city to help people escape, to carry goods - as much as we could.
- Q: WITH THE WAGON?
- A: With the little wagon and my bike. Behind my bike and carrying children and all at that time.
- Q: WAS THIS AFTER THE BOMBING AND...
- A: Yeah, after the bombing, after the city was burning. We all mobilized, everybody that could mobilize went into the city to help people, at that time.
- Q: HOW DID THAT FEEL FOR YOU?
- A: I don't know; it was not a really, a thing that I can really think about, now. Because it was an automatic thing that everybody did. We did it. Our troupe was mobilized and we did it. That was all there was to it.
- Q: AND THERE WAS NO QUESTION.
- A: There was no question. You didn't even question it, that you didn't do it. You just did it.
- Q: DID YOU FEEL PROUD?
- A: No, I just felt it my duty to do. There was no, no pride involved. It was just something that we did. To help as many people as we could. We did it for two or three days.
- Q: WHAT KIND OF HELP WERE YOU GIVING? WHAT...
- A: Well, we were very young children at the time, so all we did was help them carry things out of the city. Helped them carry their children, helped them with baby buggies. Helped them

some people couldn't walk anymore, so we let them ride our bikes, and we carried things in little wagons. And we helped them as...

Q: IN WHATEVER WAY THEY NEEDED.

A: Whatever way it was needed. It was - we were children - we were not adults, we didn't have the knowledge of the poor side of whatever it was, that we could tell them, what to do and how to do it. We just did it.

Q: NOW THE GERMANS HAD NOT OCCUPIED?

A: No, not yet, not yet.

Q: THAT WAS - WHAT? MAYBE THE FOURTH DAY OF THE WAR?

A: Fifth day of the war, yes. They didn't occupy it until, I think, a couple of weeks later. And then, they didn't really occupy the area where we were. The were, we didn't see many German soldiers there.

Q: BECAUSE IT WAS SMALL?

A: It was just a small area. It was nothing, I mean, there was nothing strategic there. We did see some parachutes, but I don't know if they were the Dutch soldiers, or if they were Germans.

Q: PROBABLY GERMAN.

A: I can't tell you.

Q: THE DUTCH WOULDN'T HAVE ANY REASON TO PARACHUTE PEOPLE IN?

A: Well, who knows? They might have been shot down. That Dutch plane might have been shot down and they might have parachuted. But that's about all I remember. I don't remember much about it.

Q: THE GERMANS PARACHUTED SOLDIERS IN, DRESSED IN DUTCH UNIFORMS.

A: It could be too. That...

Q: I KNOW THEY DID THAT. SO WHEN DID IT BEGIN TO FEEL LIKE LIFE WAS CHANGING, UNDER THE OCCUPATION?

A: About three, four months later.

Q: HOW DID IT COME?

A: I really don't remember. I must have blocked it out completely, because I had so many troubles with my uncle at that time, because he realized that I was gonna be with him for the duration, and I - he was trying to find ways to get rid of me. But, he did not want me to leave the country. He wanted me to be close by, where he could produce me, if necessary, but get rid of me, one way or the other, out of his house. Because, I found out later on, the woman that had moved in, after her place was bombed in Rotterdam, happens to be his mistress.

Q: WAS HIS MISTRESS?

A: So you can see what kind of a person he was. I mean, these are things that I found out after the war, a long time after the war. I didn't even realize it, it didn't even occur to me. These things don't occur to children that age. You don't - you do not think about things like that.

Q: WERE YOU STILL GOING TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL?

A: Oh yes. I was still going to school.

Q: AND THEY DIDN'T FORBID JEWS FROM GOING TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL?

A: No, no. Those decrees didn't come until much, much later. And, I was still going to the same school. And, I don't remember exactly when, but they found a place for me to go, in another part of Holland.

Q: WHO DID?

A: My uncle.

Q: A SAFE PLACE?

A: No, it was just another part of Holland.

- Q: NORTH?
- A: North of Holland, in [Suwallen?]. In northern area of Holland, and I lived with a family that was half Jewish. The mother was not Jewish, the father was Jewish. And they had three children, and I found out later on, that they were already, at that time, connected to the resistance. I didn't realize that of course, before. They listened to the British broadcasts...
- Q: THE BBC.
- A: The BBC, in French.
- Q: IN FRENCH?
- A: In French. They spoke French, they spoke German, they spoke English. They were a highly intelligent people. He was a college professor and she was a teacher of... - and they spoke all the languages necessary.
- Q: NOW WAS THIS A CITY THAT YOU WERE LIVING IN?
- A: Yes. It's a small city.
- Q: SMALL CITY.
- A: With many Jewish families, but not - really, most of them were non-religious.
- Q: DID YOU LIKE THIS NEW FAMILY?
- A: Very much.
- Q: SO YOU WERE GLAD THAT THEY...?
- A: Oh, very much. They -
- Q: YOUR UNCLE HAD SENT YOU AWAY?
- A: Oh and how. They were so nice to me; it was just incredible. They were very, very nice. They had a love of learning; they had books all over the place. And I could do anything I wanted within, of course, within reason, I mean. But their children were older.

Q: HOW MUCH OLDER?

A: About - the younger daughter was about two years older than I was. And then...

Q: YOU WERE ABOUT TWELVE THEN?

A: At that time - yes.

Q: AND SHE WAS ABOUT THIRTEEN?

A: And she was about thirteen, yes. And the older son, he unfortunately got killed by the Germans. He was in the resistance, at that time, already.

Q: IS THAT HOW HE GOT KILLED?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: THEY CAUGHT HIM?

A: He got executed. But they were so good to me that it was incredible.

Q: WHAT MADE THEM TAKE YOU IN?

A: Compassion - plain, ordinary compassion.

Q: IT'S INTERESTING THAT YOUR UNCLE KNEW PEOPLE LIKE THAT.

A: No he didn't.

Q: HE DIDN'T?

A: No, he didn't know people like that. He, an organization - either a Jewish or refugee organization, underground organization or something like that...

Q: I SEE.

A: That had something to do with it.

Q: SO OUT OF THE DARKNESS CAME SOME LIGHT?

A: And how - but not very long. Because there was no - the decree came down that there was no - children of Jewish faith could not go to school anymore

Q: WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN?

A: I don't remember the exact dates. The dates are completely fuzzy to me, because...

Q: WAS IT 1942?

A: '42. Something like that. Yeah, '42. And my aunt in Amsterdam decided to pay for me to come to Amsterdam, and stay with the family in Amsterdam.

Q: NOW YOU HAD AN AUNT IN AMSTERDAM WHO WAS A SISTER OF YOUR MOTHER'S?

A: Yes.

Q: SHE'S JEWISH? DID SHE NOT REALIZE HOW DANGEROUS IT WAS FOR JEWS TO BE IN AMSTERDAM?

A: Not at that time.

Q: IT WASN'T THAT BAD YET?

A: It wasn't that bad yet. No, I was living with a Safardic family. And they were very, very nice people. Very nice people. And all of them got killed. They all perished in the Holocaust.

Q: WHERE HAD THEY COME FROM?

A: In Amsterdam, they lived there for centuries. Many Safardic Jews lived in Amsterdam for centuries. There was the Safardic synagogue.

Q: SO YOU REALLY HAD SOME WONDERFUL PEOPLE THAT YOU WERE WITH?

A: Very wonderful people that were...

Q: DO YOU WANT TO MENTION THEIR NAMES?

A: I can't remember their names. I have it all written down somewhere. I was looking for it very much, but I can't remember their names. It's been so long that I had it all written down. And the names completely escape me right now.

- Q: HOW DID YOU FIND OUT THAT THE SON OF THE PEOPLE YOU LIVED WITH IN THE NORTH...?
- A: After the war.
- Q: AFTER THE WAR - OKAY. YOU DIDN'T KNOW IT WHEN YOU LEFT?
- A: No.
- Q: WAS THAT HARD TO LEAVE THEM?
- A: Yes, it was hard to leave them, but, on the other hand, at the time, it was just before the Pearl Harbor bombing. We figured it might be easier for me to be in Amsterdam, to be able to get out - smuggled out of Holland, by way of Portugal, to the United States.
- Q: WHO WAS WORKING ON THAT?
- A: My father, from this end here.
- Q: WAS HE WRITING TO YOU?
- A: Yes.
- Q: AND THAT COULD CONTINUE?
- A: He already in San Francisco at the time.
- Q: HE WAS ALREADY IN SAN FRANCISCO - OKAY. SO BEFORE PEARL HARBOR, HE COULD WRITE TO YOU, BUT AFTER YOU COULDN'T GET ANY LETTERS.
- A: No, we couldn't get any letters at all. None whatsoever.
- Q: SO THEY THOUGHT SOMEHOW IT WOULD BE BETTER TO BE SITUATED IN AMSTERDAM, IF THEY WERE GONNA SMUGGLE YOU TO PORTUGAL?
- A: It would be an easier way to be able to get out of the country at the time, because there were many more roads to the underground, the resistance or the underground railroad, which was something that - what actually happened - I don't know. How these things did not come to pass - I don't know. This had nothing to - this particular instance has nothing to do with my uncle. All the other times it had. The

- Q: DID THE SAFARDIC FAMILY HAVE CHILDREN?
- A: Yes. They had three children. They all perished. Everyone.
- Q: HOW OLD WERE THEY?
- A: They were - one girl was a year younger than I was. A girl was a year older, or two. And then they had son who already was in his late teens.
- Q: DID YOU GET CLOSE TO THEM?
- A: I didn't live there long enough.
- Q: HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE?
- A: Maybe three or four months.
- Q: HOW LONG WERE YOU IN THE NORTH?
- A: About a year and a half. Times don't - the exact times I don't remember.
- Q: BUT THE YEAR AND A HALF IN THE NORTH, WAS ENOUGH TIME FOR YOU TO HAVE GOTTEN VERY CLOSE.
- A: Yes, very close to them. And I was arrested in one of the round-ups.
- Q: ON THE STREET?
- A: No, in the house. They came to the house; they arrested me, and I was brought to something called the [sauber?] in Amsterdam. You know, the place where they rounded up all the Jews. It was a theatre, and they rounded up all the Jews there, to be shipped away.
- Q: NOW WERE YOU THE ONLY ONE TAKEN FROM THE HOUSE?
- A: Yes.
- Q: DID THEY COME JUST FOR YOU?
- A: Just for me. How - I don't know. Just for me.
- Q: DID YOU - YOU MAY NOT KNOW THIS - BUT DID YOU HAVE TO REGISTER WHEN YOU WENT TO AMSTERDAM?

A: Oh yes, absolutely. I had to register. I was wearing a star. At that time I was wearing a yellow star.

Q: EVERYONE WAS?

A: Everyone was.

Q: WHEN DID THAT START - DO YOU REMEMBER?

A: I don't remember the date, but I know that I had to wear a yellow star.

Q: BEFORE PEARL HARBOR OR AFTER?

A: Probably before.

Q: BEFORE - OKAY.

A: Everybody had to register.

Q: WHEN YOU CAME TO AMSTERDAM?

A: Wherever you went, you had to register.

Q: NOW THIS IS '42, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT?

A: Something around '42, right.

Q: SO YOU WERE FIFTEEN? IS THAT RIGHT?

A: I was...

Q: FOURTEEN OR FIFTEEN.

A: I was fourteen, at that time.

Q: THAT MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIFYING, HEY?

A: Oh, it was terrifying. Until I found out that a very close relative of my father's, was the head of the Jewish organization that took care of everybody in the theatre. Somebody by the name of Kort Fitt, was his name.

Q: HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?

A: He recognized me, and I recognized him. He recognized my name and I recognized him. He was maybe in his middle and twenties

Q: HOW DID YOU KNOW HIM?

A: From the little town of Kalkar, where his parents lived. And he was living in Holland at that time, and coincidences happen all the time. And he decided that, since he knew where they were all going to be sent, he decided to get me out of there. And he contacted my aunt, who was still living in Amsterdam, and told her to get me a false passport. And I went back to this Safardic family, to live there for another couple of weeks, months or so. Then, I got diphtheria. And I was in the hospital for, I don't know how long.

Q: PUBLIC HOSPITAL?

A: Jewish hospital in Amsterdam. And when...

Q: BUT FROM THAT POINT ON, YOU HAD A DIFFERENT IDENTITY?

A: Then I came out of the hospital with a different identity.

Q: YOU WENT IN WITH ONE, AND CAME OUT WITH A DIFFERENT ONE?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: SO THE PASSPORT HAD GOTTEN TO YOU BY...

A: By my aunt. It had gotten to me while I was in the hospital. After, and all of sudden, my name was Maria Margaretha Petersen.

Q: NOW DID YOU GET A BACKGROUND?

A: Yeah, I got a background. She was a girl from one of the small towns in Holland, and I just had a false passport and I never did get caught. I got stopped many times, but never got caught, since I spoke Dutch without a - flawlessly, without an accent at all.

Q: GOOD THING YOU WERE A GOOD STUDENT, HUH?

A: They did not realize I was not Dutch. And I was not Maria - I called myself Ria Petersen.
and

Q: WAS THIS A REAL PERSON?

A: A real person, absolutely real person.

Q: AND WHEN WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN BORN?

A: 1925. They made me two years older. It didn't make any difference. I looked older. I was always big and tall, I mean, I was never dainty. I was never cute little dainty girl. Always a big girl. So it didn't make any difference and the underground got me to Amersfoort, which was a small town in Holland. And I trained...

Q: WHERE WAS THAT?

A: That's in the middle of Holland somewhere. Amersfoort. Oh, it's a small town.

Q: IS IT NEAR AMSTERDAM?

A: Little south-east of Amsterdam.

Q: CLOSER TO THE WATER?

A: No, closer to the...

Q: OH, SOUTH-EAST. OKAY, CLOSER TO GERMANY.

A: Yeah, no, no, it's all those distances are in small miles. Maybe five, ten, fifteen, twenty miles. I mean, everything in Holland is very small. You can't imagine Holland probably fits into the peninsula perfectly. I mean, it's a very small country.

Q: YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL FOR HOW LONG?

A: I think I must have been in there for about three weeks. It was, you know, touch and go.

Q: AND YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS THERE, IN THE HOSPITAL?

A: No. The only problem there was while I was in the hospital. The Germans started bombing bringing bombers over. The British and Americans started bringing bombers over and they happened to fly over Amsterdam and the

Germans shot down one of the bombers. And luck, that luck had it - it fell, slap, bang into the Carlton Hotel, in Amsterdam, which was about a mile away from the hospital. And the Carlton Hotel was one of the headquarters of the Nazi's. Okay, this was the one thing that was the highlight of my stay in the hospital - when that happened. Of course, I was scared to death when it first happened. But when I found out where it had fallen, it was retribution, I would say.

Q: DID YOUR AUNT COME TO VISIT YOU IN THE HOSPITAL?

A: No, she sent the false passports, by way of emissary - I have no idea who. How I got it - it's a - at the time, quite vague.

Q: DID YOU MEMORIZE WHAT YOU HAD TO KNOW?

A: Oh, ja.

Q: QUICKLY.

A: It was second nature at the time. Everything you had to do was second nature. And then, I went to Amersfoort and I ended up with a family that ran a bar, or a - one of those public houses where they serve mostly beer.

Q: WHO MADE THAT CONNECTION FOR YOU? DO YOU KNOW?

A: The underground - the resistance. And they decided since, I spoke German, fluently, Dutch, fluently - I spoke enough French to make myself little bit understood, English - I learned enough to make myself understood. They decided with my language skills that I could be trained to be a - take American and British flyers that had been shot down, and not captured by the Germans, had parachuted into Holland, from point A to point B.

Q: THAT YOU WOULD TRANSPORT THEM?

A: Transport, help transport them. And..

Q: HOW DID THAT SUIT YOU?

- A: Suited me just fine. Oh, I mean, anything I could do was just fine with me. I mean, I was no idea of danger, or anything like that. I didn't think I was in any danger.
- Q: TOO YOUNG TO BE SCARED?
- A: I was too stupid to be scared. That's the thing. So...
- Q: YOU'RE TRAVELING - YOU HAVE A FALSE PASSPORT. WHAT DO THEY HAVE?
- A: Nothing.
- Q: OH BOY, IF YOU GET STOPPED...
- A: They were just in civilian clothes, and didn't speak Dutch or German. It we got stopped - ###. [makes sound with lips]
- Q: OH YEAH. NOW DID YOU SIT TOGETHER?
- A: No, we traveled together at night. What happened was actually, I only did two trips.
- Q: FROM WHERE TO WHERE?
- A: I took one trip from Amersfoort to - close to the Belgium border, where somebody else took over. And the other trip was...
- Q: BY TRAIN?
- A: No, no, by foot, bicycle.
- Q: BY BICYCLE, OKAY.
- A: By bicycle, at night. By foot or bicycle, depending upon...
- Q: WAS THERE A CURFEW AT THAT TIME?
- A: No. At that time there was no curfew, yet. And I was supposed to say we were going to find work in farms. We were dressed like farmhands, whatever.
- Q: THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO SAY - THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO SAY NOTHING?

- A: Nothing. They were supposed to keep their mouths shut. Well, it wasn't well organized at that time, yet. It was not quite the way it was later on, when they organized the things better. But we improvised; I mean, it was all improvising.
- Q: THAT WAS HIGHLY DANGEROUS.
- A: Oh, it was very dangerous, but I didn't realize it was dangerous. I had no idea it was dangerous. There was no danger involved for me. I mean, it was just something you did.
- Q: COULD YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THEM?
- A: Oh, ja. But the thing is this, I only did - and the second one I only did from Amersfoort to a small town, maybe, ten miles away. And then, somebody else took over, who was older and probably, had false identity papers for them and so on and so forth. I didn't do too many, because unfortunately, there weren't many that weren't killed by the Germans, or captured, or ... at that time. And thank goodness, there weren't that many that were shot down over Holland - or, were shot down. At that time... but my...
- Q: NOW, WHO ARRANGED FOR YOU TO DO THIS? HOW WAS THIS PRESENTED TO YOU?
- A: No idea.
- Q: WHO TOLD YOU - WHO ASKED YOU TO DO IT?
- A: No idea, we just, somebody came by - took me somewhere and trained me and then, in the woods somewhere, in an open field, told me how to do this and how to do that. There was no organization, and you didn't ask questions. You didn't ask who they were.
- Q: HOW DID THEY KNOW WHETHER YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO DO IT?
- A: They didn't. They asked me.
- Q: THEY ASKED YOU.

A: They didn't, or they told me. They didn't ask me - they told me. There was no way of saying..

Q: WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO THIS?

A: Would you like to do this, or I mean, it's going to be dangerous. Nobody explained anything to me.

Q: BUT THAT'S INTERESTING, BECAUSE THERE'S AN ASSUMPTION THERE THEN, ISN'T THERE. THAT YOU'RE GONNA DO IT.

A: Yes.

Q: SOMEONE KNEW YOU ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT.

A: I don't think so. It was an assumption that everybody who was, had a false passport, had to do something.

Q: 'CAUSE YOU WERE BEING HELPED BY THE RESISTANCE.

A: We were - I was being helped. You did something in return.

Q: OKAY.

A: It never occurred to me to find out what it was.

Q: WELL, THERE WAS ANOTHER ASSUMPTION ALSO, WHICH WAS THAT YOU WERE JEWISH AND YOU WOULD NOT BE A TRAITOR.

A: They didn't know. No.

Q: NO?

A: No. Let me tell you how I got caught by one of our own people. She got caught and she betrayed all of us, including me, and she was Jewish - to save her own hide. She betrayed the whole cell.

Q: NOW THE PEOPLE THAT YOU WERE STAYING WITH - DID THEY KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?

A: No.

Q: THEY DIDN'T?

- A: There were two people living, which was - besides being a bar, also a boarding house. And there were two people there that were in the resistance. But the people who owned the place, hired me as a caretaker of their little boy. And they knew I was not, that I was not who I was. They knew, but they didn't want to know anything. They had their business to take care of.
- Q: THE LESS YOU KNEW, THE BETTER ??
- A: You didn't know anything about anybody. You were not, you were not aware of who was what. I found out that two of the people who lived in that place were also in the resistance, because they were talking to each other about something, and I realized it. I never said anything, because you didn't.
- Q: WERE THEY BEING INDISCREET?
- A: No. No, they weren't being indiscreet. They just said a few things and I realized what they were talking about. And I, unless you were aware of it, they were not talking about anything but something very innocuous. I can't explain it, it's... it's - I cannot explain how those things happen, because they just happened, because when you are in a situation, and you just do it.
- Q: BUT THERE WAS A LOT OF INNUENDO GOING ON, WASN'T THERE?
- A: Oh, yes.
- Q: SO YOU HAD TO DO A LOT OF CONSTRUCTING IN YOUR OWN MIND, BECAUSE PEOPLE DIDN'T WANT TO PUT THINGS INTO WORDS.
- A: Oh, yeah. Oh, no, no, you didn't put anything out there.
- Q: SO EVEN IF THERE WERE PEOPLE IN THE RESISTANCE RIGHT THERE, YOU DIDN'T TALK TO THEM AND HAVE CONTACT?
- A: No. No, you didn't talk to them in that contact, because you got contacted by somebody

else; somebody else - way - somebody that didn't even exist. I mean, they had a name, but they weren't even there.

Q: AND THE PEOPLE THAT WERE IN THE RESISTANCE, THEY WERE BOTH JEWS AND NON-JEWS.

A: No, they were not Jewish.

Q: NONE OF THEM WERE JEWISH?

A: Except this one person, as far as I know. I didn't get in contact with them, after the war, because I was on my way to the United States, and I wanted to get out of Holland as soon as I possibly could.

Q: DID YOU HAVE ANY INCIDENTS AT ALL ON THOSE TWO JOURNEYS THAT YOU MADE? NO CLOSE CALLS?

A: No, none.

Q: NO INSPECTIONS?

A: Absolutely nothing. We took routes that had been deemed safe. They skirted all the important installations. There were no incidents, they were as easy as could be.

Q: TELL ME HOW YOU GOT PICKED UP?

A: The Dutch Gestapo, I mean, the Dutch picked me up.

Q: AT THE PLACE THAT YOU WERE LIVING?

A: At the place where I was living. And they knew that I was not, who I was.

Q: AND THAT'S CAUSE THAT OTHER GIRL BETRAYED YOU? YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT AT THE TIME, DID YOU?

A: No, I didn't know that at the time. I found that out when they put me into jail. They put me into a jail in Amsterdam. And when I realized that they knew that I was Jewish, I immediately turned things around. I said: "You can't do anything to me. I am a minor child of an American citizen." I had a letter hidden from my father, from the United States.

Q: WAS HE A CITIZEN ALREADY?

A: No.

Q: NO?

A: No, he had been there. I told a big lie.

Q: BUT THAT WAS VERY SMART. IT WAS...

A: I don't know how that happened, but I said:
"I'm a minor child of an American citizen, you
can't do anything to me."

Q: DID THAT JUST COME OUT OF YOUR HEAD? YOU'D
NEVER THOUGHT THAT BEFORE?

A: uh-uh. It just came - bing! - out of me. It
just was one of those instances. I have no
idea how that happened.

Q: AN INSPIRATION.

A: And so they got a little easier, they got a
little bit easy on me. They sent me to
Westerbork.

Q: NOW LET ME JUST FOLLOW UP ON THAT A MINUTE.
GERMANY WAS IN A STATE OF WAR WITH AMERICA AT
THAT TIME. THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO HONOR...

A: Oh, yes they did. The international
convention. They did - I mean, they were -
Germans have a different mindset. Germany,
Germans do everything by the book. They kept
lists of everybody. They kept information on
everybody. They did everything by the book.
Nothing was done, not by the book.

Q: OKAY, BUT WHEN THEY SENT YOU TO WESTERBORK

A: Westerbork in Holland.

Q: NO, I KNOW - SO AT THAT TIME THEY SAID: "WELL,
LET'S FORGET THIS AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP THING -
LET'S JUST TREAT HER AS A JEW."

A: Yes.

Q: AND THEN WE CAN DO WHAT WE WANT TO HER.

A: Not really.

Q: NO?

A: No, I kept on insisting. I kept on showing them my father's letter. "I am a minor child of an American citizen." So, what they did, is, instead of sending me to Auschwitz, or Birkenau, or any of the extermination camps. They sent me to the Zonderlaager, in Bergen-Belsen, which was in a separate camp for Jews that had either dual citizenship, like British citizenship, like my father's sister-in-law, sister had, etc and my uncle.. As it happened, my lovely uncle from Rotterdam, ended up in the same camp with me, because he had money in Switzerland and he bought his way out.

Q: OUT OF THAT CAMP?

A: Out of the...

Q: OUT OF THE DEPORTATION.

A: Out of the deportation.

Q: OKAY, SO THERE WERE EXCEPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAD CONNECTIONS THAT WOULD INVOKE INTERNATIONAL LAW?

A: Yes.

Q: CAUSE THEY CERTAINLY DIDN'T DEAL THAT WAY WITH GERMAN CITIZENS, OR DUTCH CITIZENS, WHO WERE JEWISH OR UNDERGROUND.

A: No. One thing that the Germans did - they were afraid of international repercussions. I don't know why, because they separated. Another thing that the Germans did - they set one group of Jews against another group of Jews.

Q: HOW DO YOU MEAN?

A: I mean, we had, we had in the camp, we had Jewish karpas who were just as bad as the Polish karpas. You know, camp police. You know what a karpas is? They were as hellish as the Polish karpas we had.

Q: NOW THIS WAS A SEGREGATED PART OF BERGEN-BELSEN. HOW MANY...
MAYBE WE GO BACK FOR A MOMENT TO WESTERBORK.

A: Well, Westerbork I don't remember too much about because...

Q: HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE?

A: A few months. A couple of months, maybe.

Q: WHAT YEAR ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

A: We're talking about '43.

Q: SUMMER?

A: End of '43.

Q: END OF '43?

A: I went to Bergen-Belsen sometime in January '44.

Q: AND IN WESTERBORK, FROM WHAT I KNOW, SOME FAMILIES WERE ABLE TO STAY TOGETHER. WHERE WERE YOU AS A...?

A: Alone. I was with a couple of girlfriends that happened to be there at that time.

Q: GIRLS YOU HAD KNOWN FROM BEFORE?

A: From Kalkar.

Q: HOW DID YOU FIND OUT IN PRISON ABOUT THE INFORMANT?

A: Not in prison. I found out after the war.

Q: OH, AFTER THE WAR. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW YOU HAD BEEN CAUGHT? NO.

A: No, I had no idea. I had no inkling. I found out - I don't know how I found out after the war. Somehow or another, I found out. Somewhere I found out and I was gonna go after her.

Q: SHE SURVIVED?

- A: She survived. I was gonna go after her and I was going to wring her neck, and literally, I mean, literally, I mean, they talked me out of it. But that's...
- Q: WHO'S THEY?
- A: Family I lived with. I - that's another story. That's another whole chapter in itself. And in the concentration camp I worked in the kitchen.
- Q: NOW THIS WAS ONCE YOU WERE AT BERGEN-BELSEN?
- A: At Bergen-Belsen. I worked in the kitchen, which helped me survive. And then, for maybe, a two-month period, they marched us into the SS kitchen to help, where the... Not the houses, where the SS lived, but they had some barracks where the SS, where some of the guards without families - and they had a kitchen there.
- Q: AND YOU WORKED THERE?
- A: I worked there and I stole them blind. I just carried with me as much as I possibly could fit into... double, I had overalls and pants underneath, and the pants underneath were tied up and I stuffed sausages, or whatever I could find there, so I could help my uncle and my cousin and so on, with food, as much as possible.
- Q: YOUR LOUSY UNCLE?
- A: My lousy uncle.
- Q: YOU HELPED HIM - YEAH. [shrugs shoulders]
- A: Why not? I mean, we were all in the same boat. We couldn't possibly. I wanted my cousin to survive. I wanted my aunt to survive.
- Q: AND YOU DIDN'T KNOW AT THAT TIME THAT HE HAD BLOCKED YOU.
- A: No. I had no idea.
- Q: DID YOU HAPPEN TO RUN INTO EDDIE HILBERSAND IN WESTERBORK?
- A: Who?

- A: Special camp, special camp. Except they starved us to death. I mean, they - the food we had was mostly potato peels and, what are they called - turnips, and piece of maybe, a piece of bread.
- Q: THEY GAVE YOU WORK IN THE CAMP - DID THEY GIVE YOUR UNCLE WORK?
- A: Uh-uh. [shakes head]
- Q: NO?
- A: No, I worked in the kitchen because I was young and strong. You needed people like me, my age, strong people, because you had to carry those big buckets, with food. And you couldn't carry them alone. You had to carry them together with somebody else - nobody could carry those things, I mean, they were swill. But they were heavy. You had to carry those. And you had to scrub those, and you had to do whatever.
- Q: YOU WENT THERE THE BEGINNING OF JANUARY? '44? DID YOU, WHEN YOU WERE IN HOLLAND, DID YOU KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE WAR?
- A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, we knew what was happening. But we heard that - in Holland we knew what was going on. But, in the camp, we heard things, maybe, a week or a month later. We did not hear about the invasion in June, until much later. We -
- Q: BUT THEY PROVED RELIABLE?
- A: Oh, absolutely. There was a way, I think, some of our camp elders got a hold of newspapers, one way or the other, and interpreted it. There were no radios to be had, of course. Nothing that we could - information that we could get by word of mouth.
- Q: NOW WERE ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE SPECIAL CAMP JEWS, OR WERE THEY JUST SPECIAL BECAUSE THEY HAD CONNECTIONS TO SOME OTHER COUNTRY?
- A: Jews. They were all Jews.
- Q: THEY WERE ALL JEWS.

- A: They were all Jews - there were Greek, they were Dutch, Greeks, Greek Jews from Salonika and Dutch, Begium and Danish.
- Q: NOW ALL THE GREEKS FROM SALONIKA WERE SENT TO AUSCHWITZ AND DONE IN - YOU KNOW? HOW DID THESE PEOPLE GET THERE?
- A: I don't know. There were a group of Jews from Salonika there.
- Q: IT JUST BLOWS MY MIND.
- A: I mean, they - yes, I don't know why they were there and how they were there. But they were there.
- Q: THEY GET SPECIAL TREATMENT?
- A: "Special treatment." Special treatment.
- Q: DID YOU MINGLE WITH THE PEOPLE IN THE BIG CAMPS?
- A: Oh yes, oh yeah. No, not the big camp. We didn't even know that existed. We only saw... I didn't know that it was a crematorium, where they burnt the bodies - the dead bodies - which was not very far from there. I didn't realize that. We didn't discuss that. That was a taboo.
- Q: YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THOUGHTS ABOUT IT?
- A: No.
- Q: IN YOUR MIND?
- A: No, I - we didn't know. We didn't know. I'm sure that people knew about it, but I didn't.
- Q: BUT, DID YOU KNOW THAT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE WAS ANOTHER CAMP?
- A: We thought they - we saw the people coming from other areas. But we didn't - I didn't realize they were mostly Jews from Auschwitz and from other camps - that had been brought to Bergen-Belsen. It, we were really, by that time we were so focused on just surviving - just getting enough food to survive. We even - I

even brought into the camp, from the SS kitchen, onions to combat scurvy, because we had scurvy. I mean, I still have scars from some of the diseases. We had typhoid fever, we had typhus, we had lice - we were filled with lice, we had bedbugs. My whole legs are scarred from that. I had holes from - holes like, two holes like this in one leg that was so deep, that you could see the bone. And we...

Q: THAT WAS FROM BEDBUGS?

A: Bedbug bites that got infected. There was no medication, no nothing. People died from things like that.

Q: DID YOU GET SICK THERE?

A: Yes, I got sick.

Q: TYPHUS?

A: Typhus I came out of the camp with. I came down with typhoid, typhus after the war. And we, I mean, we had lice. We were, vermin was everywhere. You couldn't - you had only cold water to wash yourself with. You used sand, or dirt to brush your teeth with.

Q: BUT YOU HAD SOAP?

A: I had enough soap for maybe, half, maybe three quarters of a year. I very much, I mean, I conserved the soap as much as I could.

Q: DID YOU - WHAT WAS THE LIVING ARRANGEMENT?

A: Three to tiered bed. Yeah. On those bunks, the three bunks.

Q: OKAY, SO IT WASN'T SPECIAL THAT WAY?

A: No. Nothing was special. We had no heat either. We had...

Q: BUT IT WAS WOODEN BARRACKS?

A: Wooden barracks. Yes.

Q: WHICH WAS BETTER THAN WAS IN THE CAMPS OF
REFUGEE-REFUGEE?

A: Yes, oh yes.

Q: AND JEWISH KARPO?

A: We had some Jewish karpos; we had some Polish karpos. The Polish karpos were really bad. They were awful.

Q: WERE THEY CRIMINALS?

A: Oh, they all were criminals, real criminals. I mean, they were all murderers and real criminals. They were not...

Q: DID THEY HAVE THE TRIANGLE?

A: I don't know what they had. I don't know what they had.

Q: OKAY.

A: I don't know...

Q: DID YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF SPECIAL DESIGNATION?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: WHAT WAS...?

A: Star. The Jewish star, we wore all the time. I, in fact, I have one. I kept it. And in, then in the end of January 1945, every, all of us were not allowed to work anywhere, anymore.

Q: YOU WERE NOT ALLOWED TO WORK?

A: Not allowed to work either in the regular kitchen or SS kitchen.

Q: BUT YOU'D BEEN THERE A WHOLE YEAR?

A: And... uh-huh.

Q: DID YOU THINK THAT YOU WOULD LAST?

A: I had to.

Q: DID YOU EVER WAVER IN THAT?

A: Never

Q: NO?

A: Never.

Q: I'M GONNA MAKE IT.

A: I didn't think anything else. I had to - I had to - there was no ifs and buts about it for me. It was something that I'm... it's just... that made it.

Q: WERE PEOPLE DYING?

A: Left and right.

Q: IN YOUR SPECIAL CAMP?

A: Everywhere. Everywhere, they were... Sometimes you - but, the worse part was when they, when it got really either hot in the summer, or cold, in the winter, there was this appell. You know, they put you on...

Q: ROLL CALL.

A: Roll call. And, heaven forbid if somebody didn't show up, because they were either dead or, they were sick - too sick to even crawl out of their bunk. You stood there for hours and hours and hours and hours, in the cold. They made you stand there forever, and heaven forbid, if you tried to sit down. They made the rest of them stand even longer. Some older people just keeled over. And the more keeled over, the longer we stood. So what you tried to do is, you had a couple of young people holding the older ones up, trying at least to...

Q: STEADY THEM.

A: Steady them. It went on and on and on and it was without rhyme or reason. It was sometimes, three times a week, sometimes, once a week, sometimes, I don't know...

Q: DID YOU EVER GET ANY HELP FROM ANY OF THE KARPOS?

A: No. No.

- Q: WHAT ABOUT WITHIN YOUR BUNK? DID YOU MAKE FRIENDS; DID YOU HELP EACH OTHER?
- A: Yes, we tried to help each other. It was - we were all so self-centered, that we only focused on ourselves. Everybody was trying to survive. You helped each other, and, if somebody got sick you tried to help them a little bit. But you couldn't really do much for them.
- Q: DID PEOPLE STEAL FROM EACH OTHER?
- A: Oh, and how.
- Q: DID YOU?
- A: No, I didn't have to. Because I was, I had more things and I had worked in the SS kitchen, so I didn't have to. If I would have had to - I probably would have, just like everybody else. But not within our group. Not within the group that we were in.
- Q: HOW MANY WERE IN THE GROUP?
- A: I would say we were quite a bunch of young people. And we were anywhere between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. And we were...
- Q: SO YOU HAD TO HAVE ONE GROUP THAT YOU REALLY COULD TRUST?
- A: Yes, we had...
- Q: SO IF YOU WERE GONNA STEAL FROM ANYONE, IT WOULD BE SOMEONE...
- A: Someone, somewhere else.
- Q: SOMEWHERE ELSE.
- A: Somebody we didn't know. Was not in our immediate group.
- Q: DID OTHER PEOPLE STEAL FROM YOU?
- A: Oh, yes. When something went missing, I realized it was gone. You didn't see it anymore.
- Q: BUT NO-ONE EVER TOOK YOUR LETTER?

- A: No, I carried that with me - everywhere. Everywhere I went, I had that letter.
- Q: EVERYDAY? WHERE?
- A: Wherever I could stuff it. I always had it.
- Q: YOU FELT THAT REALLY WAS YOUR TICKET.
- A: That was my ticket home. And unfortunate, it got lost.
- Q: WHEN?
- A: After the war, during liberation. Unfortunately, the burned with my clothes.
- Q: THAT WERE INFECTED? [nods head]
- A: Somehow or another, I couldn't find it anymore after that. But that was my ticket to freedom - I mean, that was my ticket.
- Q: NOW YOU MENTIONED YOU GOT FOOD FROM THE KITCHEN, AND TRIED TO GIVE YOUR UNCLE AND COUSIN. HOW DID YOU GET THE FOOD TO THEM? WERE YOU...
- A: Smuggled it.
- Q: RIGHT. BUT, WERE YOU ABLE TO SEE THEM AT ALL?
- A: Oh, yeah. We were in the same area. Oh yes.
- Q: COULD YOU GO OUT OF YOUR BARRACK?
- A: Oh yes, we could go anywhere. Within the camp, we could go anywhere, at certain times. And, the area was very small. It was not a large camp. It - I think maybe there were, at the most, ten barracks - rather large barracks. You know, they burnt all of Bergen-Belsen after the war. The British did, because they were so infected with lice and dirt and everything. So, they burned it all down. So the actual, physical area... they are gone.
- Q: DID YOU STOP HAVING YOUR PERIODS IN THE CAMP?
- A: Absolutely

- Q: FROM THE TIME YOU WENT IN - RIGHT AWAY?
- A: I don't know when.
- Q: AND THAT WAS PRETTY TYPICAL?
- A: It was very typical. I didn't know about - that was so typical, or what. Those things didn't occur to me. I was rather...
- Q: SURVIVAL WAS MORE IMPORTANT.
- A: Survival. Everything was focused on one thing.
- Q: ABOUT HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE IN THE SPECIAL CAMP?
- A: I have no idea. I have - oops - I didn't bring that book. My book from Bergen-Belsen, I didn't bring.
- Q: SO, YOU DID GET SICK IN THE CAMP?
- A: Yes, I got sick in the camp, yes. But, I didn't have typhus in the camp. I had some other - I don't know what I had.
- Q: DID YOU HAVE TO GO TO...?
- A: There was none.
- Q: THERE WAS NONE.
- A: There was none.
- Q: SO YOU JUST CARRIED ON.
- A: Just carried on.
- Q: NO CLINIC, NO MEDICAL CARE WHATSOEVER.
- A: No medical care, no clinic, no nothing. There were maybe, a couple of doctors there, but they really took care of the people that were really sick. I never considered myself ill enough... or, they didn't consider me ill enough. You know, you had your colds, your bronchitis, your 'flu's or, whatever you want to call them and so on. And they got worse as the nutrition got worse.

- Q: WERE THERE ANY PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP, THIS GROUP THAT YOU MENTIONED, THE EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FIVE, WHO, STARTED TO GO DOWNHILL AND LOSE THEIR SPIRIT?
- A: We were too young.
- Q: TOO YOUNG? SO THAT...
- A: We were too young to realize some of the things...
- Q: OKAY, SO THAT WAS REALLY THE OLDER PEOPLE - HUH?
- A: The older people lost some of their spirit - yes.
- A: But, everybody focused on the one thing - survival.
- Q: HOW MUCH WOULD PEOPLE HELP EACH OTHER?
- A: I don't know.
- Q: DID YOU SEE ACTS OF GENEROSITY, KINDNESS?
- A: Yes, we did. Yes, we did. We did - there were people that helped each other in - with food or clothing, or when somebody was sick, you give them an extra blanket - and things of that nature. But, most of it was focusing on survival - that's all. Straight - yes. There was no...
- Q: NO WASTED ENERGY.
- A: No wasted energy there, no.
- Q: WAS THERE ANY ATTEMPTS TO HAVE JEWISH SERVICES?
- A: Yes, we did fast on Yom Kippur.
- Q: HOW DID ANYONE KNOW WHAT DAY IT WAS?
- A: I don't know.
- Q: SOMEONE KNEW.
- A: Someone knew. And we had cabarets, or singing or things like that in the beginning

Q: WHILE PEOPLE WERE STILL HEALTHIER, HUH?

A: Ye, and so on, but we did have for Passover, Passover 1944, no Passover 1945, all of a sudden, Red Cross packages materialized. Or, before that - I don't know how they came about, but Red Cross packages materialized. But that was already, very much, to the end of the war. It was almost over.

Q: PEOPLE WERE STARTING TO GET WORRIED ABOUT HOW THEY WERE TREATING PEOPLE, I THINK.

A: I have a feeling that's what had happened.

Q: HIMMLER - HIMMLER MADE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE RED CROSS TO TRANSFER TWO OR THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE OUT OF CAMPS, TO SWEDEN. RIGHT AT THE END - SO THEY WOULD LEAVE HIM ALONE AFTER THE WAR.

A: Yeah, that was just about the way they did it. We were on a, we were taken out of the concentration camp...

Q: WHEN?

A: Sometime around the 8th or 9th of April, 1945. And they told us we were gonna go to Sweden. But, the direction the train went into was east. They were going to take us to an extermination camp. And we were, the group that I was with, in the concentration camp, were in the train with us. With me, we were all together. Under the supervision of - of course, each train had two SS and so on. And the train was bombed - near Magadaborg, in Germany. And in the very confusion of the bombing of the train, we escaped. We got out.

Q: ALL THE GROUP?

A: The whole group - we all got out of there. Out of the train.

Q: NOW WERE YOU IN THE CITY, OR NEAR A CITY?

A: No, it was in the countryside. And the SS went with us. I don't know - they must have known. Well that night after the bombing the

bombing was in the early evening. That night, we were all of a sudden caught between Americans and German tanks - in the crossfire. And there was a ditch - and we all hid in the ditch. And all night long, we've heard the rumbling of the tanks - Americans, the Germans. When morning came, we knew which side we were gonna walk to. And we hit the Americans. They took one look at us, and they couldn't believe their eyes, of course. As it happens, they were Texas rangers. Can you imagine - six feet, two inches tall. Handsome, as all get out - I tell you it was a revelation that I cannot forget. I can see it in front of me, just like that. They - the idea that we would be liberated by Americans, was always a dream that we had. And the ones who spoke English were immediately talking to them in English. And, the SS had taken off their uniforms, put on civilian clothes to hide among the Jews. But, we didn't let them. We told, immediately, we told them who was who, and they were of course, taken away, right away. But the Texas rangers just took us in. And it was the most amazing thing. They gave us [k-rations?], they took us to a town, called, it'll come to me, in - near Magdaborg, in Germany. Heiberstad.

Q: YOU WERE NOT FAR FROM THERE WHEN THE TRAIN...?

A: We were not far from there. They took us on a truck to there. A couple of the soldiers did and they called the Red Cross. And they - the Red Cross and the soldiers, requisitioned a German house and told the people to get out, and put us into that house, and started feeding us. And started over-feeding us. We got sick as can be. We were all sick, because they gave us too much food right away. Because we had been starving for days.

Q: AFTER THAT NIGHT AND A BIT - HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE THE AMERICANS WERE?

A: Oh, you know the difference between American tanks and German tanks. I mean, that was an instinct that you had. We knew, we knew. Somehow, I mean, we knew.

Q: ONE HAD A STAR AND ONE HAD A CROSS.

A: Well, that was not - we didn't see them. We heard them.

Q: THE GERMAN TANKS WERE BIGGER - NOISIER, PROBABLY.

A: Probably. I had, I don't know how. I mean, what do you know when you are that age. I mean, you were and you were so glad to get out of a situation that was so horrible, at one minute, and the next minute you were among Americans, which was... Then the Red Cross came. Now, I'm gonna have to go back to something that happened.

My father was in San Francisco; my father married my stepmother in 1941 - the end of '41, beginning of... I think in '42. And they received a - I had thrown out of the train a postcard that I was going to a camp.

Q: THIS WAS WHEN YOU WERE GOING FROM WESTERBORK TO BERGEN-BELSEN?

A: No, from - to Westerbork.

Q: TO WESTERBORK.

A: Threw a postcard out of the window. And it happened to go to this family in [Zwola?] where I - that was the address on there, where I had been. And they contacted, through the Red Cross, they contacted my father in the United States. They had his address here. And through the underground and so on... and so, they received a notice that I had - was going into a camp. And my mother, my stepmother intercepted that - she never told my father, because she didn't want him to worry. She thought it might be better for him to know that I might be safe in Holland. So...

Q: DID HE EVER FORGIVE HER?

A: Yes, he did. He did, because he realized that she was doing it out of love - not out of malice, or anything like that. And then, the Red Cross letter arrived in April. Oh, in April, middle of April 1945 - that I had been saved. And she finally told him. So we were liberated on the 13th Friday the 13th of April

1945. It's the day after Roosevelt died. The first thing we heard from the American soldiers, that Roosevelt had died. Of course, that was the biggest tragedy that we heard, then. That was terrible. How could that happen the day before we got liberated? And we were all in mourning. So, these are the recollections that I have. And after, then they burnt all of our clothes, because we were filled with lice. We were - we had head lice, it was horrible. We were - they used DDT on us, by the way, just to get rid of the lice, and everything. That's how I lost my letter. And ...

Q: AND THIS WAS IN...

A: In Heiberstad.

Q: AND THE RED CROSS CAME THROUGH AND HELPED.

A: The Red Cross came and helped us. Somebody by the name of Kirkpatrick was the Red Cross liaison and helped us. And since most of the people that I chummed around with, all of them, were of Dutch and German origin and had lived in Holland - were connected to Holland, they repatriated us back to Holland in - sometime in the end of April.

Q: BY TRUCK?

A: By truck. Black soldiers - transportation, in a truck with black soldiers. And, of course, we spoke enough English to make ourselves understood to them, but we didn't understand a word that they were talking. They were so sweet and so kind to us. They took us to the Dutch border, across the Dutch border. And I ended up in a small town called Wilmont, near the Dutch/German border. And there was a Dutch family by the name of Hautsmidt who took me in. And, of course, we were in contact with my father at that time, and so on. And he kept on sending packages after packages, after packages, after packages of clothes and food, and whatever he could send.

Q: ALL THE THINGS HE COULDN'T SEND FOR FIVE YEARS, HUH?

A: All the things that he couldn't do for five years. He sent money and whatever he could, to help, not only me, but all the families in town that survived.

Q: WHO MADE THOSE ARRANGEMENTS - WAS THE...

A: I have no idea.

Q: JEWISH ORGANIZATION HELPING AT THAT TIME?

A: The Jewish organizations - people just did. You saw somebody that needed help, that's homeless, didn't know where to go... My uncle in Amsterdam had - I didn't know that he had survived, or whatever. Nobody knew anything about anybody else. We found this out, these things out, two or three years, er, two or three months later. You didn't know - but I knew my father was in the United States, and through the Red Cross, through the American Armed Services, we got - were in contact. And then, later on, by regular mail.

Q: YOUR UNCLE DID SURVIVE - THE ONE THAT WAS AT THE CAMP?

A: He survived. My cousin survived. They were liberated by the Russians. And, of course the maltreatment by the Russians of those refugees killed my aunt. She had typhoid fever and she didn't get any help whatsoever. Well, what actually happened, before I lived with the people in... with the Hautsmidt's there - they took me to the hospital, in Wilmont. And I came down with typhoid fever. So I don't know, I don't remember the liberation, the end of the war.

Q: YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL?

A: I was in a coma in the hospital.

Q: WAS THAT STILL IN GERMANY, THEN?

A: Holland. In Wilmont, in Holland.

Q: SO YOU MISSED THE END OF THE WAR?

A: I missed the end of the war, but, in my sub-conscious I heard the noise the celebration

END OF TAPE 1 OF 2

PART TWO.

Q: SO YOU WERE IN THE, CROSSED THE DUTCH BORDER,
AND STAYING WITH A FAMILY?

A: After I came out of the hospital, after I...
Another thing happened in the hospital. There
were three of us who had come back with typhus,
typhoid fever. And there were many other
people in the hospital that had come back from
various areas, from the camps, and so on. So,
Princess Beatrix, at that time, er, not
Beatrix, she - Princess Juliana, the Dutch
future queen. She was still crown princess, at
that time, came to visit, and sat with me for
about ten minutes, and talked about it. She
wanted to know where I came from. And then,
that was after I got better - no infection
anymore. And then the family in - Hautsmitd,
they decided that I needed a home to come to,
because there was nobody - I had nothing,
nobody else. There was nothing, I had nobody I
could go to. So, they took me in. And they
had a store in Rotterdam, in Wilmont. That's
near Venlo, near the Dutch border, near
Mastriat, in Holland.

And since I contracted TB in the concentration
camp, I was not allowed to come to the United
States right away. I had to be cured of TB
first. And the doctors took care of that. I
got very good nutrition and it took about -
almost a year, to cure me of the TB.

Q: WAS IT LIKE A SANATORIUM?

A: No. Private home.

Q: I SEE.

A: There were no sanatoriums, there were just the
hospital, but the hospital wouldn't have helped
me at all. Private home, with good nutrition,
and whatever they could scrounge together from

friends and acquaintances and farms and so on - they would feed me. They fed me a lot. I had anemia and TB, and they fed me spinach and liver, my favorite foods, so was no hardship. Dark beer, which is one of the things that helped. And there just weren't any liver shots available, or anything like that, or the iron shots, or B10, or whatever you call it. So nutrition was the key to getting me better.

Q: AND REST?

A: Rest. Rest.

Q: DO YOU KNOW HOW THEY TREATED THE TYPHUS IN THE HOSPITAL?

A: No, no idea. Absolutely no idea, because I was completely out of it. One - the main thing is, you have to let it run its course. And, cold compresses to get the fever down. I don't even know if they had aspirin, or, what you would call in Europe, perimidone or something of the sort that would take the fever down. I have no idea if they had any of that. But, I know that I was, had cold compresses, cold on my forehead all the time. That's one of the things that I was aware of. The rest of it I wasn't aware of, because I was much too sick. And the wounds in my legs were really, terribly infected. They had to heal.

Q: SO YOU STAYED IN THIS PLACE FOR A YEAR?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: RECUPERATING?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: WERE YOU IN TOUCH WITH ANY PEOPLE THAT YOU KNEW FROM BEFORE?

A: Yes. Whoever survived.

Q: DID YOUR AUNT IN AMSTERDAM SURVIVE?

A: Yes. She was underground; she never was caught. Her husband committed suicide the minute the Germans walked in. He knew what was going on. And her son, my cousin, was in

actually, my cousin was in Nigeria, in... He worked for Lever Brothers, for the British firm of Lever Brothers. And, he lived for a long time in England; he passed away a few years ago. He was - they were much older than I was. Myself and my cousin, Peter, the one that I lived with in Holland are - were the two youngest cousins of the nine children. The children of the nine children of the eight brothers and sisters my mother had. They all survived, with the exception of one - she died. And my cousin, she and her son died in the concentration camp; all the others survived. All the other brothers and sisters survived. Some in the United States, some in Holland, some in - one sister lived in Israel.

Q: NONE OF THEM SURVIVED IN GERMANY?

A: No. The ones who happened to stay in Germany did not survive. My grandmother, who lived with my uncle - I can never forgive him for that - he never paid for her to go to the camp, to the privileged camp, so-called - Zonder camp. She died in Sobibor.

Q: SO THE ONE WHO LIVED WITH THEM, WHO MADE THEIR LIFE MORE LIVABLE THERE...

A: Yes.

Q: THERE WERE TWO DESTINATIONS FROM WESTERBORK - AUSCHWITZ WAS ONE AND SOBIBOR WAS THE OTHER.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: AND THEY WERE BOTH EXTERMINATION CAMPS?

A: Yes. And he could have saved her. He could have paid for her to go into hiding, or something like that. But he wouldn't. He didn't. And that's something that I have never forgiven - I've never forgiven him. When I found out about that I didn't even want to live with him, in Amsterdam, even if he offered to - because my father paid. I didn't. I never was - after I came to the United States, I was in touch with my cousin and I never was in touch with him.

Q: NOW DID YOU TRY TO MAKE CONNECTION WITH LIKE, THE TEACHER UP NORTH AND HIS WIFE, WHO LOST THEIR CHILD?

A: No, I lost complete track of them. I did get in touch with them right after the war, while I was in Holland. But after that I lost touch with them, because they were - they had their own way of doing things and we did not connect anymore after that. And the people in Amsterdam were all killed. That family I lived with - they all got exterminated. There was nobody that was left.

Q: THE SAFARDIC FAMILY?

A: Yes.

Q: NOW YOU HAD SAID EARLIER, ABOUT THE PERSON WHO HAD TURNED YOU IN, AND YOU MADE AN ALLUSION TO HOW YOU WOULD TALK ABOUT GOING TO STRANGLE HER. COULD YOU TELL US THAT STORY?

A: Well, there is not much to it. I didn't have any transportation to get to her. She lived in Amsterdam.

Q: AND YOU WERE STILL...

A: And I lived in Wilmont, with the family and I was, you know, too sick to go anywhere. And by the time I got word, you know, who it was - what happened was, somehow or another, got to me - I didn't... I was furious and angry and so on, that I wanted to go right away and get to her. It - I got talked out of it, for many reasons. First of all, I was much too sick to go. Second of all, I had no transportation - there was no way of getting there, short of going by bicycle, which was completely out of the question, because I was too ill for that. Third of all, the people I lived with were kindly type of older people who had survived the war in underground. They were in hiding.

Q: WERE THEY JEWS?

A: They were Jewish - yes. Very devout, very religious; very much religious Jews. They had survived the war in hiding, and were grateful that they survived and that their cousin

survived and that, survival to them was more important than revenge.

Q: THEY TRIED TO PASS THAT ON TO YOU?

A: They tried to pass it on to me. And by the time I was well enough to travel, which was about nine months later, I had completely eliminated that thought, because that was...

Q: DID YOU KNOW THE PERSON WHO TALKED?

A: Yes, I knew her. Ja, I knew her - not well. I had met her several times.

Q: IN THE COURSE OF DOING?

A: In the course of being in the resistance, yes. But then I realized that she tried to save her own hide by betraying other people, which was very easy to do. The Germans played one person against the other. One thing is that Germans knew how to manipulate other people into doing things that they usually, under ordinary circumstances, wouldn't do. And, manipulation was part of their - the propaganda that they had, the way that they manipulated all of the German people themselves. It was easy to manipulate some Jewish girl that was trying to save herself. She did - but she paid for it. I'm sure that she thought about it for a long time in her life - that she had caused some of the deaths of other people, and some misery for people. But then on the other hand, it was explained to me, I probably would have been caught anyway.

Q: WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

A: I would have been caught if I was in the resistance doing all the things that I did. I would have been caught eventually and, I might have been shot on sight, instead of saving myself by going to a special camp. I mean, you know... when something like that happens, you get talked into believing certain things, and well, alright, maybe so it could have been true; it could not have been true. I really don't know. I can't look - hindsight is always better than foresight and...

Q: HOW DID YOU GET THAT INFORMATION AFTER THE WAR
- WAS THERE ANY...?

A: I don't know. I don't remember... I do not remember - some things are so completely eliminated from my mind that even thinking about it for a long time - I can't remember. It probably could have been somebody that I knew from - who knew somebody that I knew. I don't know.

Q: WAS THERE ANY CONNECTION AFTER THE WAR OF SOME
OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE IN THE RESISTANCE?

A: No.

Q: DID THE PEOPLE IN THE GROUP THAT YOU WERE IN
BERGEN-BELSEN, DID THEY STAY IN TOUCH?

A: No. No we didn't, and I didn't join the organization that was for the Bergen-Belsen survivors.

Q: DIDN'T WANT TO?

A: Let's put it this way - I didn't. It was not my choice, but I didn't. I would have liked to have done that, if I - if it would have - probably would have helped me, but... I didn't.

Q: SOMEONE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU NOT
TO?

A: Uh-huh. And so, it was just one of the things that happened.

Q: SO YOU REMAINED IN HOLLAND FOR ABOUT A YEAR,
UNTIL THE TB WAS BETTER?

A: Until I was better, and my father got me to give - I received my non-quota visa, or visa for the people of children of - at that time he was a citizen then.

Q: HOW OLD WERE YOU THEN?

A: I was nineteen. Nine, ja, nineteen. 15th of July 1946, I arrived in New York. And my mother's twin sister, and my father's brother, who lived New York, received me there. And my aunt, my father's brother's wife, took one look

at me and she couldn't believe her eyes, because she had seen me, of course, five years before that. So, she decided that I needed some clothes to wear. And she took me to Macy's in downtown Manhattan. It was only 98° outside and the store was beautifully cool. She bought me a few clothes and we walked out in the heat and I passed out. Totally passed out. You know, I'm not used to it. So, instead of that, they decided that I should recuperate in the Catskill Mountains, where my mother's twin sister had a hotel. And they took me in for a week or so.

Q: SO THERE WERE TWINS?

A: My mother was a twin, yes.

Q: YOUR MOTHER WAS A TWIN AND THIS WAS HER TWIN.

A: My own mother was a twin.

Q: YES, AND SHE WAS HER TWIN.

A: Yes.

Q: DID SHE LOOK LIKE YOUR MOTHER?

A: Not at all. My mother was tall, slim, blue eyes. My aunt was short, dumpy with brown eyes. They were complete opposites. My mother was very, very quiet - a very quiet person. My aunt was gregarious, outgoing, fun loving. They were such opposites, you wouldn't believe.

Q: DID YOU LIKE HER?

A: Loved her. We all loved her - everybody loved her. She was one of the people that, if you would meet her, you would love her, right away. First of all, her English was fractured German and she thought she was speaking English. But she was so lovable, she was such a wonderful, wonderful person that I just adored her. Everybody, my husband adored her. Our kids adored her. The - everybody that ever got in contact with her, adored her. And she and her husband, they were lovely people.

Q: SO THEY SHIPPED YOU TO THE CATSKILLS TO FATTEN
YOU UP?

A: To fat - and I mean fatten me up. And, I'm not joking, because I was fat when I came to San Francisco. I must have gained thirty pounds there, in about, a span of about two weeks. I was fat! And nothing fitted me. I had absolutely no clothes, so everybody scrounged around - it was after the war - I mean, there wasn't much to be had. And everybody scrounged around for something decent for me to wear. So - but I had the best time over there. It was, my aunt was - her hotel was a refuge of many of the people from New York, German Jews. We used to joke at that time, that you could not arrive in that part of the Catskills without an 'Auf Bunder Jahr'n' - that's the German Jewish newspaper, in New York. Anyway, she was very well-known over there, for her cooking and her baking. She had coffee and cake every afternoon on the lawn. And her main ingredients seemed to be five pounds of butter and about ten tons of whipping cream. That was her trademark. So...

Q: THEY ATE LIKE THAT THEN.

A: Oh, yes, and I mean, then they put me on the train to San Francisco.

Q: THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO GET TWO TICKETS FOR YOU?

A: Not yet. They put me on the train to San Francisco, and my cousin's husband bribed the porter with a couple of dollar bills. I mean - to take good care of me and boy - did he. Neither one understood each other. I was speaking British type English - he was speaking southern English, and neither one of us understood each other, but boy - he took care of me like I was his own daughter.

Q: WHAT DID HE DO?

A: He made sure I ate enough. He - I, they made sure I had a sleeping berth. I didn't have a cabin, but one of those sleeping berths. He made sure I had enough blankets or enough pillows, and he took me by the hand in Chicago, where we had to transfer trains. He showed me everything - he told me about whatever was outside of the train. There was another lady

there that was from Australia who interpreted for me. You can imagine how things happened! And this is - that was the biggest adventure - I remember him so well - he was just so kind and so sweet. But I didn't realize until my cousin's husband told me that later on, that he had bribed him. Of course - I mean, that's what you do. I didn't know. I had no experience. I did speak enough English to make myself understood. But, so when I...

Q: HOW HAD YOU LEARNT ENGLISH?

A: Oh, you studied it. I mean, I started in the Jewish school in Glavor, already. We started to learn English. We learnt Hebrew and English. Those were the two languages, and in Holland it continued on. And...

Q: YOU LEARNED ENOUGH TO GET BY?

A: You just learned English - I learned enough to get by. And when I came to San Francisco, I met my father and my stepmother - for the first time.

Q: NOW IT HAD BEEN SEVEN YEARS SINCE YOU HAD SEEN YOUR FATHER.

A: No, not quite.

Q: DIDN'T HE LEAVE IN '39?

A: Ja, '39 - seven years, ja.

Q: AND YOU DIDN'T SEE HIM TILL '46.

A: Ja.

Q: AND YOU HAD THOUGHT MANY TIMES ABOUT COMING TO AMERICA. IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING TO GO ACROSS THE COUNTRY ON A TRAIN AND WONDER... WILL HE RECOGNIZE ME - I'M SO DIFFERENT AND HE - WOULD HE BE DIFFERENT?

A: He wasn't any different at all. He looked exactly the same. Little older, maybe, but the same.

Q: CAUSE THE LAST TIME YOU SAW HIM, HE LOOKED
TERRIBLE

- A: Oh, he looked terrible when I arrived. He didn't look so well either. I mean, you know, it takes a toll out of a person when you are - when you know your only child is somewhere out there in the war.
- Q: HOW WAS THAT REUNION?
- A: Strained. Yeah, it was quite strained. Because it - expectation didn't measure up.
- Q: DID YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HER?
- A: Well, yes, she had written to me and all. And all, we knew about her. Yeah, but she was really very nice. I mean...
- Q: WERE YOU PREPARED TO LIKE HER?
- A: No. No. How can anybody replace a mother that you dream of, but she made - she made the effort, and we are the best of friends now. She'll turn ninety-five on Monday. Now she has a story to tell also, but she cancelled the appointment. When I told her this morning I was coming here, she wished me good luck. She said she couldn't do it. She can't. And so - but then, when I came here, it - my father immediately decided that I have to go to school, because I, my education had been completely interrupted. I went in from a schooling... from the age of thirteen, I had sporadic schooling. I had gone in Zwola - I went to a household economic school, which was just learning to iron and cook and sew and stuff like that. No...
- Q: NO FORMAL EDUCATION.
- A: No formal education - whatever formal education I had had was reading books and studying on my own.
- Q: DID YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO HIGH SCHOOL?
- A: I went to High School.
- Q: WHERE?

A: Unfortunately, unfortunately, I started out at continuation High in San Francisco, and I was very disruptive in the class, because I kept on answering all the questions the teacher asked, because my English was too good. All the other people that were in that class didn't speak a word of English. So she decided that I should go to a High School. And, since my father had some friends whose children went to Lowell High - they put me into Lowell High School, which was very unfortunate because it was too academic, too much, too difficult. The people that went to Lowell High School were more the social types. I mean, they had aspirations to go to Stanford, Cal, Yale, Harvard - I mean, the things - the ideas that we have for our children nowadays - our grandchildren. And I just didn't fit in.

Q: HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE?

A: Two years. Almost two years. Almost two years.

Q: WHAT GRADE DID THEY PUT YOU IN?

A: They put me into Junior High - in junior grade. And I took all the courses that they thought I needed - civics, American history, English, English composition, math, all those courses that I needed. I did okay. I had big help - I had some teachers that really were interested in helping. They stayed after school with me and helped me.

Q: WHY?

A: They were interested people. They were interested in people - they were good teachers. They were really good teachers. They were not just teaching for the getting - like babysitting, they really wanted you to learn and they wanted to give you as much help as possible.

Q: THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO DO THAT...

A: Oh, they did that for everybody. Oh yes, they did it for everybody.

Q: SO YOU GONNA MINIMIZE IT?

A: Not gonna minimize it - I don't minimize anything. They did - I wasn't the only one. They did it for everybody.

Q: BUT HOW WERE PEOPLE CHOSEN TO DO - WAS IT SELF SELECTION OR DID THEY SAY TO YOU - YOU KNOW, COME AFTER SCHOOL AND...

A: Well, what happened was that I didn't understand something and I - being older than the rest of the children in the High School - I asked them. I said: "How does this and this work - and how does this fit together?" And, they said: "Well, come after school and I'll help you with it." That's how it happened.

Q: OKAY, WELL THEY SAW INTEREST IN YOU - THAT YOU WANTED TO LEARN THESE THINGS.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: AND THAT'S THE KIND OF PEOPLE THEY WANTED TO HELP.

A: There was somebody by the name of Mr. Patterson. He was the civics teacher. And since I knew I had to learn all about that to become an American citizen - so, that's how he helped me. And I flunked royally - I flunked physics. I flunked that royally, I just couldn't catch on to that. That's one thing I never had any aptitude for. So I didn't really get my High School Diploma. And, instead of that, I went to a Beauty School. I became a beautician.

Q: WERE YOU GOOD?

A: No, no.

Q: NO?

A: No, I had either from the camp or naturally, I had rashes every time I washed - I couldn't use shampoo or dyes or anything like that. I got rashes on my hands. So I did manicures instead. I just couldn't - couldn't do it. It was just as well. I wasn't that good at it -

but it was one of the things that was presented to me at the time, and I thought this was - I already had started that in Holland, in Amsterdam. I was - I forgot to tell that, that I was an apprentice in a beauty salon - in, while I was living in Amsterdam. There's another beautiful story attached to that. I tell that to our granddaughter all the time.

Q: TELL IT TO US.

A: I was dying somebody's hair with some dye, and when I rinsed the dye out - her hair had turned green, because, during the war, you had chemicals that didn't quite work right. And, I guess maybe, I had mixed them wrong or something like that. So the owner of the beauty salon asked her to come back the next day and she corrected it and did the right job - I think she wanted red hair, or something like that.

Q: SHE DIDN'T WANT GREEN?

A: She didn't want her hair green. So those are the little anecdotes that stick in my mind. I mean, these are not here nor there - these anecdotes.

Q: WHEN YOU CAME TO THIS COUNTRY - HOW WAS IT FOR YOU SOCIALLY?

A: Socially, I wanted to leave as soon as possible. I wanted to get out of here - I wanted to go to Israel.

Q: TO ISRAEL?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: HAD YOU BEEN? NO?

A: No.

Q: YOU HAD AN IMAGE.

A: I had an image - I had been a Zionist from way back. I wanted to go and - I mean, Palestine, at that time. It was still Palestine and I wanted to go there. And my father's sister was living there with her two sons and husband

And my mother's sister was living there and I knew that I could make it there. I should have gone to Israel, before I came here - and, I didn't want to leave my father. And I was torn between my father and going to Israel. That was - of course, then, I met my husband and that was the end of that.

Q: WHEN DID YOU MEET HIM?

A: I met him in '49. February, March, er, February '49, Purim.

Q: THROUGH FAMILY?

A: No, Jewish Community Center dances. My girlfriend - I lived at the Emmanuel Residence Club because my parents had a one-bedroom apartment. And they thought that it would be a better thing for me to live in the Emmanuel Residence Club, because - you know what that is?

Q: YOU'D MEET PEOPLE.

A: I'd meet other people and meet - and have a much broader social life. And, they were right. They were.

Q: YEAH, YOUR FATHER HAD SOME GOOD IDEAS FOR YOU.

A: Oh, my father had very good ideas. He had good ideas for about everybody.

Q: I'M HITTING A TOUCHY SUBJECT, AM I?

A: Not, no, no - not at all - really. He told one of my - one of our friends to go to college, not to go to work - he could've gotten a very good job. But he told him to go to college and learn and get a better education than he had. And he did, and he made a big success of himself. I mean, my father really had insight into many things that were much more up-to-date than many people his age. And being a refugee, he was much more up-to-date. From the minute I arrived in San Francisco, he told me one thing, he says: "We live in the United States, you speak only English. If you don't know a word, look it up in the dictionary. Read books only in English. There's no German spoken in this

house. If you want to know something - learn it." And he was right, because so many of our friends still speak German in their home. And, I can't understand that.

Q: HE REALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT TOOK TO PUT YOURSELF IN THE CULTURE, IN THIS SOCIETY.

A: He had a tremendous sense of humor. He worked at all kinds of odd jobs. He was never afraid to work. And he picked pears, and he did - he was a chauffeur, he was a houseman. He - when he married my stepmother, he worked at McKess and Robinson, the warehouse - he was in the warehouseman's union. He never complained about what a sorry lot he had, because, coming from a fairly wealthy family, he was his own boss most of the time.

Q: HE COULD HAVE FELT SORRY FOR HIMSELF.

A: Oh, of course he could have. Lost his wife to the Nazi's. Almost lost his daughter. He, unfortunately, died quite young. He was only sixty-six. And, he was quite a, quite a man. He also told me not to marry my husband.

Q: YEAH.

A: He told me: "Let him finish his education first. Let him go to college. Let him finish his education."

Q: WHAT DID - WHAT DID HE DO?

A: Well my husband is an engineer. He got his education while we were married.

Q: SO THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY TO DO IT, HUH?

A: Well, there was another way to do it. But it would have been easier, our lives would have been easier if he would have waited at least maybe, two, two and a half years, for him to finish his education.

Q: YEAH, BUT THAT'S A HARD TIME TO WAIT, ISN'T IT?

A: Is it ever? Is it ever? It's terrible, but

Q: YOU'D SPENT HALF YOUR LIFE WAITING ALREADY

A: Yes.

Q: YOU KNOW, THAT WAS ASKING TOO MUCH.

A: No, he was... but he was right. I mean, in having...

Q: IN A PRACTICAL SENSE HE WAS RIGHT.

A: My father was a pragmatist and a practical person. He did not believe in anything - he had had too much in his life, already, happen to him, that he knew that education was one of the most important things in your life. That's why he wanted me to go to school, and my husband to go to school. And all the people that he ever came in contact with, he told them: "Stay in school. You don't have to work. If you live poor now, your education is more important than anything." And that's...

Q: SO YOU'VE KEPT UP WITH - HOW WERE YOU WHEN YOUR FATHER DIED?

A: Thirty.

Q: AND YOU'VE KEPT A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STEPMOTHER ALL THESE YEARS.

A: Oh yes. Oh yeah.

Q: AND YOU LIKE EACH OTHER?

A: Oh we do. Oh yes, we do. Oh yeah. She was the grandmother to our kids that - the one steady person that they needed. Oh yes. She still is. She has a lot of heart, and a lot of good things.

Q: WHAT HAS AMERICA BEEN TO YOU?

A: Haven. Freedom, home. I'm very patriotic if you want to call it that. I feel that this is the only country that has given me what I - has given me my life. My children - and I don't feel anything for Germany. I mean, I admire what they've done for themselves and I hope that they will succeed in keeping away the anti-Semitism, but I don't think they will.

Europe is anti-Semitic, to begin with - all of Europe. But...

Q: YOU DID GO BACK TO GERMANY - DIDN'T YOU?

A: Oh yes, I did.

Q: YEAH, WHEN?

A: Many times.

Q: MANY TIMES?

A: Yes.

Q: TO - WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE VISITS?

A: To visit my mother's grave, to begin with - the first time.

Q: WHEN WAS THAT?

A: 1975.

Q: HOW DID THAT FEEL?

A: Actually we came back from a visit. Our daughter, at that time, was in Israel and she lived on a kibbutz, in Israel. And, for our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, all I wanted to do was go to Israel. That's always been my ideal. And we spent time with our daughter. And we toured Israel and then, we went and went back to Amsterdam - I wanted to see Amsterdam. And we rented a car and we drove into Germany - we went to Clevar, to where my school used to be, which was non-existent. And I drove to Kalkar, to visit my mother's grave. And it took us a long time to find the cemetery. Nobody knew where it was, which was a big lie. Everybody knew where it was. We finally got the key from the city hall, and we went into the cemetery and it was exactly the same as it's been before, my father took pictures of it in 1939 - before he left for the United States, he took pictures of the grave - my mother's grave and the cemetery. And it had not changed one bit.

Q: SO IT HADN'T BEEN DESTROYED?

A: Not at all. It was behind the Catholic Hospital. And it was protected somehow, by the town, because the town was run by a mayor that met the British at the edge of town and said: "There's nothing in Kalkar that you need to destroy," - with a white flag. And he saved the whole town. And there was nothing destroyed. Oh, the church was - some bombs fell into the church and so on - but nothing, and the city hall was destroyed, partially, but not, really, the town was never destroyed. And neither was the cemetery.

Q: IS THIS THE SAME MAYOR THAT YOU TALKED ABOUT?

A: No. It was another one. One thing about the cemetery now, is, we visited it again, a couple of years ago, when the book was written about the Jews of Kalkar. They, the cemetery is taken care of - was vandalized by young people. And the headmaster of the school, the High School, decided that, to teach them a lesson, they had to clean the cemetery up and put the stones back, etc. as good as they could find where they were supposed to be. And that - three times a year, they have to go inside the cemetery - weed it and take care of it; that was their job. And since then it has not been vandalized. And this has been going on - each succeeding junior and high school class does this.

Q: WHAT DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU GO TO GERMANY?

A: Nothing.

Q: NO? NOTHING.

A: No, just another country. Just like going to Mexico, or Canada or... nothing. It has no meaning to me. It's just another country.

Q: DO YOU FEEL RESENTMENT?

A: Not any more.

Q: YOU DID, ORIGINALLY?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: HOW ABOUT WHEN YOU GO TO HOLLAND?

- A: I have an affinity for Holland, but I've, the more I find out about Holland, the less I like it. Because they really didn't treat us well. There were many, many people in Holland that were anti-Semitic and still are. I didn't realize that at the time, and I didn't realize it until a few years ago.
- Q: HOW? HOW DID IT COME TO YOU?
- A: Books I've read. Articles I've read in newspapers - interviews etc.
- Q: YOU KNOW, ONE OF THE INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND WAS THAT - YOU KNOW THIS WHOLE EXPOSE ABOUT IBM, AND HOW IT HAD HELPED THE GERMANS TO COMPILE RECORDS - IT TURNED OUT THAT HOLLAND WAS THE COUNTRY IN EUROPE THAT WAS MOST ADVANCED, IN IBM - WORK AND AFFILIATION. SO, IT WAS THE EASIEST COUNTRY IN EUROPE TO CODIFY THE NAMES OF JEWS. THAT'S WHY THEY GOT SO MANY.
- A: That's why they selectively picked them up, too. That was - and, we were stupid enough to register. I mean, nowadays, you would think, you wouldn't even register. You would tell them, you know... immediately, everybody ran to register. I don't understand it now, at the time - you just did. If I wouldn't have registered, it wouldn't have - well, my name gave me away. I mean, Isaac is not a - a non-Jewish name.
- Q: YEAH, YOU WOULD'VE HAD TO CHANGE YOUR NAME.
- A: Could've changed my name, to anything.
- Q: BUT THERE'D PROBABLY BE A COURT RECORD OF THAT.
- A: There would be. I mean, there are records of records of records. It's just incredible. The records of the town in Kalkar, go back to Charlemagne. So, I mean, you tell me... I mean, everything is recorded.
- Q: ARE THERE ANY JEWS LEFT IN KALKAR TODAY?
- A: None. Not a single one.

- Q: WHO WROTE THE BOOK ON IT?
- A: Somebody by the name of... he is a very young man. I have the book. [starts reaching for the book]
- Q: DID HE COME FROM THERE?
- A: His - he was born there, yes.
- Q: THAT'S BECOMING A RATHER FREQUENT OCCURRENCE IN GERMANY, NOW.
- A: Yes. A very frequent occurrence in Germany. [finds the book] Gunther Bergmann - 'The Jews in Kalkar.' In German... and, of course, my whole family history is in here. And my cousin, in El Paso, the one who gave us the affidavit, wrote a book, called 'From the Rhine, to the Rio Grande.'
- Q: THAT'S WONDERFUL.
- A: It's his family history. But, his family history is completely intertwined with ours. And, he wrote a book, and everything is in here. And then they had an exposition in Meiern, on the Jews of Meiern - a complete exposition. They have a whole book on it, which I have, of course. And they had huge pictures of it and descriptions of everything and there is a castle in Meiern, by... or, Queen Genoa lived there. And, this castle is still in existence. And they had the archives there. And they let us look through the pictures in the archives and everything. And I turned pages and things and all of a sudden, something stared at me - I couldn't believe it. My father's bowling club - with my father's picture in there, 1926, or '25 or '26. So, I just couldn't believe it. It's also in the book that I have about Meiern.
- Q: NOW, YOU HAVE TWO DAUGHTERS AND WHEN THEY WERE GROWING UP - DID YOU TALK TO THEM AT ALL, ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES?
- A: Very little. Not until they were in their teen, late teens - early twenties.
- Q: HOW ABOUT WITH YOUR HUSBAND?

- A: He didn't want to hear it.
- Q: NO.
- A: He always said: "Forget it. It's passed, it's passed. Don't talk about it - it's passed." He didn't let me talk about it, until a few years ago. I told him some things, but...
- Q: THAT WAS A VERY FREQUENT WAY OF LOOKING AT THE WHOLE THING.
- A: Yes. I had five years of psychiatric care. But, the doctor was very sympathetic. I told him some of the things that happened, but not all. And, it was a - it was not a good experience to talk about it - with him, with not being able to talk about it at home.
- Q: HOW DOES YOUR HUSBAND FEEL ABOUT YOU TALKING ABOUT IT NOW?
- A: He thinks it's a waste of time. I mean, not for me to talk about it, but to record it. He thinks that it's passed - is passed, you forget about it.
- Q: WHY WRITE HISTORY BOOKS?
- A: That's what I said. I said: "Like Kissinger said, that anybody that does not remember history is bound to repeat it."
- Q: SO IT'S BEEN HARD FOR YOU.
- A: Yes, it's been hard in that way. Yes. But, I did talk about it to some of my friends. So that helped a lot.
- Q: HAD THEY HAD ANY EXPERIENCES LIKE THAT?
- A: None.
- Q: NO? COULD THEY BEAR IT?
- A: They wanted to know. They wanted to know. So its...
- Q: YOU LET THEM KNOW ENOUGH THAT THEY...?

A: Yeah.

Q: YOU STARTED MENTIONING TO US BEFORE A FEW OTHER THINGS THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE IN STARTING TO TALK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES.

A: Yes. The - our granddaughter, she decided that she wanted to know about it. I don't know if the tape was running at the time that I ...

Q: NO, IT WASN'T. NO, TELL US THIS.

A: Our granddaughter was, I think about four or five, when our children decided that they wanted to go skiing. And grandma, grandpa, of course, were handy people to baby-sit for them. And at that time I was wearing rubber stockings on my legs. Now, our granddaughter, who is very fashion conscious, she decided, she wanted to know why grandma was wearing those ugly things on her legs. And how come? I told her that I was injured in the war. And her eyes just grew big - "war?" I said: "Yes, World War II. Grandma got injured on her legs." And I took my stockings off and her eyes just went wide, because she saw the scars on my legs that had been there from the holes in the... And, so I told her a few little things about it, that I was in a camp and that I was in prison, and that I didn't have anything to eat; and that bedbugs were biting me and that I had an infection that didn't heal, because I was starving. And I was telling her little things - not to scare her too much - because it was late evening. She had to go to sleep. She - I didn't want her to get, to have nightmares. And, our son-in-law walked in and he overheard me. He had never heard my story before, and he wanted to know about it. That was the first time I talked about it, really, without breaking down. And our grandson was there too. They're the same age - our granddaughter, our grandson are the same age. They are cousins. But, didn't register with him. It did not have the same impact on him as it had on our granddaughter. And she wanted to know more about it. The more went on - the older she grew, she wanted to know more about it.

Q: SHE STILL...?

- A: Interested, yes.
- Q: STILL INTERESTED - HOW OLD IS SHE NOW?
- A: She's fifteen - going on thirty.
- Q: YOU TOLD US SHE HAS THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD HISTORIAN.
- A: Yes, I think our younger grandson, her brother, will probably be the one that will write a book, because he is the writer.
- Q: DID YOU SAY EARLIER THAT YOU TOLD YOUR STORY AT BERGEN-BELSEN?
- A: In Bergen-Belsen, in German.
- Q: COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT.
- A: Well, we walked into the...
- Q: HOW WAS THAT ARRANGED?
- A: It wasn't arranged at all. We decided, I decided after I was invited to Meiern; all Jews are invited back to their towns - their birthplaces...
- Q: YOU WERE INVITED BY THE GOVERNMENT.
- A: I was invited by the Jewish Christian Worker's Association to come to Meiern - and hosted by them, for ten days, we had quite an experience there.
- Q: WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?
- A: This was, let me think, 40, '95/'96. '96. And we had quite an experience in there, in that town, staying there for ten days. We attended services in the synagogue in [Undernach?], which is a small, other town, on the Rhine. And the synagogue in Meiern is no more. They took us to all the synagogues around Meiern, where, they were all destroyed. Only one of them is now a museum. And we went to Friday night services in a small town also, where there is one synagogue restored, in Undernach, which was quite an experience too, to go to services like that. They were not services

like you and I know. The, mostly Russian Jews, and very religious Jews. Where you have the services, the men are downstairs. All they do is daven. The women are upstairs. And, has no correlation between the services we have here. None, whatsoever. But it was very interesting to see. They took us on a Rhine tour, a boat tour, which was very nice. And, they really hosted us in a nice fashion.

Q: THE PEOPLE ARE OF.. I MEAN, THE TOWN OF MEIERN.

A: The town of Meiern, yes. They gave us a book and all. After that, we rented a car. We wanted to drive around Europe, around Germany maybe, or something. I decided - I told my husband, I wanna go to Bergen-Belsen. He said: "Okay." So, we rented a car and we drove to Bergen-Belsen, I mean, by way of [Westzlaar?].

Q: IS IT FAR?

A: No, it's not too far. We took a little detours around and.. found the entrance to Bergen-Belsen. It didn't look like that at all. Not at all - it did not look like that. I don't remember a thing about it. Not at all - it didn't look like that. So we walk into the Great Hall there, and there they have a book on people who were in the camp. And we open it up and there is my name, of course, and people that I know of, also. And there was my name in the book. Were in Bergen-Belsen. And I wanted to have that page. So, we asked how can I get a photocopy of that page. And they asked me: "Why?" I said: "My name is on there." And they said: "You were in the camp?" I said: "Yes, I was in the camp." "Just a minute, wait a minute."

Q: RIGHT HERE...

A: Right. So they had - she went to the back office and three people came out. And they wanted to know all about me. So I told them whatever I could. And, they said: "Would you mind if I interview you?" I didn't know what I was in for. So they videotaped it, in German, the interview, in German. And I've got the tape. They sent me the tape. And, so I told

them my story - abbreviated. I didn't want to tell them everything.

Q: DID THEY WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING?

A: Yes. They wanted to know everything and everything, but most of the things I didn't remember, because I blocked it up, blocked it out completely.

Q: WERE THEY MORE CONCERNED WITH WHAT IT WAS LIKE IN BERGEN-BELSEN FOR YOU, OR DID THEY WANT TO KNOW THE WHOLE HISTORY OF HOW YOU HAD GOTTEN THERE?

A: The whole history. They wanted to know everything. They wanted to know the whole history, because, I couldn't tell them much about Bergen-Belsen - because, I'd blocked it out completely, almost all. So, that's the reason I - I did give them the interview, but that's the reason I didn't know much. I didn't remember much. I have remembered much more today, than I did at that time. I was much too nervous and too...

Q: TOO AFRAID?

A: Too anxious.

Q: DID THINGS COME UP - DID YOU REMEMBER THINGS AFTER THAT FIRST...?

A: Yes. I remembered many more things after that. And then, it sort of cleansed me. I mean it sort of helped me see things in different ways and different perspective - different - I'd distanced myself from it.

Q: YOU WEREN'T QUITE UP - AS CLOSE TO IT, HUH?

A: No. It didn't well up all the time, every time I thought about it, or talked about it, or anything like that. It, the emotions were pushed away more.

Q: I THINK THAT'S PARTLY THE PRICE OF NOT HAVING TALKED ABOUT IT SO LONG.

A: Yes.

- Q: IT COMES WITH SUCH FORCE.
WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE, FOR YOU, TO TALK TO US TODAY?
- A: Oh, very interesting, because I had forgotten some of the things I'd talked about. They pushed away into the background, because they were either not interesting to me anymore, or forgotten, or... ah, not quite what I expected I would feel.
- Q: WELL, WE'RE VERY GLAD THAT YOU DECIDED TO TALK ABOUT IT TO US.
- A: Well, yes, I got pushed into it, by you.
[laughs] It's alright, I'm glad. I am glad that you did. You nudged, let's say, not pushed, but nudged. It's good to do that, yes.
- Q: I REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR HAVING TOLD US YOUR STORY. AND TOLD IT IN SUCH A GENEROUS WAY. I KNOW THAT SOME OF IT WAS NOT EASY. AND, I APPRECIATE YOUR COURAGE.
- A: Well, I think courage had nothing to do with it. But, I do appreciate your praise, thank you very much. But, courage had nothing to do with it. It's something that I would like to see for posterity, that - sometimes you get into situations you think you'll never get out of and you do get out of them.
- Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?
- A: I couldn't tell you. I have - the only thing that I have is - our wedding picture.
- Q: WE'LL GET THAT ON IN JUST A MOMENT.
- A: That's something that - I mean, also my husband has a story to tell, which he won't tell.
- Q: NO?
- A: No. He was in Shanghai, so...
- Q: HE'S THE - PUT IT BEHIND YOU - SCHOOL OF THOUGHT, HUH?
- A: Yes, he is, yeah.

Q: HE'S NOT WRONG.

A: He isn't?

Q: NO, THERE ARE PEOPLE LIKE THAT, WHO WANT TO DO IT THAT WAY, YOU KNOW.

A: But, he doesn't put it behind him.

Q: WELL I DON'T THINK ONE CAN PUT IT BEHIND YOU.

A: Because he runs the website of the Shanghai Reunion.

Q: OH YEAH.

A: He now organizes the reunion for the Shanghai landers, as they call themselves, right here in Foster City. There's going to be a reunion in April of next year. And he is running the whole thing now. So he isn't putting it behind him. So, it's interesting - right.

Q: YEAH, 'CAUSE THOSE PEOPLE CERTAINLY TALK ABOUT IT, DON'T THEY.

A: Of course they do.

Q: OKAY, WE'LL TAKE A BREAK AND MAYBE WE'LL GET OUR THINGS AND...

A: [star] This is one of the original stars that I wore during the war. I saved it off my clothes before they were burned by the Americans. I don't know why I did that. It's just something I did - I wanted to show how proud I was that I was Jewish. And that's the main reason, I think, maybe I did. I really don't remember why.

Q: GOOD THING YOU HAD THAT FORETHOUGHT. AND THIS WAS FROM...

A: From the - this was the one from Holland, because it said - Jew, in Dutch, on it.

[picture of woman in hat] This is my mother. This was taken way before she was married. All the sisters in the family, there were five of them, had gone to finishing school, and they all had their portrait taken. This way - I

remember seeing portraits of all of her sisters.

[picture of a young girl] That's me in 1934, in Kalkar, in our back yard. We had a huge yard, where we grew just about everything. We had to grow all of our own vegetables and fruits. We had chickens, so we could have fresh eggs. And we kept a kosher house, and everything was taken care of in our own garden, and a plot of land outside of Kalkar, so we could can for the winter.

[picture of building - 2 story] This is the store my grandfather and his partner, Joseph Spier - Joseph Spier got killed by the Nazi's in 1933. They owned the store for whatever, I can't remember, way, way back.

Q: YOU SAID IT WAS A COUPLE OF GENERATIONS, WASN'T IT?

A: Yes. Couple of generations back for them. They owned the store there.

[picture of man, with girl sitting on lap] That's my father, Arthur Isaac, Artur Ezak, that's the way it is pronounced, and myself. And at one of - just before my mother died - at one of our happier times. We were realizing we were finally going to immigrate. So, we were quite happy that way.

Q: AND THAT WAS THEN...?

A: 1938, just - maybe the summer, 1938, because I was wearing summer clothes, and my father was wearing a summer jacket. In Germany you wore a poplin, a black poplin jacket instead of your suit jacket for Shabbaz, especially when you were relaxing. No, it couldn't have been Shabbaz, because he was smoking. He wouldn't smoke on Shabbaz.

[group picture of six persons]
Q: AND THIS PICTURE HERE?

A: This picture is of my grandfather and grandmother and sister-in-law of my father's, my father, and his younger brother and a cousin - the retarded brother that He my grandfather

and grandmother were first cousins. And their grandfathers and grandmothers were also first cousins. So, my uncle was born with a club foot and somebody, in the early 1900's, when he was four years old, decided to operate on him, on this club foot, to make it better. And, the anesthetic was too strong, so he stayed - the anesthetic, he became brain damaged. So...

[picture of group around a table, with the candelabra prominent on the table]

This group of friends of mine are - they all belong to, in Amsterdam, to the [Mak-Habbeirmatzzei?] and we were all very ardent Zionists, and we all wanted to go to Israel, or, at that time, Palestine. But we wanted to go to Israel. We were - always got together, whenever we could. This was our Hanukkah party, unfortunately, all of them perished, except me. Every one of them died in a concentration camp - got caught, one way or another. And I was the only survivor of this whole group.

Q: DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YEAR THIS WAS?

A: Yes. 1941.

Q: AND YOU WERE ALL ALREADY WEARING...

A: We all already had to wear stars, because we were in the... [pulls up another picture of the same group]

This is the same picture, except somebody else is taking the picture.

Q: WHERE ARE YOU?
RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE CANDELABRA.

A: Right here. [points] That's me.

[picture of woman, sitting] This is my grandmother. Her name is Minna Rosenthal. She was born in Meiern, same place I was born in. My grandfather died in 1907, and she had - they had nine children and she raised every one of those children, by herself, by running the store. All of the five girls, my mother's four sisters and my mother, went to finishing school. And all of the four boys, my uncles, went on a college or a equivalent and had an

education. And none of them took over the store. It is my father who took the store over from her, when she wanted to retire. And she was a most, most beloved grandmother. And everybody that came in contact with her was in - loved her. She and my aunt, my mother's twin sister were very similar, in personality and in loving people and helping.

Q: AND...

A: She died - she was killed in Sobibor, by being shipped to the concentration camp.

[picture of young lady, with hat] That's me, in Zwolle, 1942, something like that, in the Household Economic School, where I learned to iron, and sew and cook. And do all the good things that a good maid can do, cleaning of course. And this is me, ironing, I'm wearing a type of a nurse's hat and an apron, with a star on it. Everybody had to wear the star. Indoors and outdoors.

[picture of man and woman] Father and my stepmother. Her name was Margaret Fleischer and she's still living, she's ninety-five years old now in 19, er, in 2001 and they were very happily married. It's only been too short a time they were married - just fifteen years. And she was very, very good to me when I first came to the United States. She helped me a great deal.

[color picture of young couple] This is myself and my husband, Renee Wildorf. And this is a picture that we had the audacity to take for Hanukkah of 1950. We got married in 1950. We had the audacity to give this as present, as a Hanukkah present to my parents and to his mother. And we took a picture of ourselves - how vain can you get!

Q: WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

A: Well, you're entirely welcome and I thank you for recording all of the histories and all of the memorials that would otherwise be lost. Because life goes on - people forget, and the oral history is part of tradition, Jewish tradition because most of the histories are

all oral histories. The written word wasn't invented until quite a long time ago. Quite a short time ago, really.

Q: WELL THANK YOU.

A: It's a tradition really, in the Jewish community to tell stories.

END OF PART 2 OF 2.

Lines: 4 452.

END OF PART 2 OF 2.