

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Gisela Feldman
May 6, 1996
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PREFACE

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GISELA FELDMAN

May 6, 1996

Question: It is May 6, 1996. This is an interview with Gisela Feldman, a survivor of the SS St. Louis. Now first what I would like to ask you is if you would state your name, your date of birth, and where you were born.

Answer: Yes, well. My name is Gisela Feldman and my maiden name was Klapl, K-L-A-P-L, and I was born on the 18th of September, 1923, in Berlin, Germany.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about growing up in Berlin at that time and about your schooling and your parents?

A: I was born in 1923, as I said, and so I had 10 years without Hitler. My parents originally came from Poland, the Austrian-Hungarian empire of Poland, at the age of 15, so by the time I was born, they had been in Germany for about twenty years. During the first 10 years, what I can remember is people still had housing shortages and that was a result of the first world war, and it was very difficult to get a decent flat. But that affected everybody, it wasn't something that we felt we were singled out for that. But when it got to some of 1932, I was nine then, I became aware of the fact, there was some sort of tension between the Nazi Party and the Communists. I remember marches in the street where people beat each other up. And in the block of flats where I lived, a person was even shot because they were demonstrating against the Nazi Party. So that in a nine year old, aroused some sort of fear that something was about to happen.

Q: What was it like at school? Did you feel very well acclimated?

A: Yes I did. In fact my sister and I were the only Jewish children in the school. And during the sort of beginnings of the Nazi party I had a very good teacher and he kept telling all the children that I was no different from anybody else and they had to treat me very well and all that. But that didn't

go on for too long because when I reached the age of 11 and I had to go to a secondary school, I had to go to a Jewish school because it was very difficult to stay on in a state school.

Q: You had many friends?

A: Yes, I had a, I used to play with the children in the street and I didn't feel too discriminated against playing with the other children in the street, but I was always blonde and blue-eyed and so I suppose that made a difference too.

Q: Was your family particularly religious?

A: Well, not a terribly orthodox, but I as a child, I wouldn't ride on a sharbot(ph) and I wouldn't switch the light on. However my father kept his shop open after going to a service in the morning, he came back because we lived in such a Christian neighborhood that, you know, we had to keep the shop open on a Saturday. And our customers really didn't stay away from us until an SS man stood guard outside the shop and told people not to buy from Jews. And even then, some of them were very brave they came in and we had one particular customer across the road from us, a Catholic baker, and they also weren't very fond of the Nazis, and you know bakers have to get up very early to bake their bread, and they found somebody dobbing(ph) their shop windows, friends of the Jews, and so they just poured buckets of water from the balcony over them. So that was really a very brave act in the climate.

Q: Do you have a sense of how your parents felt at this time and what did your father do? What kind of shop was it?

A: We had a grocery store. Well, once or twice my father was beaten up in the dark when he came home from the shop. And then things got a little difficult. But you see, when you're sort of 12, 13, you don't quite realize the dangers that were going on. But we did know of people whose fathers disappeared or they used to go and sleep in other people's houses, so when the party came to pick

them up they wouldn't be at home, they couldn't be found. So yes, things were getting very sort of disturbing. But you know, people always say to me, "Why did people not leave early on?," and the only theory I can have is, if you are very poor you can go because you've got nothing to lose, and if you were rich, you know at the beginning you were allowed to take your money out with you, but if you are a middle-class person then you sort of value a little bit of security. So that's the only explanation I have because we didn't leave until 39 which was the last moment almost.

Q: So they didn't talk to you much about what they were thinking or about possibly immigrating sooner?

A: No, my parents really I think protected us quite a lot. They didn't show their fears a great deal. And our final moment really came when my father was deported in 1938. I don't know whether you know that. My father had a Polish passport and at that time the Poles said that anybody who hadn't returned to Poland for a number of years was going to lose their passports, and I think the Nazis got a little bit worried that they were going to be left with all these people with Polish nationality and they picked up all the men during the night and just deported them to Poland. And I think that's when things started really to, for us, to reach a high point where we had to decide to do something, although we had to shut our shop before that so when my father was deported he didn't have any income anymore.

Q: Tell me, just going back just a little bit, when they closed the shop, when was that?

A: That was sort of the beginning of 38. And they also made me leave school because it was then decided education wasn't going to be much use to you if you had to go into a country where you didn't speak the language. So people got their children to learn a trade. I went to dress-making school, people became plumbers, and _____ and so on because you felt if you had a trade in your hands you didn't need to know the language.

Q: And what was your mother. Was your mother a full-time housekeeper?

A: No, she worked with my father in the shop. And we had a maid. Which of course I don't remember which year 34, 35, you weren't allowed to have anyone anymore unless they were over 50. Because you know there was this word rusenshen(ph), I don't know if you've come across it. But that's why you're not allowed to have anybody under 50.

Q: Tell me a little bit about when your father was deported and how that came about and how you first found out.

A: Well, that was obviously something, a very well kept secret because in October, the 28th of October I think, during the night there is a ring at the door and two men came in civilian clothes actually, and they said to my father, "Pack your bag, get your passport". And you know that was a very frightening experience and my sister panicked, she's three years younger than I, and she started shouting at them and they said, "Well if you don't keep quiet we will take you away as well." I must have kept calm because I remember I got up and made sandwiches for my father for him to take the sandwiches. But we didn't know why or what or where they were going to go, they didn't tell us, and while they were watching my father I rushed out down the street to go to a phone and phone my uncles to warn them, but a strange man answered the phone so we knew they had also got them. And, then some sort of rumor came about that they had been taken to the railway stations, and then all the women rushed to the railway station to see if they could still see their husbands or fathers, but we didn't see our father, but eventually we heard from him that he was in Poland. And they had apparently there was some sort of tug-of-war between the Germans and the Poles because the Poles didn't want to take them, the Germans wouldn't let them back, and there was a camp where they held all these people which was called bonchin(ph) and but my father still had family in Poland so he and his two brothers went to the family.

Q: So after he arrived in Poland you were able to correspond with him?

A: We were going to speak to with him on the phone, we were able to speak to him on the phone. Yes. Well it wasn't war time yet, you see, it was 38, it was just before Crystal Night actually that they were deported. The 28th of October, Crystal Night was in November so it wasn't very far apart.

Q: So tell me a little bit about Crystal Night and that evening.

A: Well, I really got up, we got up the next morning, and you see not living in a Jewish area we weren't so aware as to what had happened. Our shop had gone so really there wasn't much Jewish property for them to destroy. But when we heard about it I walked to my Aunt's house and yes, you were walking through glass. You know once you neared Jewish shops and the synagogue and so on then you could see what had happened. That's why it's called Crystal Night, isn't it? We were walking on glass.

Q: In between the time that your father was deported and the time that you were attempting to leave did things get progressively worse? What was it like for you?

A: First of all we were asked to leave our flat, for a German couple, and strangely enough my mother went to court and the judge gave her three months, which was quite unheard of, you know, that he should allow us to stay, and so he gave us three months, and we moved in with my aunt after that whose husband had also been deported. And then my mother started seriously to look around for some place for us to go. Because we had no income. There was no safety anymore. We children couldn't go to school. So obviously, rather late, but we knew then that we had to leave, because you see even the lot of the German people I think didn't believe that our friends anyway that he could stay in power. And a lot of the Jewish people who had become so much part of the country and the professional people who held jobs in hospitals and everywhere, nobody could

believe that an intelligent nation could allow in a dictator which in a way wasn't imposed on them, because Hindenburg supported him and he really got in by legal means but nobody thought that such a tyranny could go on but they are, that's what happened. And so then my mother started looking around and by that time it was very difficult to get a visa to go to any country, and so people took any visa they could get. I know friends of ours went to China and eventually these Cuban visas came up and you had to pay for them with them with foreign currency, which really meant you had to smuggle money out of Germany in order to have dollars to pay for these visas, which my mother did, she smuggled money out, and she didn't even know who it was going to, it was some sort of code name, you know she talked to somebody about uncle so and so, I remember that as a child. And then eventually we bought visas with the foreign currency, and which was supposed to be perfectly legal. And then my mother had to arrange a boat to take us across and she got four passages on the boat called the St. Louis which was meant to sail from Hamburg on May the 13th, which it did. And the Germans allowed people to come back into Germany providing they were leaving again. It was a sort of transit visa they allowed them. My father applied to come back and the Poles sent the wrong brother back, so my father didn't make it. And so my father phoned up in tears and he told my mother not to go without him, and she must have been a very determined woman because she said "I have to take the children out." In any case, there was another boat leaving after ours, the Orinoco and she couldn't get four passages on the next boat, but one she could get, so she was determined to take up three of the passages and my father was going to join us afterwards on the next boat.

Q: You had how many siblings?

A: I had a sister, I have a sister still, yes.

Q: So at the time you had your mother, you and your sister, the three of you?

A: Three of us were going yes. And actually the finalization of the visas didn't happen until the last minute. We were to leave on a Saturday and Friday morning we still hadn't heard that everything was finalized, so my mother rushed off to sort things out, then she called me on the phone and I went with her, and then on the Friday afternoon we got everything finalized, and we phoned my 12 year-old sister and she did all the packing and we left on the Friday night.

Q: Do you know much more about how she obtained...

A: The visa?

Q: Yeah.

A: No, I'm afraid I don't. I just know that she had to pay with it for it with foreign currency and I think they were bought abroad, paid for abroad in the Cuban embassy.

Q: So your father never made it out?

A: Never made it out, no? You know, if you know the story of the St. Louis, when we got to Havana, they wouldn't allow us to land, and the next boat was leaving two weeks later, and when the captain heard that we couldn't land I think they got as far as Antwerp, they turned back but they didn't tell the passengers they were turning back, and they ended up back in Germany and then my father had to go back to Poland and we never saw him again.

Q: So he did manage the next boat?

A: He managed the next boat but he went back to Germany and then eventually to Poland.

Q: So tell me a little bit about the passage, initially you were on the SS. St. Louis?

A: Yes, well we left on May the 13th, and if you manage to get a hold of the documentary, you will see how efficient the Germans are because they found all the old footage of us getting on, and they even found me as a 15 year old amongst all that crowd getting onto the boat. But we left on May the 13th and for us youngsters it was really quite an adventure, because this was a luxury liner, and

the captain was a wonderful man. He instructed the crew that we had to be treated like anybody else. We had to pay for the return journey, but nobody really saw anything into that because we all felt the ship was going to come back empty and it was only fair that they were paid for this. And it was an experience to be on a liner where you had a cinema and a ballroom and a swimming pool, and all the usual games you have on a boat. Obviously very few of us had ever been on a cruise so it was exciting for us youngsters. But my mother never took part in anything. She didn't worry us, you know. And it must have been an awful thing to leave your place where you've lived, and leave a husband behind who didn't want you to go. My mother had ten marks, which I don't know how much it would have been then, perhaps twenty dollars or something for the three of us, that is all we were allowed to take out. So she must have been terribly worried about the future, you know two children, twenty dollars, no job, nothing to go back to. And so, but she never worried us at all. And during the first 10 days we really had a very good time until we landed and found that things began to go wrong.

Q: What was the feeling within the passengers with you as a teenager could get a sense of anywhere along the line between the...?

A: The main thing is, we saw so many people with shaven heads. And it appears then, we sort of found out they were people let out of concentration camps, they had to sign papers to say they would never return to Germany, they were let out, and these people seemed to take longer to take part in the festivities that were going on, and so on. We had our Friday night services, we had a portrait of Hitler in the ballroom, but the captain allowed us take it off during the services and then it had to be put back after the service. It's very difficult for me now to say what I remember as a teenager and what I've read since, of course, it's very difficult to separate these things. Because there was also a book written about it, called "The Voyage of the Damned," but unfortunately I feel

it's a little bit of a soap opera and they made a film of that too. And so I don't know if I know it from the book I read or whether I really knew it that there were people watching us. The only thing I know is my mother had a cabin on her own and one night she woke up and found somebody searching through things and walking around the cabin. And after that she never slept alone again. So I don't know how much truth there was in it all, that we were being watched.

Q: Did you know before you hit Havana at all that the visas, the transit passes was canceled?

A: Not really, except somebody said on the way there that there was another boat coming from somewhere else, and I can't remember where from, England or somewhere else, and they said, "We really should hurry and get there before the other boat so that we don't have to hang about too long." Now I don't know if there is any significance in that or not, but for certain we didn't know anything until we got there, and we were even told to get up very early the next morning and had our breakfast and we were lined up with all our suitcases ready to get off, and the boat stopped quite a way outside the harbor. Well, once again we thought that was quite normal, you know, it is always deep enough for the boat to go right into the harbor and we had stopped outside, and the Cuban police came on and the immigration people, and then suddenly the atmosphere changed and we were told, "not today, not today, meyeniana(ph) tomorrow, tomorrow," but tomorrow never came, and then people were getting anxious but nobody ever gave up hope. You know we were so near America we never thought anybody would allow us to go back to Germany. I mean nine hundred and odd people that's really nothing is it, a drop in the ocean.

Q: There were some people who left the boat?

A: Yes, but they were I think Spaniards and Cubans or something, and one family I remember leaving, left because I think somebody paid them a lot of money for them, but I think they were just family if I remember correctly. But the others I think were people that had that weren't refugees

that had come to holiday or to play in a band or something but I really don't remember these things. And one man of course committed suicide and he was left behind. And that I remember very well because I was standing by the deck and I saw him rushing out of the bathroom with the blood dripping down and he ran to the edge and jumped into the water. And one of the sailors actually jumped after him and rescued him. But even when he was in the rescue launch, he was still trying to pull his arteries out and he didn't want to be saved.

Q: He had cut himself?

A: Yes, with a razor blade. Because he'd been in a camp and decided he wouldn't go back, and I suppose people's condition wasn't good you know when they got on the boat, their minds must have been very confused anyway, and then to be faced with the problems that we might have had to face, he couldn't put up with.

Q: So what happened, you're in Havana for a few days?

A: Several days, yes. And then they decided, the Cuban authorities decided, that no boat could stay in the harbor for such a length of time and that we should leave the, I think it's a three mile zone or whatever it is, and just go back and cruise around until more arrangements were made. And I believe the American Joint(ph) worked very hard for us, and they wanted to pay money for us, but I think it was more a political issue because I think whatever they offered it was decided not to accept the money and not to accept us. Whatever reason they could give for us, I really don't know, I really only know what I have heard since, so I don't know what the political issue was that why they wouldn't have us. And then we just went off and cruised along the coast of Miami and Florida and the gun boats came out in case somebody jumped overboard and swam ashore you know, and so. And eventually when we turned back towards Germany, we still really didn't know what was happening because we didn't know which direction we were going in, so for quite a time we were in

a way left in the dark except they had a committee which apparently knew what was going on but certainly we teenagers didn't know what was going on.

Q: Do you think your mother was involved in...?

A: She wasn't involved in the committee, no.

Q: Did she know much more than you did about what was going on?

A: Well, she never showed anything, you know. I just know that she never took part in any of the journification so obviously she was worried all along, so I really don't know if she knew any more than we did, but probably she suspected more than we did. Probably had a greater fear than we did.

Q: Now what was life, what did you do just on a daily basis on the ship as all of this was happening as a teenager, as a child?

A: You mean after we couldn't land, because before that we had a jolly good time, we swam and played games and went to dances and film shows.

Q: After Havana while you were in Havana and then you..?.

A: Well, then really very few people attended the sort of film shows, and the dances, and all that, because there was a sort of cloud hanging over us, even though you had hope that you weren't going to, that you were going to land somewhere eventually, but obviously it was a worrying time because you didn't know what your future held for you.

Q: Did you make new friends while you were on the boat?

A: Yes, I made quite a lot of friends but really we didn't keep it up because a small, a quarter of the people ended up in England, and a lot of those eventually got to America anyway because so many of them had quota numbers to get into America at a future date, and so quite a few left during the war even, and I think we were sort of spread around the country, and I in particular was sent away, straightaway two days after we arrived I was sent to a convalescent home by the seaside to scrub

floors for them you know, because the only work you were allowed to do was domestic work, so I was sent away straightaway.

Q: So this is after, obviously you returned to Antwerp.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So you were still in Belgium?

A: Oh no, no, we ended up in England, sorry. Yes, well eventually when we had to go back towards and we knew we were going back towards Germany, as far as I know several other people tried to commit suicide, and we had a group of young people checking all the cabins to watch people, and it was a very grim atmosphere then of course. And when we were off the coast of England suddenly we heard that Belgium, Holland, France, and England were prepared to take a quarter each of the people. And obviously a lot of people wanted to go England, because the other countries were too near Germany. And my father obviously knew what was going on because he sent us a telegram and said "Choose England." But really one didn't have a choice. They decided where people should go and people's different nationalities they had different quotas how many people they would take in of each nationality and my mother told me to go and speak to the Immigration, English Immigration Officer because I had learned English at school. How good my English was I really don't know, but I did talk to the man and whether that had any influence or not I really don't know. But luckily we ended up in England. But the boat first landed in Belgium, and the people that were staying in Belgium obviously got off and the others were transferred by trains to Holland and France, and we were put on a sort of cargo ship and taken to England. And we've heard since that at the time Gobels(ph) published in the newspapers you see nobody wants samiva(ph) at least we are building camps for them.

Q: So you went to England...?

A: Yes.

Q: And you all three stayed together?

A: Well, not quite. We stayed together for the first few days, because the Jewish Committee, it was in London, it was Woben(ph) House, gave people, put people into the hotel for the first week, but I after three days we were sent away immediately. My sister was 13 and she went to school.

Q: So where were you sent away?

A: It was seaside place called Broadstairs(ph). It was a convalescent home actually for Jewish refugees. And, but, the matron of the convalescent home was not Jewish, and there were three of us actually and we were always hungry. The didn't feed us very well.

Q: So this was the middle of, this is the end of June, the beginning of July?

A: Yes, in fact we came to England on the 19th of June I think, because my sister's birthday is on the 18th and we still had that on the boat. Yes, that was towards the end of June then, yes, yes, and I stayed there until September and then I met a family on the beach and they asked me if I would come and look after their children for them, of 6 and 11, and I was getting in English money, 25 p(ph) a week and they were offering me a pound a week or something, and so I obviously accepted, ended with going back to London so I accepted that job and the children were as I said six and a half and 11, and I was 15, and they asked me to do the cooking and the cleaning, and if the children couldn't go to school they asked me to write the letters to teachers, so somebody must have had great fun reading my writing, but still.

Q: And what about your mother and your sister, what were they doing at this time?

A: My mother eventually found work with some...[end of side one]. So, at what point do you want me to start?

Q: Oh. I kind of like, eventually we can get back to what we were just talking about, but you were in England and you were working for a family.

A: Yes, I was working for a family then and then of course the war broke out, and I was in London and we, at one stage, went and slept in the underground stations to protect ourselves because of the bombing. But I stayed with that family for about six months and once war broke out, we were allowed to do war work, and so then my sister had been evacuated by then, but my mother and I found rooms and we lived together and I went to work making soldiers uniforms and gunpowder bags, and so on.

Q: What was the name of the family that you stayed with in England?

A: No I didn't say that. Nash(ph), actually Nash(ph) yes. It was an English family Nash(ph) yes, changed from Nashinski(ph) , yes.

Q: So you came back together with...?

A: My mother and then eventually my sister came back from her evacuation too, yes. She went to a dressmaking school actually and then had to find a job. And I was working, but in 1943 I got married and moved out again, I got married at 19 and a half.

Q: And how did that come about, if you don't mind me asking?

A: How did that come about? I went to a Czech garden party with a man actually who has since became an actor, his name was Herbert Long, but he wasn't an actor in the days I knew him, he played in the Pink Panther films, but you won't remember that you are too young. But, and my husband asked me to, well, this man asked me to dance, and then saw me home afterwards and told me that if I was still going out with him two months later I would marry him and that was it. And my husband was 21 and I was 19 and a half but he had no family. He came from Poland and he was alone so possibly that's the reason he was in such a hurry.

Q: And so you are married?

A: I was married, yes. And then my husband decided perhaps he should go to university, and so he didn't go to university until after we were married.

Q: You stayed in London together?

A: For a period, but the university he went to was in Sheffield, and so we moved to Sheffield for four years until he got his degree.

Q: What was it like in London, you continued to work?

A: Yes, we had our bombings and hiding in shelters, and eventually I think a lot of people gave up and just took their chances. And of course we had the blackout. It was very difficult to find your way around because in those days we still had these famous London fogs that you only see in Sherlock Holmes films nowadays and I can remember ending up in somebody else's yard at the back of the house because it really was quite impossible to see and find your way around. On the other hand one felt very, very safe. You know you'd walk around without being able to see anybody and people would talk to you and as a young girl, you never felt afraid to walk about.

Q: What was, as far as Europe, what was happening in Europe and the holocaust there, the in time...?

A: Well one didn't really know how horrible it all was, you know. And we still heard from my father for some time. But I'd just like to back when we first came to England. My mother couldn't speak English so she went to the East end of London, which was the Jewish part in those days, and she could speak Yiddish, and she went from place to place, from shop to shop, and asked somebody if they could guarantee for my father to come out, because he could come if you had somebody that would guarantee for you, and in fact she found somebody who offered him a job, and his papers were being processed and the war broke out, so he lost his second chance there. So I'm only saying

that just to add again what a brave woman my mother was, making a decision for us to leave without him with two children and very little money, and then she immediately set about trying to get him out, and so she was really a very active woman because we relied a lot on her before we left Germany too because when we had our business eventually wholesalers wouldn't deliver to Jewish shops, so my mother used to get up at 5:00 in the morning and go to the markets and bring in the eggs and the butter so we could still sell the stuff in the, in the shop. So she really was a very, very strong, active woman. But now getting back to after the war started, we heard from my father until about 1940, because we had family in Romania and in Switzerland so he could send the mail via these two addresses. Just recently I came across a postcard from him actually and which I think historically is quite interesting because he gives his address in Poland, which was, the town was Gesshue(ph) and it says "Germany" and in brackets "Formally Poland." So in effect you see once the Germans invaded Poland the address had to be Germany. It is interesting, isn't it? Until I looked through all the stuff my mother left behind, I didn't realize how really historically interesting that must be that they had to write their address "Germany," and in brackets "Formally Poland."

Q: What were the, what did you hear from your father, any indication of what was going on?

A: There were only a few lines actually, we haven't heard for such a long time, are you well, I'm sorry you have to work so hard, write, and you know that's just these few lines. And my husband actually he died three years ago but before that went back to Poland because apparently they have quite a few archives there too, to see if he could find out what happened to my family, but they had records of people who died a natural death, but not records of people who were eventually sent away or deported so we never found out what happened.

Q: So eventually the correspondence just stopped?

A: Correspondence stopped yes. And of course the Red Cross made all sorts of inquiries so you know nobody turned up after the war, so one knew that they had gone.

Q: What was it like when you first, when you were in England, what was it like? Was it easy to acclimate? You spoke at least a little bit of English.

A: Yes well, I must have spoken quite a lot, because I was sent out to do the shopping, and of course I was in that convalescent home, and the matron that ran it only spoke English, and I think I probably learned quite a lot looking after the children too. So, I seemed to have, as I say, learned it very quickly, because I can remember after I got married being ill, and the doctors saying to my husband, "That's a real Londoner you've got there, isn't it?" So I must have lost my accent fairly quickly too.

Q: So it was fairly easy acclimating?

A: Yes, for me it was, yes, yes.

Q: How about your mother. She sounded like she, where were you living in England, was it East end?

A: No, no, we weren't living in the East end, at one time we were living in Klisl(ph) Park, and then eventually we had a flat in West Hampstead. Actually only about a year before I got married we took on that flat.

Q: And did you become involved in the Jewish community at all besides.....

A: Well, not an awful lot. We had Jewish friends and I had one particular friend from the boat actually, who eventually emigrated to Australia and I am still in touch with her and I even went to see her in Australia, and some of the people from the boat, although I hadn't remembered them but when we had this reunion to make the documentary, actually they only had nine of us because that's

all they could afford, three people from England and six from America and three of the six, I am going to see on this trip.

Q: So, you were married, and then you eventually went to Sheffield?

A: We went to Sheffield for my husband to do his studies. And he did a degree in glass technology(ph) which is an unusual subject, but before he finished his studies in 1946 we brought his parents over to England because they had, in fact, they lived in Krakoff(ph) and as the Germans marched in they marched out towards the Russian side and eventually the Russians sent them right deep into Russia and although they had an awful war, there were no worse off than of the Russians because nobody had any food, so they were discriminated against where they were and they came back to Krakoff(ph) right after the war, and then we brought them over to England and they always said they had been the happiest years of their lives. So that was great.

Q: So after the war everything was fine?

A: Yes, yes. I mean we lead perfectly normal lives. We had our first child in 1950, a daughter who lives in California, and we had two more children, one of them we lost he died at the age of 18, he had polio and eventually ended up in a car accident in an invalid car, and then I have a son in Manchester in England and I have now left London to live near him since I lost my husband.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?

A: Well, I think perhaps everything that is of interest I have told you because once I got married we lead a fairly ordinary life, perhaps not so ordinary as far as people are concerned now because we brought his parents over, we kept them for awhile, and it isn't often that the children are responsible for parents, it is normally the other way around. But it was such a normal thing in those days. You never felt that you had been hard done by or you did more than you should have done. I think we often felt very sad about my mother. You don't realize until it happens to you. My mother had 18

years of married life and when we were youngsters we thought that was a long time, but obviously it isn't a long time. And so she really had a very hard time. We often felt sorry for her, but she was never a miserable person, and all she said was "I just want to see my daughters married," and when she saw her daughters married, "I just want to see my grandchildren," you know, so really there's always people always hope for more. And then eventually she even saw her great-grandchildren so that was great.

Q: So she went on the best that she could?

A: She died in her 91st year, so really...and dearly loved by everybody. Her sons-in-law thought she wonderful because she never interfered. And so we really had a very nice family life, yes.

Q: You were saying earlier that you didn't find any difficulty talking about your experiences and do you have any reflections on the Holocaust and what happened in Europe and what may have happened to you and what may have happened to your father?

A: Well, it's something that I think is horrendous, but it's quite difficult to comprehend even though you know it has all happened. And I must say that I watch all the films and things and people always say to me "Why do you punish yourself like that?" And I just feel that at least I must experience second-hand what these people went through. I think it's a cowardly attitude to say, "I can't watch these things" because if my family could go through it at least I should know and get upset by what they've been through. But everybody has to deal with things in their own way, I suppose. But not to want to know, I think, is really denying the fact that these people existed and what happened to them. Well I hope you feel happy with what I've told you.

Q: I really appreciate you taking the time to do it.

A: Yes, but do you feel you've had sufficiently out of this interview, or did you want to ask me any questions?

Q: I think it was very good, and it's important that being young at the time, you only told us what you actually saw, that's good and it's very important.

A: Yes, but when people have talked to me before I always felt I had to be honest about the fact that you cannot really know exactly what you have experienced or what you remember from your experience or what you've read since. And I think perhaps everybody must feel that difficulty.

Q: Yeah, I think that's something you are obviously very conscious of because there are things. It has been 50 years, 60 years, and obviously there are a lot of life experiences and a lot of knowledge since then that incorporate into our memories, and it's important that we find this out.

A: Well, thank you.

Q: Thank you very much.

Conclusion of interview.