

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Preben Munch-Nielsen  
November 6, 1989  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Preben Munch-Nielsen, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on November 6, 1989 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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**PREBEN MUNCH-NIELSEN**  
**November 6, 1989**

Q: Could you tell me your name please?

A: Preben Munch-Nielsen. I think that's it's very difficult.

Q: And where were you born?

A: In Snegerstein (ph) in Denmark.

Q: In what year?

A: Pardon?

Q: What year?

A: Twenty-six.

Q: Tell me what it was like for you growing up as a child in Snegerstein.

A: Well, it's a wonderful little village. A little harbor. Fishermen and uh most of our spare time - it was at the strait between Denmark and Sweden - harbor, sailing and we had a little work. It was very fresh and very good and maybe healthy life. Had a good time.

Q: What uh what were your parents like? Tell me about your family.

A: Uh well, I'm grown up by my grandmother who at the year, at the age of 60 suddenly because of divorces and death got five grandchildren to bring up. And one is living here in Washington, in the Crystal town outside. Another lives in Paris and my sister and I live in Denmark. So we are spread a little bit. But we had a wonderful time.

Q: What about school?

A: I went to school in Copenhagen. That was an old tradition. And uh on our school, uh \_\_\_\_\_ school in Copenhagen. That's \_\_\_\_\_, uh south of there in the must be six, sixth year and uh then we go up to high school and gra... when you can graduate from that school and go to college afterwards.

Q: As a child growing up and going to school in Copenhagen, uh what were your relationships if any with Jewish students in the school?

A: I tell you I didn't know they were Jews. \_\_\_\_\_. Not many but but uh two in my class. I didn't know they were Jews. They were uh they were my school pals, nothing else.

Schoolmates. There was no distinction between a Jew and a non-Jew. They were Danes and in our society there was no, you couldn't say that's a Jew, that's not a Jew.

Q: As you got older, uh what did you hear about uh if anything in the early thirties, uh mid-thirties, about Germany and about Hitler?

A: Uh well, the most I recall that Germany always our enemy number one, and what happened in Germany was very very bad for Denmark. You know when you have the tiger at the doorstep you have to be very careful of it. There was not the possibility to say quite a lot against him and probably - I can tell you that in Denmark, uh the highest of the three percent who voted for Nazi parti.. the Nazis. And we were neighbors so Denmark is an old country with an old democratic tradition. Every form of dictatorship whether it is fascism, communism, that's that's not Danish. So I don't think - of course we were afraid.

Q: How as a child, as a young chi... young boy, did you feel the fear and feel the concern?

A: No, because we were foolish enough to believe when you have a non-aggression treaty with a man, he will keep it. That's the way we live.

Q: Tell me about the German invasion, for you. What was it like? When did you know?

A: It was really exciting because in the morning I saw the most aircrafts I ever saw. You know in in '40 to see an airplane - that was something. And one morning there was hundreds going from Copenhagen near us to and then going back over Copenhagen. And while I was had to go to school, and I knew nothing about the invasion, the occupation. But when I came to Copenhagen, to the station there, the German soldiers were there and we were shocked. Really shocked because we had no idea about it. Nothing. There was no shooting you know. Uh I suppose that thirteen Danish soldiers was killed during the invasion. There was, well, we couldn't stand anything against the Hitler war machine. We had I suppose ten thousand soldiers in Denmark and well, they put ten times as much through Denmark to - his main uh goal was to conquer Norway and they did that too you know.

Q: What happened to you? The year is 1940. You're a 14 year old boy. What did you do after the - what was your life like?

A: Well, there was not a big change. The only thing happening which was really, you you saw it at the same time, was the black-out. From one day to another, you had to black-out. Denmark was totally blacked-out. And maybe you'll understand how it was later to stand in the blacked-out beach in Denmark and look three miles over the straits, the water demarking Denmark from Sweden, where the lights were just like pearls on a string. It was so fantastic uh but the first thing there was the black-out. And then of course there were lack of goods and uh there was no connection with England anymore, and our biggest trade partner and uh - but in the beginning the Germans tried to act just like

human beings. There was what, we should be the model. We were the vikings, and we should be - I don't know what he wanted us to be - but there was not, you was not disturbed much by the Germans in the day-to-day, in the beginning.

A: When did that change for you?

Q: Well, for me, you see we were shocked to lost our freedom and every resistance movement first part - I was only 15 when I started - it was to be a messenger boy. Deliver \_\_\_\_\_ for papers. Illegal papers of course. Because the first thing you really noticed is that all the news are censored. You only hear what the Germans, the Germans wanted you to hear. And therefore it was important to keep the real messages, to give the real news and that was to be duplicated and brought out by boys like me and it is of elder people but that was the way we started and it was the beginning to the resistance movement in Denmark, before the \_\_\_\_\_, before anything else.

Q: How did you get recruited?

A: Well, one of our teachers was uh became rather a famous figure in the resistance movement and uh as I went to school in Copenhagen, lived forty kilometers from there, I was a very good guy to have to put from one place to another. And then later on it was, we couldn't have all the papers with us on the train, then we duplicated our own papers and brought around.

Q: Who was your teacher?

A: \_\_\_\_\_. Heard about him.

Q: So this was going on then for a while?

A: For a couple, for one year, two years.

Q: When did it start to change?

A: Well, some of my friends, they went in to the more heavy uh stuff in the resistance movement. Started the sabotage. Started - and that annoyed the Germans very much because because of course small thing that we could do but the Germans wanted to stop the sabotage and uh they demanded that the Danish government who had cooperated very much with the Germans to uh make uh death penalty for sabotage. That wouldn't, the Danish government accept and they signed and the Germans took over and that was the really beginning to what's happening later. From uh the 29th of August in '43 - that's a very point, the day it happened.

Q: What were you doing at this time?

- A: School boy. Doing what I've done all the time. I was not in the sabotage groups. We only had the papers and we thought that was enough.
- Q: You have described the change in the beginning of the government. Uh how did it become for you more involved in helping the Jews?
- A: When the uh Jewish New Year, about the first of October, uh we heard that the Germans would arrest the Jews and one day, it was the 2nd or 3rd of October, one of the leaders from the \_\_\_\_\_, uh asked me to be there and there, uh to follow, to fetch some Jews from the station in Snegerstein to bring them to a special, specially \_\_\_\_\_. I did that and from there it started.
- Q: How did you feel? Talk about that. What was that like for you?
- A: \_\_\_\_\_ I thought, these poor devils. What are we going to do with them? See that, I think that's ridiculous that people are hunted not because they are criminals. Our Jewish, the Danish Jews, were no criminals no where. They were not in the resistance movement. They were hunted because of an insane philosophy that your human values are depending on the shape of you nose and the color of your hair. Nonsense. That's ridiculous, and we have, you must recall that part about the concentration camps. It was no secret anymore. We didn't know the full awful truth about the concentration camps but we knew so much that we could imagine the fate our fellow citizens were meet down there with \_\_\_\_\_, humiliation, starvation, and we have heard about the "final solution", \_\_\_\_\_. There was no doubt you had nothing else to do but do what you could in order to avoid that the Germans succeed in their thoughts to \_\_\_\_\_ the Danish Jews that was our fellow citizens.
- Q: So you had, you had helped once. Did you continue helping?
- A: \_\_\_\_\_. Then you are hooked. And then later on I had to bring them to the shore and later on I had to follow them to Sweden a couple of times and well, you you know it just accelerates a little bit and you do one thing and do another thing and then you can be useful there. You could be useful there. That's that's the way it goes.
- Q: What did bringing them to the shore entail?
- A: Well, if you - it happened this way in Snegerstein - that uh two or three or four lived in one house, was hiding there. And then we tried to be quite sure there was no German police, no German soldiers, no Danish uh corroborators, and we brought them down to the shore where the boat was waiting. We knew exactly when the boat would be there. We had some - the boat was normally stationed in Sweden and we had every day that point there and there at that time. And then the boat would go in and and we could uh have our passengers aboard. But it was very safe because we did everything possible to secure the way from the houses down to the beach.

Q: What did secure mean?

A: That they were not captured. That we were able to see there were no uh \_\_\_\_\_ on the way. Also they had to react in a special way - very silent. Uh we had a problem with children sometimes but we have Doctor \_\_\_\_\_. He gave them injection, the children. But he was very afraid sometimes because he said I don't know this patient - how much can I do, but nothing happened. It was, they came over all and we never lost a passenger.

Q: You said you went on some trips. (Yes.) What was your role? What did you do?

A: It's, first of all to carry some things and well, some times they ordered me to - I'm a \_\_\_\_\_, I've been sailing all my life, so have an order to go from there to there and elsewhere to clean up the boats. If you can imagine how the boat is when a dozen of refugees afraid, what they leave after in the the cabin was well, I can still recall the smell.

Q: What did you do when you would get to Sweden with the boat load of passengers?

A: What I would do?

Q: Un-hum. What was your role? Did you take them any further?

A: No no no. I uh returned - I only went over by when we had the possibility to go two or three trips a night. Because as I told you, in the daytime the boat was situated in in Sweden. But sometimes we were very lucky. \_\_\_\_\_ and the German patrol boat is far away. Then we could go two and three trips because sometimes it only took twenty minutes to pass the strait between Denmark and Sweden. So then I returned back to Denmark.

Q: Can you tell me, on the night of October 1st and 2nd when the \_\_\_\_\_, of course that was the beginning of the attempt of the great roundup of Jews. Were you aware that this was a special night and a special trip?

A: No. No. That was of course, that was very high tensions in Denmark in, after the 29th of August. Uh we had no government. We had uh uh Gestapo rule in Denmark for the first time and uh the whole thing was very mixed and very unclear. The only thing we I remember was that the Germans told all the \_\_\_\_\_ the ruler, the Gestapo chief, told that now the marshal law was over because the Jews now was taken and the Danish soldier could uh be released. They were captured on the 29th of August. Uh the Danish soldiers said no, the general said no, they would never have their freedom as a payment for the Jews uh captured. But I had no special uh remembrance of what happen... uh of the actions to uh against the Jews.

Q: You were doing this for sometime. (Yeah.) How long did you continue this?

A: Well, you must recall that uh the transport groups was not only for uh the Danish Jews. It was also for the Danish resistance movement. So I continued and and then until the end of November when I was over in Sweden and was told not to return because uh some of our groups were taken, arrested, and then I had to stay in Sweden for the rest of the war.

Q: Before we get to Sweden, can you describe some of your fellow resistance colleagues? You mentioned Thormod (ph).

A: Uh Thormod. Well, I can tell you that they were of course grown up. They were all ten, fifteen years older than I, very responsible people, very - people who really had guts. They dared to do things. They were very clever in this way that they would never do something which had too much risk. They was always \_\_\_\_\_ in safety problems. One of them two months later shot himself (ph) but survived, is still alive and uh one was an editor. He was captured by the Gestapo and got escaped. Uh one of the very - what you call it - the starter of the whole thing in Snegerstein - the uh innkeeper, Thompson (ph) was captured, died in Copenhagen. And uh that was, of course normal people, \_\_\_\_\_ a police officer, one editor, one was uh uh bookbinder, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, most famous of them all who saved the \_\_\_\_\_ most of the times and later on was captured in what we called \_\_\_\_\_, the next boat, and was captured. The next boat was sunk by the Germans and uh was captured and sent to a concentration camp. But they were all quite normal people. You see, maybe you wouldn't recognize them when you met them on the street in the daylight. Very, was good leaders. They were people you followed and they \_\_\_\_\_. They did a good job.

Q: What happened to you when you got to Sweden and you were told you cannot go back?

A: Well, it was so nice because one of the, the \_\_\_\_\_ was there, the police officer \_\_\_\_\_. You know, in Sweden you say "Uncle" to an eld.. older man now. To me, he was Uncle \_\_\_\_\_. So the first night I spent in the jail in \_\_\_\_\_, but for open doors and the next morning asked him, uh \_\_\_\_\_ should I stay here this night and he pointed to the Grand Hotel over on the other side of the street. There was no place there. So well, I I had to go try - I went to some relatives. I continued my school and graduated in Sweden. Later on I joined the voluntary forces, the Danish Brigade, and uh came back to Denmark in '45, in May uh with this force.

Q: Describe for us what it was like, please, for a Danish boy who was seventeen, eighteen, uh going to school in Sweden?

A: It was a quite different country because when you live in a country occupied (cough) and go to another country who haven't got the same feelings as we, to them the Germans were not so bad as we thought because they had the relationship with Finland and with the Finnish-Russian War and all this. And uh sometimes they really didn't understood what



happened. But after \_\_\_\_\_, after there was a change over there. But we were treated wonderful and there was, but of course they couldn't have the same opinion of the things as we had. But we were treated good and well I I have uh Swedish relatives so I had no problems.

Q: The Danish Brigade. Tell me about you in the Brigade. What did you do and what was it like, the training in the Brigade?

A: Well, it was normal life as a soldier. I was come in there and was stayed in the Army for one and a half years and that was the normal training. Rather tough they said, and I can tell you quite a lot about uh the young Jews were of course there. It was young people coming there, trained by Danish officers (cough). We had - I think it was very funny - Germany hand grenades so because they they were bought . . . we got all our weapons from Sweden of course, the Swedish government. And they had bought lots of German hand grenades. Maybe instead of the \_\_\_\_\_ guns (cough) they were selling to the Germans. But uh we had normal training. Was a hard life but that's the way it is. Your GI's had the same fate. They had also to be away for quite a long time. That's not - I don't like to be a soldier but (cough) just now when I look back on it it's good but you had to do it that time. There was nothing to do. That was the \_\_\_\_\_.

Q: You had mentioned that there were Jews in the Brigade.

A: Yes, of course.

Q: What was your relationship with them and what, what did they say about their fellow Jews' predicament, if anything?

A: You see, I can't understand this question because there is no difference between a Dane whether he is a Jew or non-Jew. That's - it's also not - so uh that was the same - they were all Danes - it was not so that the Jews were together in uh the camp and not going out with other guys. And of course they were, we don't notice that. It was - he was a Dane - and so see I really don't understand that question.

Q: You told me before we started that in Sweden too you were involved in resistance. Uh what did you do?

A: Well, we had sometimes where we, some of our friends went back to Denmark and uh they needed weapons and uh we had the possibility of giving them some weapons to bring back to the resistance movement.

Q: How did you get the weapons?

A: Well, from friends. Now, you see it was possible because we bought weapons in Sweden, but still there I was down there and I was a carrying boy there too. That's all.

Q: You have been instrumental in bringing to the Museum a boat with the numbers 0 - 2 on it. Uh tell us, you told me before that you uh rode on that boat in the course of this. Tell me a little bit about that would you please?

A: Uh, it was strange because the first boat that we had never had the possibility to go to Sweden because it was grounded the first - it was a party boat we took - really took, and it was grounded (cough) and destroyed. And then we got this boat. It was bought by (cough) uh the bookbinder \_\_\_\_\_ from - it was a boat laying in the harbor of \_\_\_\_\_ and uh that was a very good boat and sound boat built in the beginning of the thirties. It was of course a wooden boat with a good engine and uh it was able to go rather quick eight or nine miles, and that it \_\_\_\_\_ for a \_\_\_\_\_ boat. And when it started, \_\_\_\_\_. The first night I remember had two or three, no two trips to Sweden and I think we got ten to twelve passengers every time. And then later on we had in October 700 Jews and uh totally I know by this boat brought about 1,400 people from Denmark to Sweden. And as I told you before I (cough) was, my last trip to Sweden with this boat.

Q: Uh before you got to stay there?

A: Yes.

Q: Uh was that trip anything special? Do you remember...

A: I can tell you that I never had anything special in all the time, in the couple of trips that I took. Normally there was no excitement. The excitement was before and when we were able to see north and south, and so there was no German ships. OK. And it was a little boat and the radar was not so uh so uh normal on the German ships at that time and when, if there was a little bit of waves it was very difficult to to find the boat. But it was not so difficult to go from Denmark to Sweden because as I told you before, if you go from a black dock, place into the lights. That's easy to find the way. It was when we had to go back and find the right place and be met by the right people and not by the wrong people, that was the most exciting part of the of the whole thing. You can see that to go to Sweden where we were accepted and and welcomed, sometimes I know that uh \_\_\_\_\_ sailed near the Swedish coast because there were Swedish fisher boats took over the the Jewish passengers and brought them to the sho... un to the harbors. And that gave time savings.

Q: When you describe being in the Danish Brigade in Sweden, uh would you tell me what it was like please, going home with that Brigade?

A: I say that's fantastic because we thought we were going home to fight, to throw out to throw out the Germans out of Denmark and the only shots from that was roses thrown on us, flowers thrown on us. It was just, you know. The Germans surrendered on the 4th and we arrived in \_\_\_\_\_, my hometown, on the 5th in the morning. And it was you

know, it was an excitement. It was a joy. You, I, it will be the best day I ever had you know. Free, free and freedom is something you can't describe. Everybody happy. Let us \_\_\_\_\_ out of this world.

Q: What was Denmark like at that point?

A: Well Denmark is my country and of course it's wonderful. That's - you must recall we have a very high \_\_\_\_\_ in my country. We've had the same royal family more than 1,000 years. More than 1,000 years. Queen Martha II was a descendent of King \_\_\_\_\_ who reigned Denmark about the 9th century, so we never had a revolution. It, the big uh like \_\_\_\_\_ reforms were made by the people who owned the land, the counts. It was an absolute sovereign king who gave us the freedom of choosing. At that time the other kings were beheaded, but he was beloved. That's the difference. It's been so that they have been very clever. They have given the dime before the dollar was \_\_\_\_\_ I suppose. That's uh the way. And maybe it also gives some of the explanation why it happened in Denmark in this way. If you realize that when you have a country where the tensions are rather low, and other countries in Europe - what did they use when the tension was very high - they tried to divert the tension and then was the easiest way to \_\_\_\_\_, kill a few Jews here, kill a few Jews there. But we never had that. We never had the, it was not necessary for the rulers in Denmark, the people in power to have scapegoats, so therefore we had never had this special class, special group, as scapegoats. I think maybe it gives one of the explanations why it happened in Denmark. I don't know if that's that's why.

Q: You were coming back though in 1945? Your country had been occupied. You had a hand at least in getting Jews out and back. What was the country, what was the shape of the country like? What was, what was your life like coming back? Was it very different? Was the place a mess? What . . .

A: Of course there was lack of everything. It was a poor country in this way that the Germans had taken everything and paid with uh uh German marcs and there was no money, no value and we had to start from scratch. But end of forty... '45, '46, '47, there was, everything was progress. And there was rather uh optimistic mood and later on I can tell you that \_\_\_\_\_, thanks to the \_\_\_\_\_, thanks to all what happened in the world, and uh it was not difficult, no no, to go back, no.

Q: You, what did you do?

A: Well, I started my education. I started to be a business man. I had, then I stayed some times in England, sometimes uh in Germany in order to go into business. In '49 I started in a family company and uh stayed there - was uh general manager very soon and started my own company in '81. Rather old but age is nothing to me.

Q: Go back to '45 if you would. The, you were still a young man coming back. Were you,

did you have any kind of reunion or meet with any more of the \_\_\_\_\_ club?

A: Oh well well so, I'm meeting them every time because uh uh they grow old and they were so much older than I, we had - it was so that the old parts of the \_\_\_\_\_ club, they met once a month - the first Wednesday in the month they had a meeting and done that for years but now two or three passed away and now they are using me as the last uh what do you say - I am the guy that brings it together.

Q: When you came back in '45 uh were you involved in helping Jews get re-settled back in their homes? Were you into that at all?

A: No. That was not necessary. Their houses were there. Was kept. The, I haven't heard of anybody who couldn't move into the home he left in in October of '43. It was looked after by the neighbors of course. So I, that shouldn't be a problem. There was no need to help there. They kept their wages when they were in, from their positions and their jobs were held for them and . . I don't think there were any problems there for the Jews. Neither for us. We came back and that was all where we left there. The only people who suffered was the people coming from the concentration camps. The Danish Jews, the Danish resistance movement people and uh - they had a hard time.

Q: Tell me about that?

A: Well, you know that uh the Danish Jews in concentration camps and some of the Danish resistance movement people had better time than others because we had no government but we had the health authorities who went down to to Theresienstadt for example and of course knew that it was pretend things that they did. They painted up the ruins to to show it's better than it was. But they had their gift passes every month. Uh the Danish, I really think that the people in the, the Danish in concentration camps had a feeling that people back home cared and maybe that saved some lives. Uh but of course they, the starvation was very very hard. And quite a lot of the Danish resistance people came back just like musselmen, you know, without flesh on their body. It was ridiculous and it was not so bad when they recovered, but now later they have psychology problems. They, it must be impossible to to recover completely after a time like that in in Buchenwald, in Dachau, where ever they was. But I think of big importance was that from the Danish Red Cross there was sent this gift passes every month and many of the Danish uh concentration camp prisoners they survived because of this. And also the Jews.

Q: You talked a lot about what you did and what was going on. But can you tell me a little bit about why you did what you did? Why were you involved in helping Jews or helping anybody?

A: Well uh I don't understand the the question because - could you - you couldn't let people in in need down. You can't turn your back to people who need your help. There must be some sort of decency in a man's life and I wouldn't have been decent to turn the back to

people in need. So there's no question uh of why or why not. You just did. That's the way you're brought up. That's the way of the tradition in in my country. You help of course. And therefore I don't think it's - I - could you have retained your self-respect if you, knew what these people would suffer and said no. Not likely. No. No way. So that's not a problem of of - you just have to do it. And nothing else.

Q: \_\_\_\_\_

A: No. I think I had yes, well, I think it was a time I understand when decency as, was unique. I hope we will have a world where decency will be the rule and not the exception.

Q: Thank you. Thank you very much. I want you to know something. I deliberately asked the questions that I did about Jews hoping that I would get you to say some of the answers that in fact I got. It matters. Uh, there has been, there, you know, you all from Denmark have all heard this before, and you all still look at us with this same blank look as if you're, you know, we're out of our minds. . .

A: It's an embarrassment. We are really embarrassed.

Q: No. No. It's clear. It's clear. Isn't it. We have had so many Jews sit here from other countries - the tape is still rolling \_\_\_\_\_ - who have told us on the one hand horrible stories of where people not only did not help but who made certain that they would not get out alive or attempted to. Uh and have repeated this in such quantities, that the few isolated acts of help from people from Poland or Germany or from where ever stand out as single instances. What all of you from Denmark are telling me is something very different and it is something I think that the world still does not understand was going on.

A: Well, you must recall that uh the Jewish in Denmark got their Danish citizenship in 1814. In, and already, they started in the 17th century to go to Denmark. You know that was the age of reason. I think that's very good because then they were accepted there. In 1814 they got, I think it was 1814, uh citizens' rights. They were Danes. In 1849 they had fully political rights when we had our new constitution. Uh the Jews were just the Roman Catholics. A religious minority. That's the only difference and that could be a good thing. Then they shouldn't pay tribute to the Danish church. Uh uh we have to do it but they can use it to their own congregations of course. But you must recall that the Jewish influence in the Danish culture has been rather big. I can mention that one of the most played uh plays on the \_\_\_\_\_ Theater in Copenhagen is "Wood Behind the Walls," by \_\_\_\_\_ Thompson (ph) and the famous Danish high school, you know, the \_\_\_\_\_ High School - it was one, two or three of the founders of the family tree (ph) was Jews. Their father was a rabbi but one of the sons converted to to Christianity and, but they was there. The \_\_\_\_\_ you have heard about, the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ which was a very big family in culture and but there was never Yiddish literature in Denmark. They all wrote Danish. It means that you see therefore that is not Jewish literature. That is Danish literature. Maybe you

understand why that we we are not able to understand this to try to try to separate Jews from Danes. And that that may be one of the reasons why there was not this, they were not a special group. They never lived in ghettos. And they were I think that the Jews integrated into the Danish society so quick so there was no problem. I know that in - I don't know whether it was the late 30's when we had some people from Austria and were agriculture uh scheme in Denmark, Jewish from Austria, young Jews. Even they went into the Danish society very soon. One of my wife's and I best friends, Mr. Phillips (ph), he's still speaking a little bit Austrian. He came in '38. There's one word he never learned to say in Danish. But he came in '38 as in the scheme. That was the only way to get an visa to Denmark. That was the only possibility to get into Denmark. And uh he still tells about this. He was not a farmer but OK, he started fair enough in a farm in Denmark and stayed there. Now he's just retired. He was director for uh what you call it - book publisher. But he's Danish. He's Danish. And uh therefore there's there is no difference and that's what I want to point out. That all these things, that is nonsense to us to talk about a special group of people.

Q: Will you take a minute as long as we have the tape and talk specifically about the boat "0 - 2" for the Museum. Um, it would be good to have it on tape. Tell me what you know of it's history.

A: Well, you see, I've heard a bit \_\_\_\_\_. I know that it was built in the beginning of the 1830's, early '30's (ph). I know that it was uh \_\_\_\_\_ had it in the start in \_\_\_\_\_. It was bought by uh by uh \_\_\_\_\_ and later on I know we have had some papers uh telling the owners. For instance, Thormod Larson, he bought it just after the war and had it for five, six years, and uh he he called it the "Con Man" because it has \_\_\_\_\_ made the Germans to last for so long a time. And when we discovered it again the name was "Sunshine" and I really think that was a wonderful name to give a boat. And she is an old boat, but she has been good. It was a good tool for us. She was fair. There was never, so far as I recall, one incident where the motor stopped, the engine stopped. I think that is also one of the things which - we were very fond of her. But uh I saw the boat the last time when \_\_\_\_\_ Harbor uh, no in \_\_\_\_\_ in Sweden when I when I left it in November '43 and then I saw it again now in the in the Spring here this year when uh \_\_\_\_\_ asked us to find the boat and we were quite sure it's the same boat because uh \_\_\_\_\_ for so long a time uh recognized it and everybody said yes, but that's the old \_\_\_\_\_ boat, the boat that the bookbinder \_\_\_\_\_ used. So, she is an old boat. She needs repair, but uh OK. I'm very proud to be with her and I think it's wonderful to see her in \_\_\_\_\_ something valuable for many people. And I can tell you as I said when I left \_\_\_\_\_ Harbor here in some months ago, before going to Washington, that we had so many memories, all of us, to that boat but uh it's good that somebody will keep her for us.

Q: One of the things that I neglected to ask you when we were on the boat is, can you describe a trip over on that boat? What was it like?

A: Well, in the start of the mess you know, to put people who had never been in a in a boat before, coming with everything they could have and afraid, first to calm them down. And then yourself excited and then suddenly you go out in the sea. It's a little bit wavy there, and people are very silent, very very silent. And you smell the the fear. We knew, we were not in the cabin because we stood in the in the back, but we knew at that time when we left, however, we would return. And we were positively sure that we would go over to Sweden without problems. And, but first out, well then you have nothing else to do - just sail and be calm. But the people down there was not able to see anything because they have to stay in the cabin. They had a much worse situation than we who could see. So it was easier to stand on the open deck than sit in the cabin. But normally as I said, there was no special experiences. It was only you go from here, you go over there and you will be there in so and so long time and maybe you'll be a little bit seasick. Uh, and anyway we we hoped the weather should be rough. It was easier for us to go over because they were, people, the Germans would never see us. But there was never an, you see episodes or - it was rather smooth sailing most of the time and as I told you before, we never lost a passenger. That indicates also that it's been smooth sailing.

Q: \_\_\_\_\_ Thank you, thank you very much.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

End of Tape #1

**Tape #2**

Q: Alright. Now we're back on camera. Tell me, uh this trip that was different from some of the others and your system?

A: We have a system and saying when we return to Denmark, if a red light go in; if there's a green light stay away. But one day there was no lights and but we took the chance and uh there was no one on the beach. There was no problem at all. OK. Sometimes it's human to fail and somebody had forgotten to put the light on, but uh everything ended happily.

Q: What was it like going in with no lights? How did you feel?

A: Scared. But uh send a prayer upwards. \_\_\_\_\_ At that time that was one of the last uh chance for the Jewish refugees but we were so used to uh this procedure that normally it was calm and it choose to be the same thing now. There was no problem at all. Only that one had forgotten to do what he had to do. But. . .

Q: How did your captain find his way in without lights?

A: Well, we have in Denmark uh pilots of course, but then we had people which we called "men who knows" and that's people who know that exactly part of the the border, of the of the shore and uh it's so in Denmark in the straits that the sand reefs, there are some sand reefs, that they are shifting every year. But if you know them you can go from one reef through a hole into another and then you should be a man who knows the way to do it all as people they would drown. And uh the captain knew the thing. He knew every inch of the uh beach and the shore outside. It's interesting.

Q: You're going in. Your lights had failed. Your signals had failed. If you were caught, did you have guns to defend yourself?

A: No. We never had a gun. We don't think it could help anything. Uh we couldn't resist uh a German patrol and we had also the security of our passengers to think of. So we never had a gun. It was a gunless army. \_\_\_\_\_. I think that that shows that sometimes you can win victory without arms. I think that's important.

Q: You mentioned earlier too that being without guns, that would get you a different sentence than if you had guns if you were caught?

A: Yes, in that time there would be, if you were caught with a gun, you had the risk to have the death penalty. Otherwise you will \_\_\_\_\_ shot, maybe shot at sight, but uh if you were caught without guns and then you'll get a long term death penalty, be sent to concentration camp but OK, there was a very much better chance, and at that time uh we, the most of the Danish uh resistance movement caught would be sent uh to a camp just north of the German-Danish border where the conditions were some better, oh no, much



better than in a, the German concentration camps. So there was really difference if you were taken with guns, explosives - then that would be a death penalty, but we had no use of them. We shouldn't catch fish with the guns.

Q: When you were going in, and the signals had failed, did your passengers know about this?

A: No, there was no passengers then. We were alone. We were on the way in after coming from Sweden. No, there were no passengers.

Q: Uh, let's go back a minute and describe going out again from Denmark to Sweden. Can you describe for me the reactions of some of your passengers on one of your trips? Describe for me the people on the boat, how they reacted.

A: Well, I really think they reacted what everybody can expect. Somebody are calm. Somebody are very uneasy. Some have children with them and they had a double responsibility. They are much more afraid and but normally, and I know it from uh \_\_\_\_\_ and Thormod Larson who have done it many many times, they said that it was remarkable peace, remarkable calm on the most, of the, from the side of the passengers most time. There was very seldom that some of the passengers would do anything. Because they understand that's their last chance. And that was the last attempt in their uh way from Denmark to Sweden. And I really think they were very calm in the boat also when we started. And very much joy there too when when we said now we're on the right side of the strait. That was a relief and that, that was in my -I understood it. I understood it. But uh there was never the disorder or something like that. No. But some of them, they had I suppose a \_\_\_\_\_ out. And maybe also to the boat.

Q: OK. Thank you.