

Good afternoon. My name is Bonnie Kind, and I'm a member of the Kean College Oral Testimonies Project of the Holocaust Resource Center. We're affiliated with the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale.

Sharing the interview with me is Dr. Phyllis Tobin, clinical coordinator of the Yale project in the New York area, and associate clinical coordinator at Kean College. We're privileged to greet Miss Lotte Baum, a survivor presently living in Whiting, New Jersey, who has graciously volunteered to give testimony about her experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust. Miss Baum, let me begin by just asking you to tell us a little bit about where you came from, what the town was like, and your date of birth.

I was born August 9, 1915 in Essen, Germany. And I went 8 years to Jewish public school. And I graduated in 1929 and went two years to a secretarial school. I had one brother who was 1 and 1/2 year older than I am.

What kind of a home did you have?

Oh, I had a very-- my parents, very loving parents. My father was a salesman. My mother, she didn't work, naturally, as it was at those times. And had a wonderful--

Were you comfortable?

Very-- yeah, comfortable.

To what extent was being Jewish important to you at that time?

My parents were not very religious, but we went every Saturday to the temple. And we were, naturally, members. We both went to the Jewish school, which we didn't have to. And my brother was bar mitzvah, like any normal Jewish family.

Had your parents been residents of Germany for many years?

My mother was born there. My father was-- he was born in Holland, but he lived for quite a few years in Germany. My grandparents on my father's side, they lived on the border in Germany, right near Holland.

Your social life, as a child, was it primarily with Jewish people or was it mixed?

I had only Jewish friends through school. And we were very involved with a Dutch club, where we went almost twice a month. We had gatherings and so.

What language did you speak at home?

German.

German, not Dutch.

No.

But there was a large Dutch community in Essen?

Yes, yes.

What year did you graduate secretarial school?

1931.













And also you had lost your parents before, so you were really alone in that way, too?

Yes. My father, 1931-- I was just 16 years old. Just suddenly. And my mother, she couldn't just cope. This is 1933. She had a stroke, and 1936 she passed away. Yeah, I had to take care of her. My father didn't live in Germany anymore.

So your youth wasn't so youthful.

No, it wasn't.

OK. Thank you very much. [OFF CAMERA WHISPERING].

No.

Thank you very much. We--

You're welcome. I'm glad I have it off my chest.

Yes.

I never could talk about it.

Yes, well, you have, and we really are very grateful to you. Thank you.

Thank you very much.