

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,434

2
00:00:05,434 --> 00:00:11,362
[MUSIC PLAYING]

3
00:00:11,362 --> 00:00:38,580

4
00:00:38,580 --> 00:00:39,520
Good afternoon.

5
00:00:39,520 --> 00:00:41,430
My name is Bernard
Weinstein, and I'm

6
00:00:41,430 --> 00:00:43,860
the Director of the Kean
College Oral Testimonies

7
00:00:43,860 --> 00:00:46,590
project of the Holocaust
Resource Center.

8
00:00:46,590 --> 00:00:49,290
We are affiliated with
the Video Archives

9
00:00:49,290 --> 00:00:53,100
for Holocaust Testimonies
of Yale University.

10
00:00:53,100 --> 00:00:56,760
I am privileged to welcome
Irene Buchner of Westfield, New

11
00:00:56,760 --> 00:01:02,610
Jersey, who will give us
testimony about her experiences

12
00:01:02,610 --> 00:01:04,650

before and during the Holocaust.

13

00:01:04,650 --> 00:01:06,510

Welcome, Mrs. Buchner.

14

00:01:06,510 --> 00:01:09,990

I wonder if you could
begin by telling us

15

00:01:09,990 --> 00:01:12,270

when and where you were
born, and a little bit

16

00:01:12,270 --> 00:01:15,840

about your early background?

17

00:01:15,840 --> 00:01:20,280

Well, I was born
in Berlin in 1926.

18

00:01:20,280 --> 00:01:25,590

I lived in a nice area
near the Tiergarten.

19

00:01:25,590 --> 00:01:32,260

And my earliest
remembrances, my parents,

20

00:01:32,260 --> 00:01:35,700

originally born in
Frankfurt, but moved

21

00:01:35,700 --> 00:01:37,740

to Berlin, my mother
when she was married,

22

00:01:37,740 --> 00:01:40,830

my father I think age one.

23

00:01:40,830 --> 00:01:45,600

And in 1933--

24

00:01:45,600 --> 00:01:49,290
Where was your mother born, and
then your father originally?

25
00:01:49,290 --> 00:01:51,390
Both in Frankfurt.

26
00:01:51,390 --> 00:01:52,050
In Frankfurt.

27
00:01:52,050 --> 00:01:53,730
Right.

28
00:01:53,730 --> 00:01:56,550
Although my family comes
from the Rhineland,

29
00:01:56,550 --> 00:01:58,420
has been there for a long time.

30
00:01:58,420 --> 00:02:01,920
In fact, my great
grandfather founded

31
00:02:01,920 --> 00:02:09,300
the first Jewish sanitarium for
mentally handicapped people.

32
00:02:09,300 --> 00:02:12,450
It's still there.

33
00:02:12,450 --> 00:02:14,430
That it's not
under the auspices.

34
00:02:14,430 --> 00:02:16,080
It's now Catholic boys school.

35
00:02:16,080 --> 00:02:19,110

36
00:02:19,110 --> 00:02:23,640

So my father, who was
a lawyer and district

37
00:02:23,640 --> 00:02:30,420
attorney in Berlin, was one
of the first really affected

38
00:02:30,420 --> 00:02:33,000
by the Nuremberg laws,
because any government

39
00:02:33,000 --> 00:02:37,470
servant was non Aryan was
dismissed I think, already

40
00:02:37,470 --> 00:02:39,310
in 1933.

41
00:02:39,310 --> 00:02:46,530
The irony was, that of
course, as a good bureaucrat

42
00:02:46,530 --> 00:02:49,020
in German law, they
couldn't take away

43
00:02:49,020 --> 00:02:51,590
the fact that he worked for
the government for 11 years.

44
00:02:51,590 --> 00:02:55,170
So he got a full pension,
even though he was

45
00:02:55,170 --> 00:02:57,240
dismissed from the government.

46
00:02:57,240 --> 00:03:02,350
And fortunately, he had many
interests, literary and others.

47
00:03:02,350 --> 00:03:03,750
And so he was very busy.

48
00:03:03,750 --> 00:03:08,280
He also was a representative
of an American state,

49
00:03:08,280 --> 00:03:13,620
which kind of protected
him for a while anyway.

50
00:03:13,620 --> 00:03:16,080
I have a twin sister.

51
00:03:16,080 --> 00:03:22,200
And we went to a public Catholic
school first part of my life.

52
00:03:22,200 --> 00:03:28,845
Then when we moved to the center
Berlin, Kurfurstendamm, which

53
00:03:28,845 --> 00:03:33,840
is kind of the Park
Avenue of Berlin.

54
00:03:33,840 --> 00:03:39,540
And when I was about I think
seven, eight years old.

55
00:03:39,540 --> 00:03:41,880
Then again, because
of the Nuremberg laws,

56
00:03:41,880 --> 00:03:43,770
we were prevented
from continuing

57
00:03:43,770 --> 00:03:47,580
in the public schools, and we
had to go to Jewish school.

58
00:03:47,580 --> 00:03:51,540
So my sister and I went
to a so-called Waldschule.

59

00:03:51,540 --> 00:03:55,520

It was out in the green part
of Berlin in the suburbs.

60

00:03:55,520 --> 00:03:58,580

We went there by streetcar.

61

00:03:58,580 --> 00:04:01,308

It was called the
Goldschmidt-Schule.

62

00:04:01,308 --> 00:04:02,850

Apparently, it had
quite a reputation

63

00:04:02,850 --> 00:04:06,120

even before the
Nuremberg laws made

64

00:04:06,120 --> 00:04:10,680

it necessary for many
Jewish students to go there.

65

00:04:10,680 --> 00:04:12,630

Can you contrast in
any way, or do you

66

00:04:12,630 --> 00:04:18,870

remember a kind of pre-Nuremberg
law period, which would tell us

67

00:04:18,870 --> 00:04:22,530

a little bit about the effect
that the Nuremberg laws had

68

00:04:22,530 --> 00:04:23,850

on you personally?

69

00:04:23,850 --> 00:04:25,740

I remember two things.

70

00:04:25,740 --> 00:04:29,490

Really, it was pretty
early on in my life.

71

00:04:29,490 --> 00:04:36,330

One, since we were in a
Catholic school, somehow,

72

00:04:36,330 --> 00:04:39,600

we were excused from
religious classes,

73

00:04:39,600 --> 00:04:41,850

but we weren't
prevented from going.

74

00:04:41,850 --> 00:04:43,200

So I always stayed.

75

00:04:43,200 --> 00:04:46,410

I liked it very much.

76

00:04:46,410 --> 00:04:51,690

And I remember once a teacher
was asking some question,

77

00:04:51,690 --> 00:04:55,290

and nobody in the class
knew it, but I did know it.

78

00:04:55,290 --> 00:04:59,140

And I raised my hand,
and the teacher said,

79

00:04:59,140 --> 00:05:03,280

do you have to have a little
Jewess tell you the answer?

80

00:05:03,280 --> 00:05:04,440

And she wouldn't call me.

81

00:05:04,440 --> 00:05:08,440

But finally she did,

and I responded.

82

00:05:08,440 --> 00:05:13,350

I do remember also, that it must
have been after Hitler already,

83

00:05:13,350 --> 00:05:16,770

but somebody who apparently
was in the class,

84

00:05:16,770 --> 00:05:21,060

or heard about it, that I
was a Jew, on the street,

85

00:05:21,060 --> 00:05:26,123

yelled after us, "oh, old Jew"
or something, "alter Jude."

86

00:05:26,123 --> 00:05:27,540

And so I was very
indignant, and I

87

00:05:27,540 --> 00:05:33,540

turned around and said, "alter
Heide," which is old heathen.

88

00:05:33,540 --> 00:05:37,870

And then I remember
also before we moved,

89

00:05:37,870 --> 00:05:42,220

we were invited to a birthday
party of one of our classmates.

90

00:05:42,220 --> 00:05:46,480

And her prized possession,
her prized present

91

00:05:46,480 --> 00:05:51,010

was a little doll
in full SA regalia,

92

00:05:51,010 --> 00:05:53,980

had a full uniform of a Nazi.

93

00:05:53,980 --> 00:05:55,900

And when the father
came in later,

94

00:05:55,900 --> 00:05:57,940

he also was in full uniform.

95

00:05:57,940 --> 00:06:00,220

But in those early
days, apparently, they

96

00:06:00,220 --> 00:06:02,830

hadn't thought enough
about not inviting us.

97

00:06:02,830 --> 00:06:05,260

So my sister and I were invited.

98

00:06:05,260 --> 00:06:06,580

It was a lovely party.

99

00:06:06,580 --> 00:06:09,040

But I did the recount
at home that the father

100

00:06:09,040 --> 00:06:12,670

had this uniform on, that this
doll had the same uniform.

101

00:06:12,670 --> 00:06:15,670

That was sort of
interesting to me.

102

00:06:15,670 --> 00:06:17,890

I don't know what my
parents thought of it.

103

00:06:17,890 --> 00:06:23,290

But those are the earliest
recollections about Nazism,

104

00:06:23,290 --> 00:06:24,070
or anything.

105

00:06:24,070 --> 00:06:25,660
I did know that
my father was home

106

00:06:25,660 --> 00:06:27,760
a good bit more than before.

107

00:06:27,760 --> 00:06:30,030
What was his morale like?

108

00:06:30,030 --> 00:06:33,040
His spirit?

109

00:06:33,040 --> 00:06:37,960
Well, I think generally, he
felt very transitory phase

110

00:06:37,960 --> 00:06:41,020
in German politics
and German history.

111

00:06:41,020 --> 00:06:43,750
He didn't think that
this was going to affect

112

00:06:43,750 --> 00:06:47,600
him very much for very long.

113

00:06:47,600 --> 00:06:49,930
I think that was his
attitude in the beginning,

114

00:06:49,930 --> 00:06:51,970
it couldn't happen to him.

115

00:06:51,970 --> 00:06:56,240
And as I said, he had
many other interests.

116

00:06:56,240 --> 00:07:01,860

He wrote [? ballet ?]

kind of things.

117

00:07:01,860 --> 00:07:03,520

He was a bibliophile.

118

00:07:03,520 --> 00:07:09,010

He even had an exhibit still

in 1936, I think it was,

119

00:07:09,010 --> 00:07:12,500

maybe it was a little earlier,

of his collection of Hugo von

120

00:07:12,500 --> 00:07:16,600

Hofmannsthal in the

Berlin city library,

121

00:07:16,600 --> 00:07:19,990

the big, big library in Berlin.

122

00:07:19,990 --> 00:07:21,250

It was a big exhibit.

123

00:07:21,250 --> 00:07:27,080

And he was the collector of

Hofmannsthal at that time.

124

00:07:27,080 --> 00:07:31,860

And he belonged to a very

exclusive bibliophilic society,

125

00:07:31,860 --> 00:07:34,180

called the Maximilian

Gesellschaft.

126

00:07:34,180 --> 00:07:36,970

It was like the

Grolier Club here.

127

00:07:36,970 --> 00:07:41,380

And they didn't throw him
out for a very long time,

128
00:07:41,380 --> 00:07:45,700
I think, from '33
until maybe '36,

129
00:07:45,700 --> 00:07:47,500
when he finally had to leave.

130
00:07:47,500 --> 00:07:50,440
So maybe the whole
group was disbanded.

131
00:07:50,440 --> 00:07:51,740
I'm not sure.

132
00:07:51,740 --> 00:07:54,580
But anyway, he still
exhibited his collection.

133
00:07:54,580 --> 00:07:56,360
So he was very busy with that.

134
00:07:56,360 --> 00:08:02,200
And he wrote an annotated
bibliography of Hofmannsthal,

135
00:08:02,200 --> 00:08:03,140
and so on.

136
00:08:03,140 --> 00:08:06,466
So I don't remember him being--

137
00:08:06,466 --> 00:08:10,540
our life being terribly
upset in the first few years.

138
00:08:10,540 --> 00:08:15,010
I do remember that
our house servants

139

00:08:15,010 --> 00:08:17,560
were no longer with us.

140
00:08:17,560 --> 00:08:19,810
We lost my nurse first.

141
00:08:19,810 --> 00:08:24,310
And then we lost
some of the servants,

142
00:08:24,310 --> 00:08:29,140
because again, the Nuremberg
laws apparently said

143
00:08:29,140 --> 00:08:31,630
non Aryan could not work for--

144
00:08:31,630 --> 00:08:34,450
I mean, an Aryan couldn't
work for a non Aryan.

145
00:08:34,450 --> 00:08:37,539
So I do know that
after we moved,

146
00:08:37,539 --> 00:08:40,390
we only had one servant
who was a wonderful woman,

147
00:08:40,390 --> 00:08:45,700
was very outspoken against
the Nazis and Hitler.

148
00:08:45,700 --> 00:08:49,150
Her husband was a socialist
and had been imprisoned.

149
00:08:49,150 --> 00:08:53,140
And she wasn't afraid to
work and help my mother.

150
00:08:53,140 --> 00:08:56,890
Even my nurse, whom we

had from age from when

151

00:08:56,890 --> 00:09:00,070

we were born until
about age four,

152

00:09:00,070 --> 00:09:04,000

never said anything about, isn't
it a shame what's going on,

153

00:09:04,000 --> 00:09:06,490

never made a remark,
even though she lived

154

00:09:06,490 --> 00:09:08,310

in the family and everything.

155

00:09:08,310 --> 00:09:09,940

Never said anything
against the Nazis.

156

00:09:09,940 --> 00:09:13,910

And my mother even
remarked on that.

157

00:09:13,910 --> 00:09:16,450

But other than
that, as a child, I

158

00:09:16,450 --> 00:09:17,950

don't remember too
much, except when

159

00:09:17,950 --> 00:09:21,040

we had to go to
the Jewish school,

160

00:09:21,040 --> 00:09:25,070

and we had to go quite
a way on the streetcar.

161

00:09:25,070 --> 00:09:26,930

But we didn't mind it.

162
00:09:26,930 --> 00:09:29,950
And I do remember once,
it must have been just

163
00:09:29,950 --> 00:09:38,440
before Kristallnacht, you
know, November, I guess it was.

164
00:09:38,440 --> 00:09:42,850
My sister said, she
saw some SA youth

165
00:09:42,850 --> 00:09:46,540
that were chasing kids, my
sister having dark hair,

166
00:09:46,540 --> 00:09:48,950
and looking a little
more Jewish than I did.

167
00:09:48,950 --> 00:09:54,200
I had blonde pigtails, and they
didn't know that I was Jewish.

168
00:09:54,200 --> 00:09:55,070
They Chased her.

169
00:09:55,070 --> 00:09:57,040
They didn't chase me.

170
00:09:57,040 --> 00:09:58,090
And we ran home.

171
00:09:58,090 --> 00:10:00,070
We didn't know why
they were chasing us,

172
00:10:00,070 --> 00:10:01,910
but they were chasing us.

173
00:10:01,910 --> 00:10:06,910

And that's one recollection.

174

00:10:06,910 --> 00:10:15,710

And I do remember once, must
have been '38, suddenly,

175

00:10:15,710 --> 00:10:20,270

we had a chauffeur,
and he came and he

176

00:10:20,270 --> 00:10:22,730

told my father to pack his bag.

177

00:10:22,730 --> 00:10:26,210

And my father packed
his bag, and they

178

00:10:26,210 --> 00:10:28,720

disappeared for a whole week.

179

00:10:28,720 --> 00:10:31,430

We didn't know where he
was, or where he'd gone to.

180

00:10:31,430 --> 00:10:36,080

And some men did come to our
house and asked where he was.

181

00:10:36,080 --> 00:10:40,460

And apparently, that was because
they were rounding up people,

182

00:10:40,460 --> 00:10:44,030

and somebody had
probably given his name,

183

00:10:44,030 --> 00:10:45,650

and they were coming
to look for him.

184

00:10:45,650 --> 00:10:48,860

And he had been in the
Rhineland it turned out.

185
00:10:48,860 --> 00:10:51,530
He wasn't there when they came,
and they didn't come again,

186
00:10:51,530 --> 00:10:55,160
not while we were in Berlin.

187
00:10:55,160 --> 00:10:57,470
These were not
people in uniform.

188
00:10:57,470 --> 00:11:00,650
These were people
in civilian clothes.

189
00:11:00,650 --> 00:11:01,820
I do remember that.

190
00:11:01,820 --> 00:11:05,280

191
00:11:05,280 --> 00:11:10,920
After '38, I guess,
I mean, there

192
00:11:10,920 --> 00:11:15,410
wasn't much talk in the
house about immigrating,

193
00:11:15,410 --> 00:11:17,730
where would we go to.

194
00:11:17,730 --> 00:11:22,980
And my father who never knew
any English, only French, much

195
00:11:22,980 --> 00:11:28,300
preferred the idea of
Belgium, or of France.

196
00:11:28,300 --> 00:11:32,490

And my mother
really would prefer

197
00:11:32,490 --> 00:11:35,610
the idea of going to the
United States, or to Israel.

198
00:11:35,610 --> 00:11:40,140
And I had joined a youth
group, Zionist youth group.

199
00:11:40,140 --> 00:11:44,310
And I was very Zionist oriented.

200
00:11:44,310 --> 00:11:45,930
And I wanted to go to Israel.

201
00:11:45,930 --> 00:11:49,030
And many of my friends
started leaving,

202
00:11:49,030 --> 00:11:52,590
going to different
countries, and some

203
00:11:52,590 --> 00:11:55,570
going to Israel, youth Aliyah.

204
00:11:55,570 --> 00:11:57,630
I thought that was
the best thing.

205
00:11:57,630 --> 00:11:59,340
And I wanted to go too.

206
00:11:59,340 --> 00:12:01,980
But we didn't have--

207
00:12:01,980 --> 00:12:06,240
as far as I know at that time,
we might have had a visa,

208

00:12:06,240 --> 00:12:09,630
but we didn't have an
immigrating number, which

209
00:12:09,630 --> 00:12:11,810
apparently, you needed to.

210
00:12:11,810 --> 00:12:13,860
So don't forget,
I mean, my sister

211
00:12:13,860 --> 00:12:18,660
and I were about 11 years
old when all this happened.

212
00:12:18,660 --> 00:12:22,350
Did you have a sense of
personal endangerment,

213
00:12:22,350 --> 00:12:26,920
that your own life at this
time might be in danger?

214
00:12:26,920 --> 00:12:28,620
I knew there were disruptions.

215
00:12:28,620 --> 00:12:31,620
But my parents
acted very coolly,

216
00:12:31,620 --> 00:12:36,280
and I think tried to save
us from any kind of worry.

217
00:12:36,280 --> 00:12:39,420
So my sister and I lived
very ordinary lives,

218
00:12:39,420 --> 00:12:41,790
despite the things
that were going on.

219
00:12:41,790 --> 00:12:45,310

We did know about Kristallnacht,
because living in Berlin,

220
00:12:45,310 --> 00:12:47,560
we saw the signs, and
the store windows,

221
00:12:47,560 --> 00:12:49,470
and we saw the smashed windows.

222
00:12:49,470 --> 00:12:52,750
And we knew that the
synagogue had been burned.

223
00:12:52,750 --> 00:12:54,810
So we were aware of that.

224
00:12:54,810 --> 00:12:59,520
And I guess children being
where they are, I thought,

225
00:12:59,520 --> 00:13:02,680
how wonderful it would be
to go away and go to Israel.

226
00:13:02,680 --> 00:13:06,310
So I thought that was
really what I wanted to do.

227
00:13:06,310 --> 00:13:12,600
And so we heard that my parents
had made some kind of contacts

228
00:13:12,600 --> 00:13:15,960
overseas, that there had
been letters back and forth.

229
00:13:15,960 --> 00:13:21,750
My grandmother had gone to
America, and one of my uncles.

230
00:13:21,750 --> 00:13:27,270
And so we knew I suppose,

that this was going on,

231
00:13:27,270 --> 00:13:30,780
but it didn't really
affect our daily life

232
00:13:30,780 --> 00:13:36,030
very much until finally,
my relatives in America

233
00:13:36,030 --> 00:13:37,810
had relatives in England.

234
00:13:37,810 --> 00:13:40,080
And it was decided
that my sister and I

235
00:13:40,080 --> 00:13:43,170
were to be sent to England.

236
00:13:43,170 --> 00:13:46,680
Again, we heard of
children's transports.

237
00:13:46,680 --> 00:13:50,040
This was a children's transport.

238
00:13:50,040 --> 00:13:54,210
Many parents decided that
things were too uncertain,

239
00:13:54,210 --> 00:13:55,920
their own futures uncertain.

240
00:13:55,920 --> 00:13:59,370
They wanted to at least
get their children out.

241
00:13:59,370 --> 00:14:01,590
So we were two of those.

242
00:14:01,590 --> 00:14:05,100

And because we had
these relatives

243
00:14:05,100 --> 00:14:08,220
that my parents made
contact with them,

244
00:14:08,220 --> 00:14:10,980
and they found a school
for us, and they were still

245
00:14:10,980 --> 00:14:16,540
able to write back and forth
to England and to America.

246
00:14:16,540 --> 00:14:25,710
And so in 1939,
January, I guess it was,

247
00:14:25,710 --> 00:14:30,330
we left on the
children's transport.

248
00:14:30,330 --> 00:14:34,380
My parents brought us
to Hamburg from where

249
00:14:34,380 --> 00:14:42,068
we were supposed to embark on a
ship, and land in Southampton.

250
00:14:42,068 --> 00:14:43,860
And you and your sister
were then about 12.

251
00:14:43,860 --> 00:14:46,230
We were just 12, yeah.

252
00:14:46,230 --> 00:14:50,670
And my parents again, we had
been to all kinds of camps,

253
00:14:50,670 --> 00:14:54,090

and we'd been in boarding school
in Switzerland at one point.

254

00:14:54,090 --> 00:14:57,840

So it wasn't a new experience
to leave my parents.

255

00:14:57,840 --> 00:15:01,680

We did see a lot of other
kids, and a lot of parents

256

00:15:01,680 --> 00:15:05,070

crying and carrying on when
the children were leaving.

257

00:15:05,070 --> 00:15:07,080

And my sisters
said to my mother,

258

00:15:07,080 --> 00:15:09,390

mommy, if you don't
cry, I won't cry.

259

00:15:09,390 --> 00:15:10,290

And that was it.

260

00:15:10,290 --> 00:15:11,220

We didn't cry.

261

00:15:11,220 --> 00:15:14,700

And we each had a suitcase.

262

00:15:14,700 --> 00:15:17,430

We had a big trunk that
was being shipped too.

263

00:15:17,430 --> 00:15:20,640

And we left.

264

00:15:20,640 --> 00:15:24,690

I still remember a
Nazi officer apparently

265

00:15:24,690 --> 00:15:28,440

with some kind of soft spot
in his heart for little girls

266

00:15:28,440 --> 00:15:32,280

with blonde pigtails,
took my hand,

267

00:15:32,280 --> 00:15:34,060

and just took me
through customs.

268

00:15:34,060 --> 00:15:35,910

They never opened my suitcase.

269

00:15:35,910 --> 00:15:37,920

I could have smuggled
out the crown jewels,

270

00:15:37,920 --> 00:15:40,830

and nobody would have seen it.

271

00:15:40,830 --> 00:15:43,380

Do you think it was
because you were blonde?

272

00:15:43,380 --> 00:15:46,470

I guess I was a little
girl, and probably

273

00:15:46,470 --> 00:15:48,520

not too different from his own.

274

00:15:48,520 --> 00:15:55,120

And I don't know why,
but I do remember that.

275

00:15:55,120 --> 00:15:58,080

And then we went on
this terrible voyage

276

00:15:58,080 --> 00:16:01,980

across the English
Channel with all the kids,

277
00:16:01,980 --> 00:16:03,720
and we were all sick.

278
00:16:03,720 --> 00:16:06,960
And they had made a special
party for us, and so on.

279
00:16:06,960 --> 00:16:10,130
I guess whoever organized
the transport wanted

280
00:16:10,130 --> 00:16:11,600
the kids to be happy.

281
00:16:11,600 --> 00:16:15,650
And most of us never
made it up to the party.

282
00:16:15,650 --> 00:16:18,150
We were terribly sick.

283
00:16:18,150 --> 00:16:25,220
And when we came to England,
we were met by these people

284
00:16:25,220 --> 00:16:29,120
we'd never seen before in our
lives, but who were very nice.

285
00:16:29,120 --> 00:16:31,460
And they took us to
their home in London.

286
00:16:31,460 --> 00:16:34,760
And the next day,
drove us to our school.

287
00:16:34,760 --> 00:16:43,670
And we spent the school
years, well, from 12 to 16

288
00:16:43,670 --> 00:16:45,080
in a English boarding school.

289
00:16:45,080 --> 00:16:48,410
Of course, the
war did interfere,

290
00:16:48,410 --> 00:16:54,770
because we went to boarding
schools in Hove, Sussex.

291
00:16:54,770 --> 00:17:00,780
And 1939, when the war
broke out in Europe,

292
00:17:00,780 --> 00:17:02,910
my parents were in Berlin.

293
00:17:02,910 --> 00:17:04,740
And we were in England.

294
00:17:04,740 --> 00:17:07,520
And we could no longer
write to each other.

295
00:17:07,520 --> 00:17:09,380
We couldn't be in contact.

296
00:17:09,380 --> 00:17:11,400
We sent letters to America.

297
00:17:11,400 --> 00:17:13,550
And they sent it on to Berlin.

298
00:17:13,550 --> 00:17:16,310
And we sent letters to
some cousins in Belgium,

299
00:17:16,310 --> 00:17:18,589
and they sent it on to Berlin.

300

00:17:18,589 --> 00:17:20,180

We didn't know what they got.

301

00:17:20,180 --> 00:17:23,240

And we didn't hear from
them very much either.

302

00:17:23,240 --> 00:17:26,310

We did get letters
maybe once a month.

303

00:17:26,310 --> 00:17:29,690

And it was possible
to send a Red Cross

304

00:17:29,690 --> 00:17:33,085

letter, 25 words
every so often, just

305

00:17:33,085 --> 00:17:34,460

to make sure they
were all right.

306

00:17:34,460 --> 00:17:39,800

But you know, there
came a time when

307

00:17:39,800 --> 00:17:42,380

English planes bombed Germany.

308

00:17:42,380 --> 00:17:45,450

And we knew our parents
had been in Berlin.

309

00:17:45,450 --> 00:17:48,830

It wasn't exactly
a pleasant thought.

310

00:17:48,830 --> 00:17:50,870

And they of course,
heard the news

311

00:17:50,870 --> 00:17:54,900
about what was
going on in England.

312
00:17:54,900 --> 00:17:57,920
And they weren't
too happy either.

313
00:17:57,920 --> 00:18:03,350
In 1941, I think it
was, our school was

314
00:18:03,350 --> 00:18:08,130
evacuated, because we
were right on the border.

315
00:18:08,130 --> 00:18:10,310
And people were
afraid that Germany

316
00:18:10,310 --> 00:18:12,120
was going to invade England.

317
00:18:12,120 --> 00:18:15,530
And we were evacuated
to North Wales.

318
00:18:15,530 --> 00:18:18,890
And I spent the rest
of my time in England,

319
00:18:18,890 --> 00:18:21,980
at least at that
school in North Wales.

320
00:18:21,980 --> 00:18:24,770
That was also a
very unusual thing.

321
00:18:24,770 --> 00:18:28,430
While you were in Hove, or
while you were in Wales,

322

00:18:28,430 --> 00:18:36,090
did you experience
anything as far as Jews?

323
00:18:36,090 --> 00:18:38,390
The funny part was,
that even though we

324
00:18:38,390 --> 00:18:43,580
were in a Jewish school, they
looked upon us as Germans.

325
00:18:43,580 --> 00:18:47,360
And when the war was
really going furiously,

326
00:18:47,360 --> 00:18:50,600
they started calling us Hans.

327
00:18:50,600 --> 00:18:55,100
In other words, we became the
personification of Germany,

328
00:18:55,100 --> 00:18:57,950
even though we were Jews
and victims in a sense.

329
00:18:57,950 --> 00:19:01,460
As far as the kids were
concerned, we were Germans.

330
00:19:01,460 --> 00:19:04,040
You know, I mean, that
didn't last very long.

331
00:19:04,040 --> 00:19:07,700
But anyway, it was
sort of ironic twist

332
00:19:07,700 --> 00:19:11,120
that we had to suffer as
Germans, even though we

333

00:19:11,120 --> 00:19:13,970
were the victims of Germans.

334
00:19:13,970 --> 00:19:15,860
Did you live at the school?

335
00:19:15,860 --> 00:19:17,870
Yeah, it was a boarding school.

336
00:19:17,870 --> 00:19:22,460
And we graduated at 16.

337
00:19:22,460 --> 00:19:27,590
And since British universities
did not accept women

338
00:19:27,590 --> 00:19:32,300
under the age of 18, we went
to a secretarial college,

339
00:19:32,300 --> 00:19:34,950
a finishing skilled type thing.

340
00:19:34,950 --> 00:19:40,610
And then started
a job in England,

341
00:19:40,610 --> 00:19:45,130
in London, that was a time
of great bombing raids.

342
00:19:45,130 --> 00:19:47,870
So in the meantime,
however, my parents

343
00:19:47,870 --> 00:19:52,190
had left Germany
last minute, 1941.

344
00:19:52,190 --> 00:19:56,720
And via Portugal, had managed
to get to the United States.

345

00:19:56,720 --> 00:19:59,090

But by that time,
of course, America

346

00:19:59,090 --> 00:20:06,390

was in the war,
December '41, and we

347

00:20:06,390 --> 00:20:10,370

had no possibility of
getting to America, because

348

00:20:10,370 --> 00:20:13,850

of the submarines, new
boats, and everything.

349

00:20:13,850 --> 00:20:18,710

It was much too dangerous at
that time to join our parents.

350

00:20:18,710 --> 00:20:26,870

And so actually, it
wasn't until December '43.

351

00:20:26,870 --> 00:20:29,060

And even that was very risky.

352

00:20:29,060 --> 00:20:30,920

And we didn't
expect it to happen.

353

00:20:30,920 --> 00:20:35,460

But one fine day, somebody
came to us and said,

354

00:20:35,460 --> 00:20:38,570

we have permission
from your parents

355

00:20:38,570 --> 00:20:41,580

to let you come to America.

356

00:20:41,580 --> 00:20:44,600

And this was at
that time, I guess

357

00:20:44,600 --> 00:20:51,470

Bloomsbury House took care
of Jewish refugees in London.

358

00:20:51,470 --> 00:20:55,070

And all arrangements were
made through Bloomsbury house,

359

00:20:55,070 --> 00:20:56,780

wherever that was.

360

00:20:56,780 --> 00:21:00,630

And my parents had given
permission for us to come.

361

00:21:00,630 --> 00:21:04,760

But then when the u-boat,
danger was so great

362

00:21:04,760 --> 00:21:07,580

they had rescinded
that permission.

363

00:21:07,580 --> 00:21:12,890

But the fact that they took back
the permission came too late.

364

00:21:12,890 --> 00:21:15,680

Because that time,
they had already

365

00:21:15,680 --> 00:21:18,260

said taught us that we could go.

366

00:21:18,260 --> 00:21:22,220

Within 24 hours, I think, nobody
was supposed to know about it.

367

00:21:22,220 --> 00:21:24,290

We hastily packed.

368
00:21:24,290 --> 00:21:29,000
And we were taken at
night in a dark car

369
00:21:29,000 --> 00:21:30,770
to Bristol, because
nobody was supposed

370
00:21:30,770 --> 00:21:32,300
to know the point
of embarkation,

371
00:21:32,300 --> 00:21:33,860
because it was very dangerous.

372
00:21:33,860 --> 00:21:36,830
If the Germans found out
the convoy was going,

373
00:21:36,830 --> 00:21:40,140
then it was bound
to be attacked.

374
00:21:40,140 --> 00:21:43,220
So this was in '41.

375
00:21:43,220 --> 00:21:48,200
And we went on this banana boat.

376
00:21:48,200 --> 00:21:49,660
It was a Cunard.

377
00:21:49,660 --> 00:21:54,890
I guess, in peacetime,
it hauled fruit.

378
00:21:54,890 --> 00:21:56,900
But it had some nice
staterooms, and they

379

00:21:56,900 --> 00:22:01,370
were about 17 kids
in the staterooms,

380
00:22:01,370 --> 00:22:05,600
all children to be reunited
with their parents.

381
00:22:05,600 --> 00:22:13,450
And I guess, from age
maybe 8, 10, to 17.

382
00:22:13,450 --> 00:22:20,680
And we set out from Bristol
at night to join the convoy,

383
00:22:20,680 --> 00:22:24,460
and cross the Atlantic in
the middle of the winter,

384
00:22:24,460 --> 00:22:29,680
zigzag route via
Greenland and Iceland,

385
00:22:29,680 --> 00:22:31,750
took about three weeks.

386
00:22:31,750 --> 00:22:34,360
Terrible, we were getting
sick the whole time,

387
00:22:34,360 --> 00:22:39,090
all the time we got on the boat
to the time we came to America.

388
00:22:39,090 --> 00:22:42,340
And of course, the
convoy was attacked.

389
00:22:42,340 --> 00:22:44,350
Our boat was not.

390
00:22:44,350 --> 00:22:51,440

And we landed in New York,
which was blacked out too.

391
00:22:51,440 --> 00:22:55,480
And we were met by
a representative

392
00:22:55,480 --> 00:23:01,720
of the Jewish council,
a woman who at that time

393
00:23:01,720 --> 00:23:05,230
did this kind of work,
and the Red Cross.

394
00:23:05,230 --> 00:23:08,320
Nobody in America knew we
were arriving in America.

395
00:23:08,320 --> 00:23:10,570
Because my parents had
thought the permission

396
00:23:10,570 --> 00:23:13,330
had been withdrawn,
and we weren't coming.

397
00:23:13,330 --> 00:23:18,740
So nobody knew we were
on the way, or there.

398
00:23:18,740 --> 00:23:22,510
So it was a big shock, a very
happy one for my parents.

399
00:23:22,510 --> 00:23:25,600
They had been spared the
agony of waiting for us,

400
00:23:25,600 --> 00:23:28,250
because they didn't
think we were coming.

401

00:23:28,250 --> 00:23:32,770

And we met them and my
grandmother, everybody,

402

00:23:32,770 --> 00:23:37,300

after five years

separation from 12 to 17

403

00:23:37,300 --> 00:23:40,270

not seeing the family at all.

404

00:23:40,270 --> 00:23:41,800

Did you have any
awareness of what

405

00:23:41,800 --> 00:23:46,970

was happening at the same
time throughout Europe?

406

00:23:46,970 --> 00:23:48,190

Of course.

407

00:23:48,190 --> 00:23:50,950

Well, first of all, we
went to Jewish school,

408

00:23:50,950 --> 00:23:57,070

a school that had catered
to Jewish students

409

00:23:57,070 --> 00:24:02,320

from all over Europe,
Holland, France, Poland.

410

00:24:02,320 --> 00:24:05,530

They'd come there to learn
English in the summer.

411

00:24:05,530 --> 00:24:08,380

And so we had met many
of these students.

412

00:24:08,380 --> 00:24:14,140

In fact, the summer of '39,
we had students from Holland,

413
00:24:14,140 --> 00:24:17,860
from Poland, from Belgium.

414
00:24:17,860 --> 00:24:23,290
And when the dangers of
war seemed ever closer,

415
00:24:23,290 --> 00:24:26,690
these kids went back,
these Jewish kids.

416
00:24:26,690 --> 00:24:33,070
And I do remember when we heard
the news of Germany invading

417
00:24:33,070 --> 00:24:36,640
Poland, and thinking
of these girls,

418
00:24:36,640 --> 00:24:41,800
this is a girls school,
what happened to them.

419
00:24:41,800 --> 00:24:47,890
And being very concerned
about their fate.

420
00:24:47,890 --> 00:24:49,780
That certainly impacted on us.

421
00:24:49,780 --> 00:24:53,080
And of course, we followed
the war very closely,

422
00:24:53,080 --> 00:24:57,430
like all English people
at that time, worried.

423
00:24:57,430 --> 00:25:01,840
And we knew what was happening

in the occupied countries.

424

00:25:01,840 --> 00:25:06,340

And we assumed that life
was very bad for Jews,

425

00:25:06,340 --> 00:25:10,900

those that survived.

426

00:25:10,900 --> 00:25:14,120

We of course, didn't know about
concentration camps in detail.

427

00:25:14,120 --> 00:25:16,990

We did know that people were
sent to concentration camps.

428

00:25:16,990 --> 00:25:20,800

We even knew where they
were, some of them.

429

00:25:20,800 --> 00:25:21,700

We had--

430

00:25:21,700 --> 00:25:24,550

How did this information
filter through?

431

00:25:24,550 --> 00:25:32,390

Well, I think I'd
already heard stories

432

00:25:32,390 --> 00:25:34,640

about being rounded
up, because I know

433

00:25:34,640 --> 00:25:39,800

when we were afraid my father
was going to be taken away,

434

00:25:39,800 --> 00:25:45,500

my uncle had had an
experience of some Nazis,

435

00:25:45,500 --> 00:25:50,030
somebody coming to his house,
also wanting to take him away.

436

00:25:50,030 --> 00:25:52,700
And he was a
veteran of World War

437

00:25:52,700 --> 00:25:57,500
I. He had all his medals
displayed on his mantelpiece.

438

00:25:57,500 --> 00:26:00,380
And when they came, he
started showing them to him,

439

00:26:00,380 --> 00:26:02,600
to the two men who came.

440

00:26:02,600 --> 00:26:05,440
And they talked about
the war, and so on.

441

00:26:05,440 --> 00:26:08,140
The two men left
ad didn't take him.

442

00:26:08,140 --> 00:26:12,290
That was in the early days,
later on, of course, they did.

443

00:26:12,290 --> 00:26:17,440
And my uncle also fled
and came to England.

444

00:26:17,440 --> 00:26:19,880
He was my father's only brother.

445

00:26:19,880 --> 00:26:22,550
And had no possibility.

446

00:26:22,550 --> 00:26:26,270
I know he told us stories about
taking my grandmother's jewels

447
00:26:26,270 --> 00:26:29,450
and selling them in
his clothes, and that's

448
00:26:29,450 --> 00:26:32,060
what he lived on in England
for about four years

449
00:26:32,060 --> 00:26:36,050
during the war, because they
wouldn't allow him to work.

450
00:26:36,050 --> 00:26:41,150
And so we did know
those kind of stories,

451
00:26:41,150 --> 00:26:44,900
and we did know that people--

452
00:26:44,900 --> 00:26:52,370
even in when we still heard by
United States, and via Belgium,

453
00:26:52,370 --> 00:26:55,880
that certain members of the
family, old people who hadn't

454
00:26:55,880 --> 00:26:58,220
been able to get out, plus
one cousin, I remember,

455
00:26:58,220 --> 00:27:04,730
of my father's who had
been taken to somewhere,

456
00:27:04,730 --> 00:27:06,515
transported, was the word.

457
00:27:06,515 --> 00:27:09,830

It was usually, euphemistically called transported.

458
00:27:09,830 --> 00:27:13,820
We didn't know exactly transported to where or what--

459
00:27:13,820 --> 00:27:18,350
but and certainly moved from where they used to live.

460
00:27:18,350 --> 00:27:21,850

461
00:27:21,850 --> 00:27:28,815
Details, I think it's hard to sort out what we learned later,

462
00:27:28,815 --> 00:27:30,460
and what we knew then.

463
00:27:30,460 --> 00:27:34,360
But I don't think we knew any great details.

464
00:27:34,360 --> 00:27:36,640
We knew that concentration camps existed,

465
00:27:36,640 --> 00:27:41,140
that we knew, nothing about a final solution,

466
00:27:41,140 --> 00:27:45,800
or killing people in ovens, anything like that.

467
00:27:45,800 --> 00:27:47,840
That, we did not know.

468
00:27:47,840 --> 00:27:49,660
We knew it must have been terribly

469

00:27:49,660 --> 00:27:56,050

hard for many of the people,
that they certainly suffered,

470

00:27:56,050 --> 00:27:59,010

we knew that.

471

00:27:59,010 --> 00:28:04,780

And that old people rarely
survived if they were taken.

472

00:28:04,780 --> 00:28:08,370

But other things, we
really did not know.

473

00:28:08,370 --> 00:28:12,510

474

00:28:12,510 --> 00:28:20,100

It's really a childhood
in peculiar circumstances.

475

00:28:20,100 --> 00:28:24,150

And yet, those peculiar
circumstances never

476

00:28:24,150 --> 00:28:28,980

really registering very
deeply, because we sort of

477

00:28:28,980 --> 00:28:30,370

took it in stride.

478

00:28:30,370 --> 00:28:37,920

I mean, even though we were
separated from our parents,

479

00:28:37,920 --> 00:28:40,500

the kids in boarding school were
separated from their parents

480

00:28:40,500 --> 00:28:42,150
too in England.

481
00:28:42,150 --> 00:28:45,588
It was quite usual for kids
to go to boarding school.

482
00:28:45,588 --> 00:28:47,880
The only thing that was
different with my sister and me

483
00:28:47,880 --> 00:28:50,670
is that, we never went home.

484
00:28:50,670 --> 00:28:52,930
We had nowhere to go
during vacation time.

485
00:28:52,930 --> 00:28:54,960
So we always stayed in school.

486
00:28:54,960 --> 00:28:56,610
What were these
vacations like for you?

487
00:28:56,610 --> 00:28:59,430

488
00:28:59,430 --> 00:29:05,780
Well, it's very hard for
me to remember exactly

489
00:29:05,780 --> 00:29:08,240
if they were
different in any way.

490
00:29:08,240 --> 00:29:10,790
There were always a few
kids who stayed at school

491
00:29:10,790 --> 00:29:15,020
during vacation, either
their parents, worked,

492

00:29:15,020 --> 00:29:18,780
or they were on travels, or they
were diplomats or something.

493

00:29:18,780 --> 00:29:21,770
And so there was nobody home
to take care of the kids.

494

00:29:21,770 --> 00:29:24,920
So there were always a few
kids who stayed for vacation.

495

00:29:24,920 --> 00:29:26,810
And then there were
some kids who came just

496

00:29:26,810 --> 00:29:29,450
for vacation to the school.

497

00:29:29,450 --> 00:29:31,400
So we weren't alone.

498

00:29:31,400 --> 00:29:38,540
But our usual friends, and
classmates, they went home,

499

00:29:38,540 --> 00:29:40,520
and we didn't.

500

00:29:40,520 --> 00:29:42,560
That's really what
it amounted to.

501

00:29:42,560 --> 00:29:45,500
They had programs in the summer.

502

00:29:45,500 --> 00:29:49,970
We did spend a
few weekends or so

503

00:29:49,970 --> 00:29:53,150

on when we were still
in Hove with these--

504
00:29:53,150 --> 00:29:55,430
we called them aunt and
uncle, these relatives

505
00:29:55,430 --> 00:29:59,000
of our relatives in America.

506
00:29:59,000 --> 00:30:00,410
But they were older people.

507
00:30:00,410 --> 00:30:03,120
They really didn't know
what to do with us.

508
00:30:03,120 --> 00:30:06,035
And so they were happy
we could stay at school.

509
00:30:06,035 --> 00:30:08,580

510
00:30:08,580 --> 00:30:11,280
Now, by the time
the tide of the war

511
00:30:11,280 --> 00:30:15,900
had turned in favor
of the allies,

512
00:30:15,900 --> 00:30:19,380
you were already in
the United States.

513
00:30:19,380 --> 00:30:25,110
Yes, we lived through
the more dubious times

514
00:30:25,110 --> 00:30:30,060
in England, I mean, the
bombing attacks, and the fear

515
00:30:30,060 --> 00:30:34,980
of invasion, and when
things were going

516
00:30:34,980 --> 00:30:37,590
rather badly for the allies.

517
00:30:37,590 --> 00:30:41,010
But it's strange.

518
00:30:41,010 --> 00:30:43,200
First of all, we were
physically removed.

519
00:30:43,200 --> 00:30:47,640
We were in North Wales,
which is very rural.

520
00:30:47,640 --> 00:30:50,130
The closest we got to
any bombs at that time

521
00:30:50,130 --> 00:30:54,900
was apparently some German
plane had been chased,

522
00:30:54,900 --> 00:30:56,350
and had to drop its bombs.

523
00:30:56,350 --> 00:30:59,010
So in the middle of
the sheep meadow,

524
00:30:59,010 --> 00:31:02,100
there was suddenly this bomb.

525
00:31:02,100 --> 00:31:04,740
But we weren't bombed ourselves.

526
00:31:04,740 --> 00:31:09,330
Of course, we heard and read

everything that was going on.

527

00:31:09,330 --> 00:31:12,180

And most of the
British children were

528

00:31:12,180 --> 00:31:15,090

evacuated from the
cities at that time

529

00:31:15,090 --> 00:31:16,930

were sent to the country.

530

00:31:16,930 --> 00:31:21,770

So again, it wasn't
that unusual for us.

531

00:31:21,770 --> 00:31:27,600

And later on, when we
were in, London that was I

532

00:31:27,600 --> 00:31:30,450

think the time of the
V-12s, or the V-8s.

533

00:31:30,450 --> 00:31:31,390

The V-2s.

534

00:31:31,390 --> 00:31:31,890

V-2s?

535

00:31:31,890 --> 00:31:32,390

V-2s.

536

00:31:32,390 --> 00:31:35,530

V-2s, OK.

537

00:31:35,530 --> 00:31:37,890

We were in an
apartment building,

538

00:31:37,890 --> 00:31:42,930

and we were so blase we didn't
even go down into the shelter.

539
00:31:42,930 --> 00:31:46,050
We felt, you know, we
were indestructible.

540
00:31:46,050 --> 00:31:48,570
We couldn't be hit.

541
00:31:48,570 --> 00:31:50,520
But that's I think--

542
00:31:50,520 --> 00:31:52,980
In other words, you
didn't know what

543
00:31:52,980 --> 00:31:56,280
you had actually
confronted until you

544
00:31:56,280 --> 00:31:57,900
looked at it retrospectively.

545
00:31:57,900 --> 00:32:02,340
Or really, when we began
to realize what dangers

546
00:32:02,340 --> 00:32:03,475
we had really escaped.

547
00:32:03,475 --> 00:32:06,340

548
00:32:06,340 --> 00:32:10,800
Trying just to see it as we
saw it then, first of all,

549
00:32:10,800 --> 00:32:15,360
it was a great blessing
that there were two of us.

550

00:32:15,360 --> 00:32:18,720

I can imagine how
lonesome some kids felt

551

00:32:18,720 --> 00:32:21,480

who were in our children's
transport, who were

552

00:32:21,480 --> 00:32:25,320

alone and went to the unknown.

553

00:32:25,320 --> 00:32:27,580

We had the great good
fortune, first of all,

554

00:32:27,580 --> 00:32:29,350

we knew where we were going.

555

00:32:29,350 --> 00:32:31,380

I mean, these relatives
had written to us,

556

00:32:31,380 --> 00:32:33,810

and had encouraged my parents.

557

00:32:33,810 --> 00:32:36,990

And we had seen
pictures of the school.

558

00:32:36,990 --> 00:32:39,120

We had gotten a letter
from the principal.

559

00:32:39,120 --> 00:32:43,080

So it wasn't a journey
into the unknown.

560

00:32:43,080 --> 00:32:46,230

And then there were two of us.

561

00:32:46,230 --> 00:32:48,770

Neither one of us knew
any English at all

562
00:32:48,770 --> 00:32:50,220
when we went to England.

563
00:32:50,220 --> 00:32:54,480
Although, I had French my first
second language, and my sister

564
00:32:54,480 --> 00:32:55,770
took English.

565
00:32:55,770 --> 00:33:00,810
So she had at least
maybe 20 words.

566
00:33:00,810 --> 00:33:03,840
And so she was our spokesperson.

567
00:33:03,840 --> 00:33:06,960
And she had great
dramatic ability.

568
00:33:06,960 --> 00:33:10,170
And when they asked us to
tell her about our trip,

569
00:33:10,170 --> 00:33:13,950
she pantomimed the whole journey
across the English channel,

570
00:33:13,950 --> 00:33:17,300
and of course, was a great hit
with all the English kids who

571
00:33:17,300 --> 00:33:19,050
had never gone through
anything like that.

572
00:33:19,050 --> 00:33:21,720

573
00:33:21,720 --> 00:33:24,990

And we probably learned English
within a very short time,

574
00:33:24,990 --> 00:33:27,900
because we had special
English lessons.

575
00:33:27,900 --> 00:33:29,550
As I said, the
school that was used

576
00:33:29,550 --> 00:33:32,050
to foreigners, foreign kids.

577
00:33:32,050 --> 00:33:35,150
And so we had English for
the first three months.

578
00:33:35,150 --> 00:33:38,430
And then we went into
the regular classroom.

579
00:33:38,430 --> 00:33:49,295
And felt pretty much part
of whatever was going on.

580
00:33:49,295 --> 00:33:50,920
The worst thing, of
course, was that we

581
00:33:50,920 --> 00:33:53,170
didn't have our parents.

582
00:33:53,170 --> 00:33:58,690
And that we really, I suppose,
were orphaned, or maybe

583
00:33:58,690 --> 00:34:01,390
never looked at it
like that, because we

584
00:34:01,390 --> 00:34:06,510
knew our parents were

somewhere at that time.

585

00:34:06,510 --> 00:34:10,679

And trying to
think, it certainly

586

00:34:10,679 --> 00:34:16,620

was a total disruption of
our lives, and of our parents

587

00:34:16,620 --> 00:34:21,699

lives, careers, everything.

588

00:34:21,699 --> 00:34:28,030

Later, when we were reunited
with our parents in America,

589

00:34:28,030 --> 00:34:30,429

you know, the fact
that my father,

590

00:34:30,429 --> 00:34:32,679

they lived in a small apartment.

591

00:34:32,679 --> 00:34:35,230

592

00:34:35,230 --> 00:34:36,610

We heard all the stories.

593

00:34:36,610 --> 00:34:39,860

My father had to take any
job once the war started.

594

00:34:39,860 --> 00:34:41,873

He's a German lawyer.

595

00:34:41,873 --> 00:34:43,540

Nothing he could do
really, although, he

596

00:34:43,540 --> 00:34:49,969

was a financial expert, exchange rates, and things like that.

597

00:34:49,969 --> 00:34:52,639

And he thought first
he could do something,

598

00:34:52,639 --> 00:34:55,150

but then once the war
started, that was out.

599

00:34:55,150 --> 00:35:01,600

So he took a job as a cashier
at Delmonico's in New York.

600

00:35:01,600 --> 00:35:04,930

I guess, the only
cashier with a doctorate

601

00:35:04,930 --> 00:35:06,830

probably at that time.

602

00:35:06,830 --> 00:35:09,520

But it was very good.

603

00:35:09,520 --> 00:35:13,690

He also had worked I
think, as a male nurse.

604

00:35:13,690 --> 00:35:16,640

Because in World War I,
he was in the Red Cross.

605

00:35:16,640 --> 00:35:18,700

So that's the only
thing he knew.

606

00:35:18,700 --> 00:35:23,540

So for a few months, he
had worked as a male nurse.

607

00:35:23,540 --> 00:35:26,980

When he first came

to this country,

608

00:35:26,980 --> 00:35:29,260

he was a displaced scholar.

609

00:35:29,260 --> 00:35:32,890

And the Quakers wanted
displaced scholars.

610

00:35:32,890 --> 00:35:37,030

So he spent a lovely
at Haverford College,

611

00:35:37,030 --> 00:35:42,040

and in Orono, Maine with the
other displaced scholars.

612

00:35:42,040 --> 00:35:44,390

But that didn't
help him get a job.

613

00:35:44,390 --> 00:35:48,170

So finally, by the
time we arrived,

614

00:35:48,170 --> 00:35:50,590

he was fortunate
through a cousin,

615

00:35:50,590 --> 00:35:55,330

he heard about jobs
in the OSS, Office

616

00:35:55,330 --> 00:35:59,590

of Strategic Services
in Washington

617

00:35:59,590 --> 00:36:03,730

who were looking
for foreign experts.

618

00:36:03,730 --> 00:36:09,100

And that was the beginning of

his career as an American Civil

619
00:36:09,100 --> 00:36:10,420
Servant.

620
00:36:10,420 --> 00:36:16,010
And he got a job there.

621
00:36:16,010 --> 00:36:19,790
He liked what he was
doing, apparently,

622
00:36:19,790 --> 00:36:23,600
preparing for at least
giving information

623
00:36:23,600 --> 00:36:25,460
on the German system.

624
00:36:25,460 --> 00:36:29,030
When the war was
over, he was taken

625
00:36:29,030 --> 00:36:32,810
into the US Office of
the Chief of Counsel

626
00:36:32,810 --> 00:36:34,610
at the Nuremberg trials.

627
00:36:34,610 --> 00:36:36,950
And he went to Nuremberg.

628
00:36:36,950 --> 00:36:42,260
So in a way, he did come
back circuitously to the law,

629
00:36:42,260 --> 00:36:44,120
Oh yes, once he
was in Washington,

630
00:36:44,120 --> 00:36:47,390

he used his knowledge.

631
00:36:47,390 --> 00:36:50,010
And in the Nuremberg
trials too, which

632
00:36:50,010 --> 00:36:53,950
was must have been
devastating to him.

633
00:36:53,950 --> 00:36:57,830
And so--

634
00:36:57,830 --> 00:37:01,090
When he traveled back to
Germany, did you accompany him?

635
00:37:01,090 --> 00:37:01,590
Never.

636
00:37:01,590 --> 00:37:02,590
Or anyone in the family?

637
00:37:02,590 --> 00:37:04,040
That was just after the war.

638
00:37:04,040 --> 00:37:07,140
No civilians were
allowed to go to Germany.

639
00:37:07,140 --> 00:37:11,530
I was in college at the time,
even my mother never went.

640
00:37:11,530 --> 00:37:16,050
He got a temporary
commission in the US Army.

641
00:37:16,050 --> 00:37:18,650
He was a Colonel in the US Army.

642
00:37:18,650 --> 00:37:22,340

He went in uniform to Germany
because, that was post-war,

643
00:37:22,340 --> 00:37:26,780
was still very difficult.
And he made contact

644
00:37:26,780 --> 00:37:28,670
with some of his old friends.

645
00:37:28,670 --> 00:37:33,140
And he also had to get people
to testify, and witnesses.

646
00:37:33,140 --> 00:37:36,620
And I think it was devastating.

647
00:37:36,620 --> 00:37:40,880
He suffered a heart attack
there, didn't come home.

648
00:37:40,880 --> 00:37:46,400
And suffered a second heart
attack, and died in Nuremberg.

649
00:37:46,400 --> 00:37:49,610
But it's what he wanted to do.

650
00:37:49,610 --> 00:37:52,940
You know, it was really a
justification in a sense.

651
00:37:52,940 --> 00:37:55,930

652
00:37:55,930 --> 00:37:59,050
What effect that you
were able to see,

653
00:37:59,050 --> 00:38:03,100
did all of this migration
from one place to another

654

00:38:03,100 --> 00:38:06,270
have on your mother?

655

00:38:06,270 --> 00:38:08,810
My mother is a very
resilient woman.

656

00:38:08,810 --> 00:38:16,010
I mean, she was certainly
born to most luxuries,

657

00:38:16,010 --> 00:38:19,040
and never had to
do anything much.

658

00:38:19,040 --> 00:38:21,470
She was trained as a
singer, even though she

659

00:38:21,470 --> 00:38:26,170
didn't have a professional
career, and never worked,

660

00:38:26,170 --> 00:38:28,140
never did anything.

661

00:38:28,140 --> 00:38:34,530
And so when she came to this
country, what could she do?

662

00:38:34,530 --> 00:38:36,320
She decided the only
thing she could do,

663

00:38:36,320 --> 00:38:37,880
she loved children and babies.

664

00:38:37,880 --> 00:38:40,250
She was going to
be a baby nurse.

665

00:38:40,250 --> 00:38:43,370

And she got a job
as a baby nurse.

666
00:38:43,370 --> 00:38:47,930
And that really started
her on a kind of a career

667
00:38:47,930 --> 00:38:50,970
that she pursued
for quite a while.

668
00:38:50,970 --> 00:38:52,580
She liked newborn babies.

669
00:38:52,580 --> 00:38:55,430
She'd go and help
the new mothers,

670
00:38:55,430 --> 00:38:58,340
and made many contacts that way.

671
00:38:58,340 --> 00:39:02,510
People still write to
her from those days.

672
00:39:02,510 --> 00:39:04,760
And since my father
didn't have a job,

673
00:39:04,760 --> 00:39:08,060
she had at least some money.

674
00:39:08,060 --> 00:39:10,970
And that's how they survived.

675
00:39:10,970 --> 00:39:13,070
And she never complained.

676
00:39:13,070 --> 00:39:14,300
She did it.

677
00:39:14,300 --> 00:39:17,720

People loved her, and
kept recommending her.

678
00:39:17,720 --> 00:39:20,190
She never was short of babies.

679
00:39:20,190 --> 00:39:26,710
And so you know, I
mean, as much as she

680
00:39:26,710 --> 00:39:31,280
must have missed
all her former life,

681
00:39:31,280 --> 00:39:35,530
I think it was much easier for
her somehow than for my father.

682
00:39:35,530 --> 00:39:40,750
My father was not as
flexible, as adaptable.

683
00:39:40,750 --> 00:39:42,730
He was also older.

684
00:39:42,730 --> 00:39:48,880
And of course, everything he
knew and everything he did

685
00:39:48,880 --> 00:39:54,640
had almost no application
in his new life

686
00:39:54,640 --> 00:39:57,010
until he got into Washington.

687
00:39:57,010 --> 00:39:59,620
So it was a very,
very difficult thing,

688
00:39:59,620 --> 00:40:03,466
and language was
difficult for him too.

689
00:40:03,466 --> 00:40:06,400
My mother knew some English.

690
00:40:06,400 --> 00:40:08,110
My father didn't.

691
00:40:08,110 --> 00:40:08,890
He learned.

692
00:40:08,890 --> 00:40:09,770
He studied.

693
00:40:09,770 --> 00:40:14,360
But it never came
out very fluently.

694
00:40:14,360 --> 00:40:17,170
So that was a handicap
to him, particularly,

695
00:40:17,170 --> 00:40:19,142
since he was a very--

696
00:40:19,142 --> 00:40:20,540
how should say I say it?

697
00:40:20,540 --> 00:40:23,830
His language was very important
to him, the way he spoke.

698
00:40:23,830 --> 00:40:28,030
And he did it very well
in German, or in French.

699
00:40:28,030 --> 00:40:32,710
And he studied Latin and
Greek too, but not English.

700
00:40:32,710 --> 00:40:37,330
So it was always a
puzzlement to him.

701
00:40:37,330 --> 00:40:40,690
So when you reflect
on things that

702
00:40:40,690 --> 00:40:47,410
happened to you to date, what
thoughts go through your mind?

703
00:40:47,410 --> 00:40:55,230
What do you what do you think
of most, your early life?

704
00:40:55,230 --> 00:40:57,750
Well, in America you mean?

705
00:40:57,750 --> 00:41:04,340
Well, in Europe and England.

706
00:41:04,340 --> 00:41:10,970
I would say that,
all these years

707
00:41:10,970 --> 00:41:14,670
one takes it for granted, that
this is part of one's life.

708
00:41:14,670 --> 00:41:18,170
I mean, as my mother said, she's
lived many different lives.

709
00:41:18,170 --> 00:41:20,300
And I have that feeling
too a little bit,

710
00:41:20,300 --> 00:41:24,110
many different lives that
sort of come together,

711
00:41:24,110 --> 00:41:32,530
and sort of
compartmented in a sense.

712

00:41:32,530 --> 00:41:35,860

The English life had nothing
to do with the German life.

713

00:41:35,860 --> 00:41:38,560

And American life nothing
to do with the English life,

714

00:41:38,560 --> 00:41:39,770

or the German life.

715

00:41:39,770 --> 00:41:47,230

So it's sort of almost, it's
part of me, but it's also--

716

00:41:47,230 --> 00:41:49,780

717

00:41:49,780 --> 00:41:52,660

Compartmentalized, or separated.

718

00:41:52,660 --> 00:41:56,620

Somehow, I met an
old friend of mine

719

00:41:56,620 --> 00:42:01,630

in Israel whom I played
with, and with whom

720

00:42:01,630 --> 00:42:03,280

I was in the
Zionist organization

721

00:42:03,280 --> 00:42:06,160

before we were
both 11 years old.

722

00:42:06,160 --> 00:42:10,360

And we met, and it's as if we'd
seen each other all the time

723

00:42:10,360 --> 00:42:10,900

since then.

724

00:42:10,900 --> 00:42:12,430

Of course, we had never.

725

00:42:12,430 --> 00:42:16,910

And we felt very close.

726

00:42:16,910 --> 00:42:21,720

We had gone through
the same experiences.

727

00:42:21,720 --> 00:42:26,010

And it was strange.

728

00:42:26,010 --> 00:42:27,450

She lived in a
kibbutz, and so on.

729

00:42:27,450 --> 00:42:31,680

But yet here we were, two middle
aged ladies coming together

730

00:42:31,680 --> 00:42:36,640

despite our differences,
and different languages,

731

00:42:36,640 --> 00:42:39,180

different experiences,
since we were kids,

732

00:42:39,180 --> 00:42:46,770

we somehow could sort of take
off from where we ended age 11.

733

00:42:46,770 --> 00:42:49,650

Were your Zionist
interests strengthened

734

00:42:49,650 --> 00:42:52,410

by what you experienced?

735

00:42:52,410 --> 00:42:55,890
They were always there, I think.

736
00:42:55,890 --> 00:43:00,450
Yes, certainly, my parents
were very assimilated Jews.

737
00:43:00,450 --> 00:43:05,100
And I would never have
gotten into Zionist circles

738
00:43:05,100 --> 00:43:08,590
if it hadn't been for Hitler.

739
00:43:08,590 --> 00:43:09,960
I'm sure of that.

740
00:43:09,960 --> 00:43:15,840
And it was always sort
of in the back of my mind

741
00:43:15,840 --> 00:43:19,560
that I had to see to it
that Israel would be there,

742
00:43:19,560 --> 00:43:22,140
and the refuge, and so on.

743
00:43:22,140 --> 00:43:26,880
I think it made me
very conscious of that.

744
00:43:26,880 --> 00:43:33,030
And I guess also, it
made me more Jewish,

745
00:43:33,030 --> 00:43:36,090
I mean, then I would
have been otherwise.

746
00:43:36,090 --> 00:43:40,800
It made me want to know
as much as I could about

747
00:43:40,800 --> 00:43:43,940
Judaism, about Jewish
experience, and so on.

748
00:43:43,940 --> 00:43:47,490
And I wanted to be sure
to pass it on in some way.

749
00:43:47,490 --> 00:43:53,910
I didn't want to give Hitler
kind of a posthumous victory.

750
00:43:53,910 --> 00:43:55,860
And I think that's
one reason why

751
00:43:55,860 --> 00:43:59,670
my son studied
German literature,

752
00:43:59,670 --> 00:44:04,860
and sort of tried to take
off also in that vein.

753
00:44:04,860 --> 00:44:08,500
Certainly, he was interested
in what my father had done.

754
00:44:08,500 --> 00:44:12,790
And so probably,
I influenced him,

755
00:44:12,790 --> 00:44:16,330
even though I didn't
do it very consciously,

756
00:44:16,330 --> 00:44:19,530
that there should
be a Jewish presence

757
00:44:19,530 --> 00:44:22,335
in German literary life somehow.

758
00:44:22,335 --> 00:44:25,300

759
00:44:25,300 --> 00:44:28,195
To give the sense that something
had survived this fight?

760
00:44:28,195 --> 00:44:31,000
They survived, and that it
was a very major contribution

761
00:44:31,000 --> 00:44:33,310
that shouldn't be forgotten.

762
00:44:33,310 --> 00:44:35,460
Yeah.

763
00:44:35,460 --> 00:44:37,680
Yeah, what about religion?

764
00:44:37,680 --> 00:44:44,010
Was that always, or ever a major
part of your Jewish identity

765
00:44:44,010 --> 00:44:46,080
and experience?

766
00:44:46,080 --> 00:44:53,500
I felt myself very Jewish from
the time that I was little.

767
00:44:53,500 --> 00:44:57,120
My mother tells me
that I felt so strongly

768
00:44:57,120 --> 00:44:59,370
that I said, of
all people, I had

769
00:44:59,370 --> 00:45:02,970
to have blond hair and

blue eyes, you know.

770

00:45:02,970 --> 00:45:07,140

I thought I should look more
Jewish when I was a kid.

771

00:45:07,140 --> 00:45:10,140

My sister had dark
hair, so why didn't I?

772

00:45:10,140 --> 00:45:22,930

And I think if I hadn't learned
about Judaism because I had to,

773

00:45:22,930 --> 00:45:25,390

I probably would have found
my way to it somewhere.

774

00:45:25,390 --> 00:45:29,980

But it so happened that it
was really forced on me.

775

00:45:29,980 --> 00:45:33,040

I went to Jewish
school in Berlin.

776

00:45:33,040 --> 00:45:37,272

And then we were transferred
to Jewish school in England.

777

00:45:37,272 --> 00:45:38,230

So it was always there.

778

00:45:38,230 --> 00:45:41,650

It was very much a
part of me, yeah.

779

00:45:41,650 --> 00:45:43,760

But not really my sister.

780

00:45:43,760 --> 00:45:48,660

So it's really the
way one looks at it.

781
00:45:48,660 --> 00:45:50,730
Yeah.

782
00:45:50,730 --> 00:45:53,567
Well, I thank you
for sharing with us--

783
00:45:53,567 --> 00:45:54,400
You're very welcome.

784
00:45:54,400 --> 00:45:55,590
Your experiences.

785
00:45:55,590 --> 00:45:59,040
And you're given us a
perspective that very often, we

786
00:45:59,040 --> 00:46:02,180
don't have in doing
these interviews.

787
00:46:02,180 --> 00:46:03,820
Thank you very much, Irene.

788
00:46:03,820 --> 00:46:04,870
You're very welcome.

789
00:46:04,870 --> 00:46:05,964
Is this the end?

790
00:46:05,964 --> 00:46:13,570

791
00:46:13,570 --> 00:46:18,420
[MUSIC PLAYING]

792
00:46:18,420 --> 00:46:35,000