

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Erna Karplus
August 27, 1997
RG-50.030*0444

PREFACE

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ERNA KARPLUS

August 27, 1997

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: Let me ask you first, Mrs. Karplus, if you could, say your name and where we are right now, and we can say that the date is August 27th, 1997. And if you could say your name and where we are right now, and then we'll go from there, okay?

Answer: I am Erna Karplus, and we are in my apartment on Beacon Street, in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Q: Okay, that's August 27th, 1997.

A: Sorry.

Q: No, no, that's okay, I can add that. Well, I have many questions for you.

A: I'm so glad.

Q: And I guess I'll start out by just asking you to talk and reflect a little bit about your childhood, and yo -- did you grow up in Vienna?

A: I was born in Vienna, and I had three siblings. I was the youngest, and I lived in Vienna, but from '32 to '36 I was in Paris, and lived in Paris. And then I went back because I married a friend of mine whom I knew only 11 years. So we decided to marry. And I loved to be in Paris, of course, it was a wonderful experience as a young Viennese. People liked the Viennese people. They hated -- the French people hated the Germans, but they liked the Viennese, so I was lucky, and had a wonderful time. I was working there, because one could only take little money there. I could live only three months of the money which I've taken with me. So I started es -- I wanted to stay longer than three months, and I started as soon as possible to earn money to stay longer. And so I stayed longer, I went always in summer back to Vienna, and also f -- I went skiing, and

met my friends for Christmas, and then in summer I went also -- I really did a lot of mountaineering, summer and winter, fall and spring, all the time we were on the mountains as youngsters.

Q: Well tell -- tell me a little bit about that and growing up in Vienna again. What was it like being a child in Vienna? Do you -- was it -- was it a -- was it a -- a memorable childhood --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- do you remember many things? What are some of the things you remember most about your childhood?

A: Of course, first was school, and I was six years in the gymnasium where you learn Latin and I think at that time we learned English there. I feel I had a very happy childhood. We had many friends and it was of -- was, of course, very different to what's going on here. We didn't -- we're not allowed to go in a nightclub, or outside. We always had some sis -- parties, some parties at home, so that was with -- really lovely. We had a big apartment, and as we were four, we had many friends, and we [indecipherable] parents loved also to entertain, so we had to always saw the friends at home. My -- first, of course, I was not as much in the mountains, but when I grow up as a -- and had friends. If we -- if I say boyfriend, it does not mean like here that you sleep with them. S-S -- ju -- it was everything very platonic, and -- but we had many friends, and with them we went to theater, or to the concert, or weekend to the mountains. That's -- I loved the mountains, and the f -- a-and whether it was skiing or rock climbing, everything was lovely for us, and for me. Then, after my six years of gymnasium, I decided to become a photographer, and --

Q: How old were you then? How old were you?

A: 16, probably.

Q: 16.

A: Just a minute. It was six, 11 -- no, seven, seven -- 17. Because five class -- five were ca -- public school, that means the lower classes, and then there for six years in the gymnasium, that's 11 years, and you started with six years, so that was 17.

Q: 17.

A: And first I worked at a photographer, and then I went to a school where I learned about photography and printing and so on.

Q: And what pro -- what drew you into -- what attracted you to photography?

A: I think it's -- we always have taken pictures, and then I met somebody, a photographer, who talked about it, and suddenly I decided I'd rather to go two more years and to make my [indecipherable] as to go to study photography. But then, I admit my -- it was called master exam for photography, it's not like here master. I was first an apprentice. It goes like -- I don't know how you call it here, you know? And then I made my master for photography, and I worked at the photographer. Then -- I always have taken exercises. Not only me, everyone in Vienna had, Mother and everyone has taken exercises, and my teacher said, you're so gifted, why don't you study to be an exercise teacher? So I propose this to my father, who was horrified. You never will need to work, you will marry and never will need to work again. And now you have photographer, for what do you want to study to be a exercise teacher? Luckily, my brother-in-law, Dr. Felix Fleischner talked for me, he was all for it, said I st-study what I want, and luckily Father agreed. He had to agree because one has to pay, of course. And I studied to be a phot -- exercise teacher and got my diploma in Vienna.

Q: When was this, approximately?

A: The diploma, ach, I have it somewhere. Let me think. Six, 17, that was [inaudible] 24 - 25, probably '29.

Q: '29?

A: Nine, cause --

Q: What year were you born, by the way?

A: Seven.

Q: 1907?

A: In seven, yes.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: Yes, I will have my 90th birthday this year in November. I can't believe it.

Q: You don't look like you're about to have your 90th birthday.

A: No, I will look like 102, but I am not. Anyway, then, when I made my diploma, I worked for [indecipherable] photography, and I worked as an exercise teacher, after I have the diploma. In Vienna you have to have a diploma, not like here that everyone can put out her shingle without ever learned anything. And also, where you teach, it was -- somebody came to look whether it is the proper place to teach. Whether it's clean enough, whether it has the shower and so on. [phone ringing]

Q: Do you need to get that?

A: [indecipherable] [tape break] -- is not a nurse, but she was with my sister [indecipherable]

Q: Ah, I see.

A: And she calls sometimes, see how everything is.

Q: Ah, oh. Okay.

A: Is settle. Do you have it on?

Q: Yes. Do you want me to turn it off? [tape break]. Continuing. Go ahead.

A: I love to teach exercises, and too, I was very happy to start in Vienna with it, and I was also teaching like we have here, the st -- ca -- for instance, the Cambridge Center for Adult Education. So there were in Vienna [indecipherable] which were really started to make grandfather of the brother-in-law of mine, of Hartman, and I was teaching, for instance in the Luderhatte mon volkshheim. And I probably did not work the whole day from morning evening, that I don't remember, but I enjoyed to work, and to do things and of course weekend we always went away, a group of people. We were several who always met in the train and we went someplace. Then, in '32, I got the chance to go to Paris. It was -- as I say, it was three months. I had some money and I loved to go to Paris, also to practice my French. We had always as children, when we were young, we had a governess very long, and then a French teacher, who went also with us at -- in summer for vacation. I think she learned more German than we learned French, but it was a possibility to learn French. And so I went to Paris, but --

Q: Well yeah, okay, that's fine. We -- we can -- let -- let me just ask you one specific thing about --

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: -- about Vienna when you were a child. You know, in doing some reading about the history of anti-Semitism in Austria, there is quite a bit of history going back to long before you were born, and I'm just wondering, y-you're describing us a ch -- an -- a nice, a pleasant childhood, do -- did you -- were there things when you were a little girl, I mean, before the anschluss that you noticed? I mean, were there -- did your grandfather have problems, did your parents have problems, did you have any problems?

A: Never. Never. We had always also some Gentile friends, who went with us to mountains, we were invited. Everything went -- we -- I never felt an anti-Semitism. I -- i-in fact grew up, my father was very religious. I was not allowed to write on Saturday at school, we had school at Saturday. And there was another girl who was not allowed to write. So there were never given written examinations on Saturday because we didn't write. But there was never -- I never felt any anti-Semitism as long we were there, til Hitler came. We were very lucky this way, we had always, as I say, Gentile friends, and in fact, our Jewish friends had very nice Gentile friends whom they married after Hitler to -- to go out with them. That -- to emigrate with them. So we were really a mixed group. More Jews than Gentile, but we were mix and I never suffered.

Q: Did you hear of anyone, any Jewish friends or -- or acquaintances, or even people you had heard about who had a problem?

A: Only, for instance at the university. It was very hard for my brother-in-law, who was an x-ray doctor, Roentgenologist. He was only [indecipherable] and not -- could not become professor. Then there was, at the university, a Jewish professor, m-my husband's uncle was professor of neurology. But that was really seldom that a Jew got a professorship. That I knew, that I heard. But otherwise I really never personally felt it, that the anti-Semitism was -- I knew it was there, but I didn't feel it. I didn't --

Q: Ho-How did you know it was there? How di -- how were you --

A: For instance, about this university, and then, now I try to think. I really -- I don't remember anything special before Hitler --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- that is -- but I d -- I knew that there is anti-Semitism. I try to remember, but I don't know, I'm sorry.

Q: Were there stories, Mrs. Karplus, at that time of -- of Jewish families wanting to assimilate and in some cases actually convert? Wa-Was there -- were there conversions to Christianity going on i-in the desire to assimilate, or --

A: No, not much. No, except that many, many who were not at all religious. For instance, we three sisters married three men who were not at all religious, but they -- they didn't convert, I mean, and my husband said always for a joke he would never convert. Maybe, if he would fall in love with a woman, then he would co -- he would convert, but no-nobody I knew. That doesn't say it didn't exist, but nobody I knew converted. We all -- they assimilated really, very much. My father came what was afterwards Poland, at that time when he was born it was still Austria. But he was very religious, and that was really seldom that si -- si -- that one is so religious. More -- all my friends were really assimilated, and not at all -- and had Christmas tree.

Q: So they weren't practicing or observant in that -- in that sense.

A: Yeah, but re -- Christmas tree didn't mean to us a Catholic festivity. It was --

Q: M-More of a cultural

A: -- cultural, yeah.

Q: -- or a national --

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh. Mm-hm.

A: [indecipherable] again and again. And so, for instance, all of my in-laws had Christmas trees, and my -- and my mother-in-law, everyone had. But -- but we did not have it at home, because Father was Jewish religious, so we didn't have it. In fact we had a kosher house, and we kept it as youngster, but then, more and more, we kept it less. But at first real -- we really ke -- were -- also tr-ried to do everything my father and mother wanted to do. We kept all the -- for -- for

instance, all the holidays, Jewish holidays at home. So, as a youngster, I really did not suffer by anti-Semitism, was -- and we were very lucky probably, our group of people, because we were mix in, as I said. Two of my very good friends had Gentile friends and then they married them, so s -- they went together out from the -- Austria.

Q: And when you were a child with your -- with your father being o-observant, did you belong to a synagogue?

A: We went to synagogue when the parents were there, to visit, of course. We visited Mother, because it was -- sometime it was also separated, the men and the women in -- in one of the temple after [indecipherable] not. So we always went there to visit Mother, when she was af -- there. Father was probably more in the temple than Mother, but Mother also observed with -- with Father, and -- but a-as a little child, I felt also religious, but then less and less.

Q: And how did -- what -- what kind of feeling was that as a little child, to -- to be religious as a child? Do you remember the feeling you had?

A: It was -- I try to remember. It was quite of course, to go up as a little, little one with it. You know, it was quite of course that we thought like our parents were thinking. And this was so tradition to have all the holidays. And at -- probably felt myself religious because I wouldn't have touched what wasn't allowed, for instance, ham. I wouldn't touch. I would not, never as a youngster, eat what I was not allowed to eat for the religious reason.

Q: So that everything was kosher in your family?

A: Yeah, in my family, my family, but not -- one friend of my sister's family was also kosher, but otherwise all our friends were not religious at all, brought up. They were conscious Jews, I think, but not religious. In general, they were very assimilated, really. We all felt Viennese, and not Jewish Viennese. We didn't emphasize the Jews in -- but we felt very Viennese, of course,

growing up there, and living there, and we loved Vienna. So, I am sorry I can't say -- I mean, I think I only accepted what my parents expected from us children.

Q: What many children --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- most children do.

A: At that time. And then, afterwards, I mean when I was maybe 16 or 17 years old, I -- I felt different. I felt that it is really some of the things I didn't want to accept. For instance, I wasn't allowed to ring the bell when I came home the apartment. To me it was much more work to knock than ringing the bell like that.

Q: Was this every day, or just on Shabbat?

A: Every day. We were not allowed to ring the -- oh, excuse me, that -- that was a good question of you and a bad answer of me. It -- yes, it probably was only si -- as -- as -- as -- Saturday Shabbes, you are right. It was not the whole week.

Q: But -- but it mu-must have seemed like more, because you remembered it as every day, right?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, but, you know, it is a few years ago, so --

Q: A couple of years.

A: -- it's [indecipherable] and my memory doesn't get better. I mean, my si -- one sister had the wonderful memory and I never had the good memory and it didn't get better.

Q: Well, it seems pretty good to me.

A: No, no, it didn't get better.

Q: Well, let -- let me ask you a little bit about -- now, your -- your father and -- and his work, and -- and did his work allow you all to have a -- a comfortable lifestyle --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- or was it a difficult one?

A: Most of the time father -- we had the very good life. We had piano lessons and basic French and the English, and the -- and Mother had every day a hairdresser coming, and everything -- that was like that in Vienna. So we had --

Q: Uh-huh, and domestic help, did you have --

A: And dom -- of course --

Q: Maids and cooks?

A: -- two domestic help. We had the lovely apartment we had and that means we moved from a smaller apartment to a bigger apartment. You had to buy the apartment and Father could do it. And he really gave us all the opportunities to learn and to come and go. He was not delighted that I spent so much money when we went skiing when I was older. When -- I went skiing because that cost money, the train. And there he was not -- he thought that I spend too much money on the -- for the train, for the -- but to me it was important. And my future husband, who was always with us, had in fact a ticket for nothing because he had the high position in the newspaper. So he had, for all the trains, if he wanted first class, to go first class, wherever he wanted, he had the ticket. So for birthday I got sometimes tickets, so to go, so to be able to go every weekend, and I did.

Q: And did you all travel, did you take vacations abroad, or did you --

A: Always. When we were small, Mother went with us vacation. We went to -- first years always to Salzburg, because Mother's parents lived there, and we went for summer and also Christmas, we went to Salzburg for our vacation. Close by -- to Salzburg was a suburban place, and there the parents rented the house, so we went always to this house in Salzburg. And the most exciting was that we were there at the beginning when Reinhardt started to have the place in Salzburg,

because now it is quiet, of course, but my brother was in one of the place, and very little role so we could always go to all the [indecipherable] rehearsals. So it was wonderful, we knew all then, all the li -- wonderful actor and actresses. And that was the first year that was played "Jedermann", by Hoffner -- by Hofmannsthal. Hofmannsthal was a Viennese and "Jedermann" was a play by him and it was played in front of the beautiful church, a lovely, lovely church. And we were very proud, of course that our brother was of the stage. We were very young. So Salzburg was important. Afterwards we went to Italy with Mother, and we went to -- where else? We -- fit -- Italy several times, and always to a beach to swim. And in the year 1914, we were, for instance in Italy at the beach in Carrado, and then we saw a man going with a drum on the beach, and we children, I was six and a half years -- we children were delighted, but in reality, he announced that the war broke out. 1914 til '18 was the war. So, of course, Mother was in despair only to get home. All she wanted, to get home.

Q: And so this -- you thought this man was making nice music?

A: Yeah, that -- that was lovely for a child, a drum, to go with the drum, and I had no idea, of course, what it was, and then Mother tried to explain to us. But then it was the first World War, '14 to '18, and Austria was, up to then very big, and then it is -- became a very little country, because Hungary left many Romanian born a -- so many countries were taken, were occupied by the -- by the [indecipherable]. Austria became a small -- a small country. But st -- during the war, of course, we suffered very much.

Q: During World War I?

A: Just awful.

Q: And how is that -- tell me about that.

A: We didn't get to eat, and you had to stand in line for hours to get, I don't know how many eggs, maybe two eggs. And we children went all after school, always standing in line. And often we had the same dresses, but then we had to be different so that nobody knew that there are three people of a family who wanted to have eggs or meat or bread, I don't know any more what all, we had to stand in line. And -- but really for hours.

Q: And now -- but your family was well off --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- and yet you still had to stand in line?

A: No -- yeah, nobody ha -- nobody h-had the possibility. Sometimes we got from a uncle, from Mother's brother, who was in the military, an officer, but that was not only in the war, he was by ch-choice for his life, you know, he went to military academy and so on. Sometimes he came and brought us something special to eat. We had only one vegetable, for instance, all that we got for without standing in line. It was called rote and it is a kind of beet. I still have the feeling, the taste of it, because we ate every day this beet.

Q: When's the last time you had one of those beets?

A: But no, I eat a little better.

Q: But -- but you -- you haven't -- I was asking you, I wondered if you've had any of those beets since then. I bet you haven't wanted to taste them.

A: No, never. Never. Never. I don't know whether they are here, I really don't --

Q: And you don't want to find out.

A: No, I'm -- no, I'm not curious.

Q: No.

A: It was really ec -- so that was very hard. Then, we had no shoes, we had wooden shoes only, there was no leather. And I [indecipherable] my feet very much with these wooden shoes, because they were so heavy on my skin.

Q: So even pe-people or families with means like yours --

A: Means.

Q: -- was as -- as if you were poor.

A: Yeah. Yeah, everyone was the same. That's it, we co-couldn't get really enough to eat. It was very, very hard.

Q: Do you remember going to bed hungry as a child?

A: No, that I don't remember, because we surely got the roten, the -- the beets. I don't remember that I was -- went hungry. But not -- it was not a pleasure to eat, this was -- we t -- it was not much there to eat. Yes, anti-Semitism I met for the first time in Salzburg, that reminds me.

When we went to Salzburg, there was a horrid paper. It was called Der Sturm, that means storm.

And it was awfully anti-Semitic. And there it was written the family from Albert Pollack, he was -- he had many, many things [indecipherable] and he was high up, you know, from the -- to -- very, very appreciated, he was an [indecipherable] and he was very appreciated in Salzburg then.

It's hoefe is -- means -- it's aristocrats. And there was written the family from Vienna ca-came and eat and ate and ate, and they've taken us all the food away.

Q: O-Okay.

A: [indecipherable] accent whatsoever.

Q: You were saying, taking all the food away.

A: Food

Q: The food away.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And that -- so, and that's interesting because there were many Jews in Vienna, but not very many in Salzburg, right?

A: There weren't in Salzburg. My -- my grandfather, for instance [indecipherable] his brother, his sister to come. They were in Austria.

Q: Oh, no thank you.

A: But you tell me.

Q: Okay, I will, thank you.

A: Is -- they were in Austria, all, and he ask them to come because he loved Salzburg. And I don't know whether you know grandfather was a military in Salzburg and loved it, and then he -- when he got through with his military, he rented an apartment and a little shop. And then he was called to that -- it was some -- I think some Catholic high one who was in charge for Salzburg, and say, don't you know, no Jew is allowed to settle in Salzburg? You have to leave right away, and -- and leave your apartment and shop. So grandfather went away, and talked to the military for whom he worked -- not worked, for whom he was with, and they liked him very much and appreciated him because he was a very good man. And they talked to this archbishop or whoever he was, and he called grandfather and say -- said come. You are granted to live here, but you will be the only Jew. But grandfather did not si -- maybe you have it, grandfather, after a little while his sister came, his brother came and so on. And then came more and more and more Jews to Salzburg. And he was wonderful because he was fighting for everything. They had no rabbi -- rabbi there. Rabbiner in German. Rabbi is English, isn't it? They had no rabbi there, he had to come. They had no kosher meat for people who wanted kosher meat. So he had to -- everything to arrange. There was no temple, and when they wanted to buy some acres to build the temple,

they were not allowed to buy it for that, for temples they were not allowed to buy. Then -- but one Jew had grounds and said he want to build a temple there, and then it was permitted, if it is not on the side -- close to the sidewalk. It has to be farther back so that nobody is offended by a temple. Perhaps the Gentile would be offended if there's a temple.

Q: But they wouldn't say that about a church?

A: No. Not at all, because as -- they were all Catholic, of course. So -- but it was built. And that was hundred year old for -- two or three years ago when I went there. And so that was celebrated and grandfather was celebrated. All the time was spoken about Albert Pollack, and I was so proud.

Q: Well I'm -- I've read a little bit about him in this chapter called Jewish life in Austria, and it just says about him -- I don't know if you've seen this, but --

A: No.

Q: -- s -- he was -- "Albert Pollack opened his antique shop and eventually attained prosperity and respect in the city. He was sought after as a patron by many associations. Then in 1872 he was the first Jew to acquire citizenship in Salzburg," as you just said. And then it says, "Members of the Austrian imperial family were among his customers, and Pollack was honored with the title, Royal and Imperial Supplier of Antiques to the Court of His Majesty and Emperor of Austria."

A: Yeah.

Q: That's a pretty --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: -- good title.

A: He was very [indecipherable] and he was very liked as a person. For instance when Jews -- s- strangers I shouldn't say, you know, when people came who didn't live in Salzburg, they were always invited for the holidays in the house of my grandfather and grandmother, always. So, they had only eight children, so it was really bu-bu -- nothing, and he was very well off, because he understood a lot about antiques, and the whole family loved antiques, and had also -- many of them had the s-s-stores, antique stores, and dealt with antiques. Two of my uncles and an aunt, and my mother. At one point, probably when Father's business wasn't so good, she had also an antique shop. Everyone had antique and of course the apartment had only antique furniture and -- because they all loved antiques. [indecipherable] Grandfather, who understood a lot, really.

Q: Going to turn the tape over.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

A: So now we were at my grandfather and we all -- we all grandchildren loved grandfather because he was very gentle and warm and caring. We had not the same feeling for grandmother, who was a little colder, but very beautiful. Have you seen pictures of her?

Q: No, I haven't.

A: I will show --

Q: What was her name, by the way?

A: Caroline.

Q: Caroline.

A: Was Caroline Pollack. I show you pictures afterwards.

Q: All right. Okay.

A: You [indecipherable] --

Q: Let's -- no, we can si --

A: I -- I get them now if you --

Q: Okay, sure, why not?

A: -- you want.

Q: We'll pause for a moment.

A: You know, I -- [tape break].

Q: Okay, here we're looking, and we've got the tape recorder on again, and tell me what we're looking at. I'm holding a thick postcard in my hand.

A: My mother, who was the youngest of eight children, and st -- that's an aunt of mine, her sister, who was the oldest, with her two children when they were small.

Q: Look at those hats.

A: It's th -- it's this one, the girl, the little girl was si -- in concentration camp, and from one concentration camp to the next one, she went. She really went through a lot, and --

Q: Is that Mimi?

A: Mimi, yeah.

Q: Ah, I read about her, yes.

A: [indecipherable]. And then her brother was a doctor in Vienna, but he committed suicide when Hitler came.

Q: Oh.

A: By the way, I think he was baptized. I think. But oh -- maybe one didn't know that he is Jewish, he -- and -- but he committed suicide. But it is so adorable because it's so old fashioned, isn't it?

Q: We have, just to describe this picture, you have the two women, who look very -- almost like twins, don't they?

A: Yeah.

Q: They have the same expression, but they're sisters, or -- or they're --

A: No, ju -- they are sisters --

Q: They are sisters.

A: -- but many years apart.

Q: Many years apart. They're both sitting in what appear to be cane chairs, wooden chairs, in front of some evergreen trees, it looks like a --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- short needle pine trees on the gravel in front of a house. There's a little bit of a iron fence behind. And when would you say, Mrs. Karplus, that this photo -- photograph was taken?

A: It was -- if I would be lucky -- no, it doesn't say.

Q: It doesn't say on the back.

A: In the back, but --

Q: What does it say on the back, it says --

A: Mimi --

Q: Mother's ca -- Kath Pollack --

A: -- was probably 10 years -- 10 years older than I, so she would be how many?

Q: Tan -- Tante Irma on the left.

A: And then -- then she was probably -- she -- the girl, I think was four years old, no, or five years old.

Q: And Mimi was all -- i-is the next generation above you?

A: Wa -- my cousin, no.

Q: S-She's your cousin?

A: She's my cousin.

Q: Was she about your age?

A: No, she was much older because I said, she was the daughter of the oldest of the sisters, and of the siblings, the eight siblings.

Q: Uh-huh. So she would have been how much older than you, would you say?

A: Older -- she -- at least 10 years older than I was, 15 years, yeah.

Q: So she would -- she would be 100 today, if she were alive.

A: Yes. Yeah at least.

Q: So she would have been --

A: So -- and then is a --

Q: -- born in maybe 1895 --

A: Five, yeah, yeah.

Q: -- 1897. And this picture looks like she's maybe six years old, perhaps?

A: The most.

Q: At the most? Maybe even four or five?

A: I would say four years old.

Q: So this picture was probably taken right around 1900 then?

A: Yeah, yeah --

Q: 19 --

A: Yes, I -- I w -- I would say.

Q: - 1899 - 1900

A: Yeah, or maybe 1899, yeah.

Q: Goodness, wow. It's amazing. It's still very clear.

A: [indecipherable] so sweet.

Q: It's faded around the edges a little bit.

A: Yeah, I had it -- to crop it and send.

Q: Uh-huh. And then here are some other pictures here.

A: And now that is my mother there.

Q: This is your mother, what a beautiful picture --

A: That is my mother.

Q: -- standing there in a white dress, with flowers. And this is your mother?

A: Grandmother.

Q: Oh, this is your grandmother?

A: Grandmother.

Q: This is Albert Pollack's wife?

A: Albert Pollack's wife.

Q: Caroline, Caroleen.

A: Caroleen, Caroleena. And I --

Q: And do you remember what her maiden name was?

A: Breuer.

Q: Broil?

A: Yeah, and she was --

Q: With an a -- a B-r --

A: B-r-e-u-e-r.

Q: B --

A: R --

Q: R --

A: -- e-u-e-r.

Q: B-r-e-u-e-r.

A: Because we pronounce e-u boy.

Q: Breuer, uh-huh.

A: I have taken these pictures, that is a copy. That's is --

Q: She looks very stern, she's got --

A: Yeah, yeah. She's [indecipherable]

Q: -- a very serious expression.

A: -- and she was beautiful.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And Mother, that was, I think, before she married.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And this is it. And --

Q: And what is this one? Is this like an exercise?

A: That -- he -- yeah, he wanted [indecipherable] exercise, an exercise picture.

Q: Oh, and that's you in 19 --

A: My pupils.

Q: -- 90 -- what -- what year was that?

A: No, I would say 20 years ago.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: About [indecipherable]

Q: Very active, and that's with other people's --

A: And then this is -- this is also in the corridor, I will show you afterwards

Q: It looks almost like [indecipherable]

A: This is my logo.

Q: Uh-huh, okay.

A: I don't [indecipherable]. I have many more pictures of [indecipherable] which I say --

Q: Okay, well maybe we can look at some later when this is --

A: -- if you like to look at it, but --

Q: Oh, you have more here?

A: No, I -- I don't think that there's something here. No, th-they're negative.

Q: No? Okay, that's all right. Well thank you for showing me that.

A: But I wanted to sh --

Q: Yeah, it's very interesting.

A: -- to show because I loved this as an old picture.

Q: Uh-huh. Well, so you're -- so y-you -- how often did you go to visit your -- your grandfather Albert in Salzburg?

A: Yeah, as a ch-ch -- small children we went always summer and Christmas. We went always Christmas in Salzburg and in the hotel we lived, and then for -- in summer we lived always close to Salzburg. [indecipherable] went with the -- first you had to walk, and then you went with the trolley to Salzburg as children.

Q: And did your father and mother come with you to -- on these trips?

A: Father was very little with us in summer, because he worked in Vienna, and Mother was always with us, I mean, when we were children, and the governess was also always, or a French lady was -- a French governess.

Q: A governess is like a -- what we call a nanny in the --

A: Yeah, yeah --

Q: -- governess [indecipherable]

A: -- yeah, yeah.

Q: And --

A: And then the French -- French lady was with us. I told you, we learned German very well.

With us --

Q: And she was a governess also?

A: Also, yeah, for us children.

Q: Uh-huh. All right. And what was your father's work? You may have already mentioned --

A: Father inven -- Father imported different textiles, from Italy, and from Switzerland and probably from England because always came an English, a very nice English gentleman to Vienna, and that -- and came to our house, I mean, for dinner. And he came very often. I even had to photograph from him -- him, in my folder, you know, my photograph folder where I -- I had to have pictures for my exam. And he had the office in Vienna and my brother worked also with him, yeah, when he grew up. And he had also a -- a [indecipherable] associate who worked with him. And it was in Vienna too, that you came always home for lunch, for a long -- for a long hour, because Father, for instance, we were eating and then he always was lying down. And that was not only him who was lying down, everyone in Vienna, all the parents were resting after lunch, before they went back to the office. Very few people, therefore, lived out of Vienna and

had houses, we all had apartments because to be close to the office. My husband, for instance, also walked off -- always to the office, and came home for lunch. Lunch was our big dinner. That means the evening we had also plenty to eat, but less. So --

Q: Oh well, let me ask you, i-in your father's textile business, was this finished clothing, or -- or cut cloth that -- that he was importing?

A: No, only en gros, en gros that means the big [indecipherable] of tex -- of textile, of material.

Q: And they were coming from where?

A: From It -- from Italy and Switzerland I am sure, but now I thought also from England because one gentleman came always from England, I remember, but I don't know why. I don't remember, so I suppose that he also imported, you know, from England, some material.

Q: Now, did he travel also to Switzerland, Italy, and England?

A: Father? Yeah, yeah.

Q: He traveled a lot.

A: Father traveled, yeah, traveled very much.

Q: Now did you also -- did your family had property a-abroad at all?

A: No.

Q: No, just -- it's just in Austria.

A: We didn't have prop -- we had only in Vienna, a -- a lovely apartment, looking over a park, si -- one, two, three, four, five rooms in a row, looking on the park and then the living room and dining room were on the other side of the street. But it was really lovely to look, the view was so nice, and the balcony was to the park.

Q: Now let me ask you a little bit about Paris. What -- why did you decide to go there and what was it like when you got there for those fo -- for those four years?

A: It was the first time that I left Vienna alone and did -- afterwards I realized how good it was for me, because I was always the youngest Sporer girl, and the never -- the sister-in-law of the famous Dr. Felix Fleischner, I never had the feeling I'm Erna Sporer. And in Paris, of course, I was in the first time alone, the first time I washed my own stockings and underwear, because I was a spoiled brat in Vienna, as we always had somebody to do it. And I --

Q: Even during World War I?

A: No, that was ak -- as -- a -- much later.

Q: Yeah.

A: Of course, I went to -- '36 -- no, '32 to Paris, and the --

Q: Uh-huh. No, no, but I mean y-you had people to -- to -- to wa -- even when you were --

A: Yeah well, all -- all the time --

Q: -- during the war you still had [indecipherable]

A: -- also afterwards --

Q: -- this is -- yeah.

A: -- we never washed our own laundry.

Q: Uh-huh. So you're -- yeah --

A: But I need to -- I learned to wash my own laundry --

Q: All right. And you're about 25 years old when you went there?

A: Yeah --

Q: It would have been '32?

A: -- 20 into '30 -- '32, 24 and a half.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, in summer I went there. And I was there three months, th -- I had only money for three months, so -- and I loved to stay longer, of course I had to ask for the permission of my parents because I was too young, I was 24 and a half. That was for Vienna young, and I had to get permission. And I went from one photographer to the next one, whether they want to have me. Finally, I found one who said yes, a German, if I type French, English and German letters. I said I'm willing to type, but I can only type with two fingers. But you don't have to pay me for the overtime, because I need to -- so I worked for him, and that was in spring, I remember. And then I was very lucky, one day he was sick and so I had to go out to take a photograph, which was on a magazine on the -- on the top, how do you call it?

Q: The cover?

A: Of the cover. So I was very proud [indecipherable]

Q: Well, do you remember which magazine it was?

A: No. I think Vu, it was called. I think.

Q: Like a news magazine, or --

A: A news magazine, yeah.

Q: Do you remember what the picture was about?

A: No, I don't.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I worked for him, and then came a friend to Paris, who was really a friend of my older sister, who was already married at that time. And for him I was always the little Erna, but when he saw me in Paris I was grown up, and he fell in love with me. And he lived in -- in Spain, and he say, please come and t -- and it's so beautiful in Spain, Madrid and so on. So I went to Madrid and spent also some weeks somewhere on a beach, but alone. And I went on the beach and didn't

know, I saw always men behind me. And then I learned one can't go as a woman alone on a beach, that means one invites the men. And I had no idea, of course. So of -- I stopped to walk on the beach alone, yeah. I had no -- I didn't know that. And then I went back to Paris and there I met at -- my phot -- [indecipherable] photographer, a very nice young lady, who also invited me to go boating with them and so on. And I wanted to start now with exercises to teach. So I looked for a place where I can rent it for one hour or so, invited some people, invited some people to watch, and so I started to teach exercises in Paris. And I earned enough money to live there comfortable, made very good friends. And as I say, the French people were charming to me, and very nice, and as I loved to teach, and always asked, every year when I came back to -- before I came back in summer to the parents, I always say please, can there be another year? So I was four years there. I always had two months at least vacation, and then I've taken another studio again, where I was teaching. And then in -- four years later, in ni -- i-in '36, my husband proposed that we should marry. So I always loved him, so it was easy for me to say yes.

Q: Where were you at the time?

A: In Paris. He wrote me every second day, a shorthand letter. His family, Karplus, always wrote only shorthand to each other, so I had to learn shorthand before I left, but I wasn't as fluent. And as he wrote me every second day, I -- I was already -- the second day I wasn't ready for the next letter. And so I went back to Vienna, but my pupils were terrific, when I said I will marry I got the most beautiful wedding gifts in Paris already, from my friends and pupils. And went back to Vienna and then --

Q: Were you married in Vienna?

A: In Vienna.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah.

Q: With all your family.

A: A very small wedding. I mean, here everyone has it elaborate. I ha -- we had only the closest family.

Q: And was -- is he from Vienna, also, was he from Vienna?

A: He, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He was born in Vienna, and his father was a lawyer and my husband studied also law, but not to be a lawyer, only to be a good executive. To be a lawyer in Vienna at that time you had to study law, then to be seven years in a law firm before you're allowed to be a lawyer, to open up your own office. But he never thought of being a lawyer. O -- really he studied only law to be a good executive.

Q: Oh. So --

A: And then he --

Q: Oh, let me just ask you, now yo -- when you -- you were married then in '36 in Vienna.

A: Yeah.

Q: And your -- your parents were happy about -- they -- they liked that he -- that -- they all get along, uh-huh.

A: Very much. Everyone liked him. During the time I was away they were all the time in touch with him, and in fact he helped one of my sisters who had a -- opened a -- for children, a nurser -
- nursery, and he helped her. They were always in touch with each other, and they all liked him. And then we were there til '38.

Q: Now let me -- before you get into '38, let me just ask you a little bit about those years from '36 to '38.

A: Yeah.

Q: First of all, what was it like being back in Vienna? What was your life, your daily routine like, i -- did you work as the -- still exercise teaching and photographer?

A: Yeah, yeah, I was, yeah. Very little, but I did teach exercises.

Q: And your husband --

A: -- and of course I have taken exercises, of course. I have taken acrobatic til I broke my collarbone. And -- a very leisurely life. I've taken courses at museum, and my husband had always when -- if he wanted tickets for theater for -- because he -- for his position, and he -- weekend we always were in the mountains, of course, and I had a lovely time these two years I was in Vienna, and then we -- we bought [indecipherable] my husband bought the beautiful apartment, and we had it all redone with an architect, and the architect designed all our thing, all our furniture, and that friend who had the factory to make furniture, made it, and we had a lot of friends and always I saw now in this little booklet, even after Hitler, always we saw friends, friends, friends in Vienna. They were for dinner -- of course we had the maid and cook, so they were for dinner with us, we went for dinner to them. So we had the very social life, also. But Friday evening, which is the beginning of the Shabbes, we always have the whole fl -- all s -- four couples had to be at my parent's for dinner. That was Friday evening.

Q: Uh-huh, you had to be there, uh-huh.

A: It's -- our husbands didn't appreciate this much, but -- but my parents expected it, so we did it, yeah.

Q: Yeah, it was just one of those family obligations --

A: That -- family, yeah, yeah.

Q: -- that every family --

A: Family has --

Q: -- has, right?

A: -- yeah. S-So should I tell you what my husband did?

Q: Please, yeah, let's talk about that.

A: He -- he was the head of a big publishing house and that he became, in Vienna it was called director, if you are the head of. Here you call it publisher. There were five daily newspapers, then there were six or seven weekly newspapers, and books were published. There were 800 people and he was the head of it. He did not write himself, never, but he was the head of the -- chief editor and [indecipherable] of all the ones who wrote, and he, of course ha-had decided about the salary and things like that. Besides of [indecipherable] that he became in '36, and therefore he decided to marry, because he had a very high salary, and said now we can live very well together, and I can take care of you. In Vienna one married only til the husband could take care of the wife. One didn't expect to work -- that she was working. And so th-therefore, when he became the head -- he was not the head first, he was under the director, I wa -- he wrote me to marry. And of course, when -- should I tell you now when Hitler came?

Q: Yes, you --

A: Or not yet?

Q: Well, let -- let me just ask you one more question about -- about leading up to -- well, what was the climate there -- and I guess this get -- leads into the question a-a-about when Hitler came, did you feel when you came back after four years that the atmosphere, in terms of people's attitudes towards Jews, and the anti-Semitism had changed? Did you notice a difference?

A: No, but I have to say that some people were amazed that we -- that I went back to Vienna, because they were afraid what will be. And my husband -- my husband said he n -- he would not leave his wonderful position, which was interesting for him, of course, and he would not leave voluntarily. But there was some people who said, why did you come back? And for me it was a good reason to come back, to marry my husband.

Q: Well, what gave you the idea, or what was it that people said that gave you an idea that it wasn't good to come back?

A: Said that -- that Hitler is in Germany, and somehow they were afraid that he will really c-come to -- also to Austria and so on.

Q: And what did you know about Hitler in 1936, and wh --

A: I knew --

Q: -- what were you afraid of [indecipherable]

A: -- that -- I knew -- I knew about Hitler because I had friends in Germany, for instance.

[sneezes]

Q: Bless you.

A: Excuse me. Who came to Paris to bring money, that I take care of money, because they knew that they will eventually leave there. So I knew that in Germany it went on, but nothing is atrocities like afterwards. I had no idea. But I knew that Germany, he is against Jews, but they were not yet deported like later. In '33, he started in Paris -- in Germany. So people were what -- what -- probably afraid in Austria that -- and ask me why I came back, and considered to come back. They were amazed. But, as I see, my husband said he would not leave voluntarily his job, his interesting job. And I loved to come back to Vienna. I loved Paris, of course, very much, and

-- but I enjoyed to come back to Vienna because it was really my birthplace, and where I spent so many years.

Q: Were there times during those years, from '36 to '38 before the anschluss that -- that you did feel uncomfortable or -- or frightened?

A: No, I never felt frightened, and really it was a big surprise, the -- when Hitler marched -- not he marched in, but the SS men marched in. It was a big surprise for all of us, and Schuschnigg, who was our president spoke on the television to say good-bye.

Q: On the ra -- on the tel -- not the television, on --

A: Not television --

Q: -- on the radio.

A: -- the radio. Excuse me.

Q: That's okay.

A: Now it is -- television is so handy. No, it was on the radio that he said good-bye, he has to give in, he can't fight. And th-that was a horror, of course, for all of us. It was a surprise. Somehow one feared it, but it was a surprise when it happened.

Q: Tell -- tell me about the -- the feeling that you remember, maybe, if you do remember the feeling at that time when he rat -- actually came to power, and what kinds of conversations were going on in your family at that time.

A: But in Germany was far enough for us, you know? We had also relatives in Germany, my mother's sister and children were there. And -- but it was so f -- Germany was far for us, and at that time it was -- he didn't start right away as horrid as he did afterwards. Even in Austria, I mean he started awful, but the horrid atrocities came later, much later. And --

Q: Wh-What -- what was it about Hitler in 1936 and 1937, before Kristallnacht, and before the anschluss --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- that made you be fearful of him, or -- or -- or not --

A: Yeah, not secure --

Q: -- certainly not want him to come to power.

A: -- let us say not sec --

Q: Not secure, okay.

A: -- not secure. But we saw -- we spoke very little about it, I have to say, and we were not really so much afraid of it that we expected it. We didn't expect it.

Q: Mm-hm. Right.

A: But some people were afraid of it. I mean, my family didn't --

Q: But -- but you knew something about him.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was it that you knew about him?

A: Just that h-he's ridiculously anti-Semitic, and want to have only the blonde, blue-eyed people. Oh, I have blue eye. And that he wanted only to have won the race, that the Jews are impossible, that we're all Jew.

Q: And how did you know this, from reading the --

A: Well, reading, probably --

Q: -- just from reading the newspapers, or listening to the radio?

A: -- in the newspapers, yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: I si -- don't think we listed so much to the radio as we do here now. I think we're g -- read newspapers, and I had plenty newspapers at home from my husband, [indecipherable] newspapers.

Q: So when the anschluss took place, when the Nazis came to power in Austria, you said that it was a shock. What kinds of conversations was -- were you having with your family at that time, once the anschluss st --

A: What should we do? Th-That was the first, everyone, what should we do, what can we do? That was the first reaction, of course, of all of us. It was on a Friday evening and we were at my parent's, but my husband was not yet there.

Q: Was he still at work?

A: A-At his work, at his office, because two SS men came. The moment they marched in, two SS men went to the office, took my husband, with a letter addressed to Dr. Richard Karplus from Berlin to give his office to the two SS men who hand him the letter. Of course they had no idea what to do. It was prepared already because the newspaper was important, a democratic newspaper, and so many newspaper in his firm who -- which came out, you know? So everything was prepared from Berlin, that he should pa -- give over.

Q: Because he was Jewish?

A: Of course.

Q: Of course, but -- but what -- let me ask you a naïve question, how did they know on the day that they m -- took power in Austria that, presumably many other people including your husband were Jewish and -- and owned property or factories, and they would have these letters ready.

How -- how would they know that?

Q: I do -- that, I don't know how they found out, but probably newspaper was very important, because a newspaper brought the news, and they didn't want that it is against them, you know? That I can understand, that they really had the aim to stop Jews to be at the top of newspapers, you know? That was obvious, because the newspapers give you the news and they can be differently brought.

Q: Now, when you say differently brought, do you mean like different kinds of perspectives depending --

A: Yeah, perspective, we se --

Q: -- on the political --

A: -- we he -- see -- see it here, how the republicans --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and the democrats [indecipherable]

Q: Well, did -- were there newspapers that were publishing ideas about, you know, a Jewish conspiracy and these kinds of things at that --

A: No, no, no.

Q: So there wasn't that kind of --

A: No, not at all.

Q: -- Fascist --

A: Not at all. In the newspapers were the news, I'm sure about -- about Hitler, all these years, you know, that we learned about what's going on in Germany, and -- but it was never in these papers how it was -- there was a single Jewish newspaper, but I -- I don't remember to have seen it, really, and so I don't know. But I can understand that the newspaper were in aim to stop right away to write how horrid Hitler is here, you know? They wanted to avoid that -- this.

Q: So you mean -- you -- you were -- you're saying that they did not want to write about how terrible Hitler was --

A: Yeah, see --

Q: -- because the Nazis were coming to power in Austria and they didn't want to --

A: Yeah, I mean --

Q: -- get their presses confiscated, or --

A: -- [indecipherable] the Germans didn't want that the newspapers write badly about the Germans, and to influence people. So that -- so they were really anxious to get it out of the hand of the Jew. But my husband stayed still 10 days, because he said he is the captain, he -- the people, of course -- 800 people lost all their heads, whether they were Jewish or not Jewish.

Q: When you say they lost their heads --

A: Tha -- lost their head, that is probably German [indecipherable]

Q: For -- for being -- lo-losing their jobs?

A: Y-Yeah, not only losing their jobs, but that Hitler came in. That we are no more Austria.

Q: They lost their heads, they were -- they were --

A: We are no more Austrians, but not all of them, it was a mixed group. There were many non-Jews. For instance, the secretary of my husband. My husband called me up at my parent's and said, Erna, don't walk alone at home. One doesn't know what's going on. I send you my secretary. And the secretary has taken, in the moment the SS men came to my husband, he has taken out the -- you know, h-he was a Nazi. He was -- his secretary was in the party already, the Nationalistic party.

Q: And did your husband know that?

A: No idea. But he offered to come to take me home, because he had the -- how do you call it, you know, the party insignia.

Q: Was it a -- was it a swastika at that time?

A: Yeah.

Q: It was a swastika?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: For [indecipherable] Austria [indecipherable]

A: And so -- and so he sent me him, that he walks me home. He was a -- very devoted to my husband, and that was again and again afterwards. Though you are a Jew, I love you.

Q: So he was a member of the party, but he didn't have anything against you, at that time.

A: No, not against my husband, he wrote us and -- afterwards. He -- because he appreciated my husband as a person, you know. And said -- but that was not only with my husband, one heard it very often. I love you, though you are a Jew. But t -- all the Jews are, of course, horrid, but you are not horrid.

Q: When did you start hearing that kind of thing?

A: After Hitler, of course, after Hitler. And also, I mean, I saw it with as -- a -- also the secretary was also not Jewish -- of -- of my husband. I'd say all -- I'd say -- not all, but they wrote all the time to my husband afterwards, because a -- as a person they liked him, it was only bad luck that he was a Jew. And he stayed this evening very long in th -- in the office, so to calm down the people, the reporters and everyone. And then he came home, and that I remember distinctly. It was very late probably, and we walked up and down in the big living room, you know, what should we do, what should we do. And we were very lucky, we got -- we had friends in America who send us telegram whether we want affidavit. We got letters from Paris from the lady who

has taken over my studio, that my pupils want to have me back, and I ha -- I have right away a job. The friends from Paris wrote me, they want to have me back. I wanted to go to Paris, but my husband, who was very intelligent, said, Erna, let us only once emigrate. Paris will be also a victim of Hitler. And he was so right. So we thought about America, a little about Australia. But my husband read always English, and knew so much about Boston, for instance, so we -- we wanted to go really to amer -- we decided. And then I started to go to the different embassies to get the visas, you know, to get the visa to go to France, and to Switzerland, to go through the different lands. And the French sent us an affidavit so we could really -- we could really go to America.

Q: Okay now, let me --

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: Okay, this is s-side A of tape two with Mrs. Karplus, our interview continues. Mrs. Karplus, you were just talking about emigrating to America, but I -- I'd like to back up a little bit to that --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- night that you and your husband were pacing back and forth in the living room.

A: Yeah.

Q: And talking about what to do. I-I just want to ask you to r-recall as many specifics about that as you can. I mean, did you suddenly feel like your whole world was going to be changed?

A: Yeah, yes, yes. Of course. We felt awful to leave our homeland, and we were -- we were born, where we were so many years. It was a horrid s -- moment to think one has to leave that -- we were in the lovely apartment almost not two years, and made so many changes there, and built lovely [indecipherable] there. And so many things we did. It was an awful thing to think to leave, but the luckiest thing was that we were two. We did it for each other. Alone, I would have been much more lost fo -- to do it for myself. But I had the feeling I do it for my husband and he did it for me, not to collapse. So we were really ve -- horribly, of course, upset and unhappy. And what to do? That was the big question for everyone.

Q: Now, this was back in -- in March of 1938?

A: '36 -- '38, yeah --

Q: '38, March of --

A: -- excuse me, '30 si -- yeah.

Q: -- Mar -- March of '38.

A: March '38.

Q: And you also have -- had family who were faced with the same kinds of decisions.

A: Yeah

Q: What other conversations were going on in the family at that time?

A: Yeah, everyone had the same problem. How and where to go, and as fast as possible to leave. We were the first ones because the others were not confronted right away with losing the job or - or stopping their job. Also my brother-in-law, who was a Roentgenologist, you know, he still continued to -- to see patients. And another brother-in-law was in a big firm, and he continued to be there. But my husband was really confronted, the first one of the family to lose his job. But -- so we made -- right away tried to make arrangements, but we were not sure what to do, really. I mean the -- because from the -- Paris, for instance, I got not the same day, I got the -- after a few days the letters, and we were not yet hundred percent decided right away, where we go.

Eventually we worked through that, that America would be the right place, where Hitler would not come. And my husband was right that he said let us not go to Paris. Many people went to Paris and went through -- or to England, for instance, and were bombed there, I mean. So it was very clever of him to go -- to decide for America.

Q: Let me ask you -- a-and I know some of this might be painful memories, but I want to ask you about some of the specifics of -- of 1938, and how you felt, a-apart from your decision about where to go --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- which I-I'm sure you were thinking about a lot.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was it like living in Vienna in 1938, between the time that the anschluss started in -- in March, to the Kristallnacht in -- in --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- in the end, in November of '38. What -- what was it -- what was it like th -- were you required to identify yourself as a Jew? Did you have to wear one of the yellow badges, or --

A: No, not yet, because we left in June or July, very early.

Q: In -- in '38 --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- or '39?

A: 30 -- '38.

Q: Oh, I thought you didn't leave until '39.

A: No, we left very early because we were really f -- as I said, one of the first one who were confronted with it.

Q: So you didn't have to live through Kristallnacht?

A: No, we were not there. Also, my sisters and brother not. The parents were -- were still in Vienna, I think, but not in their apartment. And we were no -- we left comparatively early. I have it in my book, I think

Q: You have a little leather book that looks --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- about four inches by one and -- two inches --

A: [indecipherable]

Q: This is 1938.

A: We left fr -- Friday the 15th of July at two o'clock. We went to Zurich. So it was really early, you know? The 15th of July. We were very lucky. For that reason we could take all our silver, all our furniture, everything with us, only not all money.

Q: They delayed your money.

A: We got very little money, but all our fur -- all we had, we could take with us. We were not allowed to buy something any more. No -- nothing new, we could take. So, for us it was really short in comparison, that we were in Vienna under Hitler.

Q: So from March to June is only three months.

A: Yeah.

Q: What were those three months like?

A: The three months, I'm amazed that I see in my booklet how we saw every day friends, not -- at five o'clock, at seven o'clock, at nine o'clock, we saw friends, friends, probably we were all want to talk over what to do, I suppose.

Q: And maybe you wanted to say good-bye to people, too?

A: Also that, but that was not right away, but I see my husband had [indecipherable] the 19th of March, and fr-friends came, family came. So we saw a lot of people in this time, and I think really because we were also excited what -- about the happenings, and what to do. And I went -- my husband went, I told you, the first 10 days to the office, got always in the evening some telephone calls with the -- they can put the -- now, how is it called, you said it before, the Hakenkreutz. Sometimes people -- I have the hole in my head. Is it -- to take off democratic paper. Of course, my husband say to everything yes [indecipherable] because he knew it doesn't hurt him to forbid, you know? And then came two people, two SS men to our apartment to look whether we have s -- something against Hitler, some literature or so. And in fact we had the New York Times, where there was something, but they couldn't speak English, luckily.

Q: When was this?

A: That was probably nex -- everything in '38, so ma -- April, maybe.

Q: Maybe April of '38.

A: But the horror was, of course that -- was that they take my husband with them, you know?

Q: What -- what --

A: They went through the whole apartment, in my -- my underwears, in the -- the -- they looked whether there is something hidden. They have taken 40 books of our books, which were from Jews, or Russian communists, and they looked everything over. And as I say, we had always the Sunday Times, and in the Sunday Times was something against Hitler, but they didn't -- couldn't read English, luckily. So they didn't know. So they didn't find anything, only these 40 books they have taken with them, and luckily they had to ha -- very heavy for s -- them to carry, they were very heavy. And -- but they didn't take my husband, that was the big danger always.

Q: And wh-why? Did you see that happening around you, the people who si -- men were disappearing?

A: Yeah, for instance my brother-in-law.

Q: Say that again?

A: My brother-in-law, who was in a -- in an office, he was also doctor of law without being a lawyer. He did the same as my husband. To be a good executive, and he -- his boss was away in Prague, and when the SS --

Q: His boss was?

A: In Prague, Czechoslovi --Czeshuls -- I don't --

Q: Czechoslovakia, yeah, uh-huh.

A: Right. And as the boss was not here, and he was next to the boss, the head of the firm, he c -- was taken to the police, the SS men taking him to the police. And when my sister went there, of course they didn't let him go. They kept him because it was a Jewish firm, and the boss is not there, but he is representing the boss, so he was in the police. At that time it was only police,

there was not yet concentration camps, that we knew. And my sister went, of course, there. I slept in her house because she was, of course, awfully upset and unhappy. I -- I didn't remember that I slept there, but I read it in my little book. And she had two little children. And that was an awfully exciting time for my sister, and also for us, what will happen with him. Eventually he was freed, and they went also, but we were the first one to live -- to leave Aus -- Vienna. But soon afterwards, my sister, who was married with the Roentgenologist, and also my other sister [indecipherable] they left. My sister -- I know very little about my sister who was married with the doctor, because I was --

Q: And her name?

A: Risa Fleischner. Dr. Felix Fleischner. And I don't know whether you know Lynn. Do you know Lynn?

Q: I know who she is, cause I've read some of her questions --

A: Who she is. And she --

Q: -- this is your niece, your great-niece?

A: Yeah, my great-niece, and she is the great -- grand -- she is the grandchild of my sister Risa Fleischner. And her daughter, Lis says -- she lives in -- Lis Rosenman, she lives in New York, she says she knows a lot about. I admit I n -- I know very little how they went through, because we di -- were a lot with my sister whose husband was his -- at the police, you know? That was the most frightening thing for us, what will happen to him. And I was, of course, also frightened the 10 days my husband went to the office, whether he came home. If one of the 800 people could have said one word against my husband, he would never be allowed to go home and to leave the country. But we were so lucky that not one person said anything against him. He was

very -- people liked him very much and he was a very fair boss. I mean, he was just as much for the worker as for the executives. So --

Q: And these were -- these were -- all 800 people were all employees in the textile --

A: Yeah. Not textile, in my husband's --

Q: -- in the -- I'm -- excuse, not the textile --

A: -- the publishing house.

Q: -- in the publishing, yeah, sorry.

A: Yeah, the publishing house.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah. And my father closed the office, and at that time he -- he will -- had heart trouble, and he went to a kind of hospital [indecipherable] sanatorium it was called, where you go after your operation to recuperate. That was a wonderful thing in Vienna, when you were operated, to have a place where to recuperate where there were doctors and nurses, you know? You didn't have to stay the hospital as long, and go home. But you will go to the sanatorium. Here, sanatorium is for mental sick people, no? But we called it so -- like that. So F -- Father and Mother were there, and I -- that was a -- horrid, of course, for me to say good-bye, because I didn't know whether I will ever see them again. That was really awful. That was -- but you asked what we did in that time before we left. Number one, I had to go to the different embassies, and I had always to stand in line, because I was not the only one who wanted to get the visa for France and Switzerland. So that one had to have the permission that one paid all the taxes. One had to have it black and white that we paid everything and can leave the country. There were many things like that of course, for the police. And one had to prove things, you know? And then wa -- we prepared, of course, to leave -- I mean, to -- e-everything has to be packed, and to decide what one takes or

not. And, for instance, we didn't take the dining room, because we thought we will never have as big a -- an apartment again. And so it's sad time, but what I was really amazed to see, how many friends we saw all the time, family and friends, also. It -- it seems we were two hours there and then two hours there. That I didn't remember, frankly, you know? I only saw it in my little book that we did.

Q: So, e-everyone in your family was -- most people in your family were thinking about leaving, you -- you talked about Risa and is it Felix Fleischner?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. And I saw from my notes, I guess from your grand-niece that --

A: Did you talk to my grand-niece?

Q: No, I didn't, but I've -- but I saw some of the notes that she sent to Arwen at the Holocaust Museum.

A: Oh, she did, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And she mentioned apparently that -- that Risa and Felix went away -- fled Vienna in '38 also in a -- in a plane, in a little plane --

A: Yeah, we -- the all --

Q: -- to Switzerland?

A: Yeah. The --

Q: You were all in together? No --

A: -- yeah -- no, no. They went after us, but to the same place we went, because we had a cousin over there, a cousin who lived with her husband in France, in Paris. I saw her a lot during the time. And then they were on vacation, this was summer, on vacation. Whether it is France or Switzerland, I don't know. [indecipherable] it was in Milan [indecipherable] and probably the

name of the [indecipherable] I wrote down. Yeah. That -- we -- we went there, and my ha -- no, my brother left the first one, because his wife was pregnant and expected in August, a child. So he was the first one who went to Italy, because in Italy we had the -- he had the business friends, really. And also he could make business instead of from Vienna. He makes the business from Italy, from Milano. So he was the first one who left for his pregnant wife's sake.

Q: And that's Agon?

A: Agon.

Q: Agon, uh-huh.

A: Why do you ask?

Q: Well, I just have these notes here, I just -- I just [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, he was Agon Sporer, my -- my name, my born name, shp -- my family name, Sporer. I had also my studio here, under my -- my name Sporer, Erna Sporer.

Q: Oh.

A: And he was the first one, really, who left.

Q: Right, and -- and Risa --

A: And to --

Q: -- left, and you left --

A: -- we -- I -- th -- then --

Q: -- all that year --

A: -- I left, and then afterwards Risa left, and afterwards Hella left.

Q: And what about your parents?

A: My parents stayed there in the apartment, and one day Mother said a-an SS man came -- we called them always SS, a Nazi. Do you say Nazi here?

Q: Either -- either one, I think would [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, came and said, your husband has to come with us to the police. So Father had to go to the police, and was there. Of course that means overnight in a -- in -- like in jail. And Mother was, of course, horribly unhappy and said he has -- he's a sick man with his heart and so on. So after a week, they said, if you empty your apartment, we can have your apartment in one week, we will give him free. So Mother had to empty the apartment in one week, and Father got free. And then they lived with other families in an apartment.

Q: In Vienna?

A: Vienna.

Q: They stayed?

A: Yeah, that was -- but that was much later.

Q: So the --

A: When we all have left already.

Q: But they were there until when? Or did they say the whole ti --

A: That I don't know exactly, I know only when they came here, but to -- my brother tried to get them to Italy, to Milano, but this was very, very hard to get them in. And then, after many months, I don't know how -- unfortunately when, but it was surely we left in June, July we left?

Q: I think you said you left July 15th.

A: July, yeah. July 15, yeah, we left Vienna. It was probably November or December that they left. [indecipherable]

Q: That -- that your parents left?

A: Par -- my parents.

Q: So everyone left in '38 o-of your main family.

A: Everyone, yeah, luckily.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And my parents were in Italy.

Q: So -- but your parents lived through Kristallnacht then?

A: Pardon?

Q: Your parents lived through Kristallnacht? They -- they were --

A: No, no, in Italy.

Q: Oh, they were in Italy all -- by November?

A: My parents lived in -- because th -- my -- no, they -- no, they lived in Vienna, of course.

Q: In -- in -- during --

A: And then they had to leave the -- the -- the apartment in one week to the SS men.

Q: Right.

A: And then they lived with many other people in -- in -- in an apartment.

Q: Right.

A: The Jews were put together.

Q: But I was -- I was just suggesting that i-if they didn't leave until December of 1938,

Kristallnacht was in November of 1938. Do you remember them telling you about Kristallnacht?

A: No, no, no, nothing.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Nothing. I am not sure that's -- and unfortunately I am the only old one, my generation. I can't ask anyone, because nobody is there. So I am not sure when they left Vienna. I know only that they were then in Italy, and we sent them -- peop -- fre -- people sent them an affidavit, and Mother went always to a consulate and it repeated about 15 times that the consul always asks one

thing, that the affidavit giver has to do. And after 15 times the af -- the man who gave the affidavit said, here is enough. But the consul ask always Mother to come, it was far for her to come to the consul. He was obviously an anti-Semite and didn't want the parents go to America, so he never asked 10 things at the same time, no, one thing. And she has always to come and come and come to the consul to get the affi -- to get the emigration. So one said he has enough, he can't do any more. So we found somebody else here in Boston, who were very nice, and then what I was -- e-every evening I came home after work and cried. That was all I could do for my poor parents who were there. I thought Mother is so old, 60 years old, that she has to go through that, and Father was 74. So, it's tha -- for me the idea was awful, these old, old, people. And a cousin of my husband married an -- a married lawyer who, when she met him in Vienna when he came to help Jews to come out of -- of Vienna, and then they married and he was very influential in [indecipherable] in -- in Washington. So when Mother came one day again to the consul, the consul said, and whom do you have in Washington who has such influence? And she got her affidavit. Only through -- Alfred Shvetsky was his name. He was in the big firm you probably know, Sullivan and Cromwell in -- in New York. His father was one, I think, of the founders. So anyway, the parents came with the worst boat [indecipherable] prepared it, the boat -- about the boat I had the newspaper clipping, the Navamari it was called. And there were hundreds and hundreds of people on it instead of 50 people. They were lying next to each other. It was awful.

Q: Fro-From where to where?

A: From Portugal to New York. Luckily we didn't know during this time, how awful this was. For weeks and weeks they were on the boat.

Q: For weeks?

A: Navamari was the name of the boat.

Q: No, the -- you -- they were on the boat --

A: My parents were on the boat --

Q: For weeks?

A: -- because it was -- for weeks.

Q: Why for weeks?

A: They stopped in Bermuda, I know. Where else they stopped, I don't know. They had very little to eat and drink, and there were very few bathrooms, and many people got cholera. And they were lying one next to the other. And many people went to court afterwards. And I had an article, unfortunately I don't find -- I also re -- wrote already for my grand-niece, for Lynnise about the Holocaust, because she wanted to know for her children, you know? And I started it on vacation, and I can't find it. I feel ashamed, but I can't find it. I looked again and again for it, but I can't find it. And there was also, I found a note, a newspaper note about Navamari, how awful it was and -- in the newspaper. And afterwards many people went to court to get money for -- because it was so awful, the -- the -- the [indecipherable]

Q: The boat?

A: Yes, the boat, and how they were treated, horrid. When they arrived, they looked so bad that I thought Father will die on the way to the apartment. It was just that horrifying.

Q: You -- you met them at the --

A: At the -- yeah, I was in New York, I met them at -- we all were at the port, we three sisters were at the -- at the -- to see -- to meet them. My --

Q: Do you remember the date?

A: September '41. Just before the war, we were in the war.

Q: Se-September 14th --

A: '41

Q: Se-September of '41 you me -- they didn't come until '41?

A: No, because the consul -- first we didn't -- they were in Italy, secure.

Q: [indecipherable] Mm-hm.

A: Then it started, my brother had to leave, because it looked for the Jews, they were -- secluded the Jews in Italy also. So my brother left, and my parents. Then we started worrying. We didn't start right away, we thought they are in Italy, in [indecipherable] and secure, you know? And so it -- it -- S-September, and therefore, I was so afraid and so unhappy because I thought that soon we will be in the war. In '41 December, and we were in the war. And so it's -- I can give you some ice in it.

Q: No, no. No, thank you, no, that's fine.

A: No? Don't you want ice in it?

Q: No, no, I -- really, it's fine, thank you.

A: Yeah.

Q: Or -- unless you want some ice for yourself.

A: No, I want only to be wet.

Q: I know. Me, too. Now --

A: So the parents came over, yeah.

Q: So what was that like standing there on the dock, waiting for your parents just to come --

A: It was awful, and luckily we didn't know ho-how awful the whole trip was. That was -- we were really lucky, because to t -- to travel all the time, all the weeks, would have been awful. But I felt so sorry for my old mother, 60 years old, and she became 99. Then she was little older.

Q: Do you -- do you remember what kind of reunion it was? It must have been both happy and sad, huh?

A: Ve-Very t -- very touching and af -- ab -- one, I think I went with Father into the apartment of my sister in New York, because Mother waited probably for -- with my other sisters for the suitcases, and Father of -- was, of course, in an awful state, awful. Th-They looked horrid. And we sisters were so unhappy. It was really awful. Am I excused for th -- for a moment?

Q: Oh, please, please. [tape break] -- to munch a little bit here. Well, so we were talking about -- and you were -- you were talking about the --

A: Parents [indecipherable]

Q: -- a-about your parents journey. And I wanted to -- to go back a little bit again to those few months before you all left.

A: Yeah.

Q: What kind of preparations was everybody making? You've t-talked about it a little bit, but did you -- was -- was it -- was there careful planning involved in -- in deciding on how to book the trips, and how to get your --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- possessions out of the country? How did you go about all that?

A: We found out that we can take a big van and all our things, as I said, which we have. We were not allowed to buy stockings new, or anything new we were not allowed to -- to -- and our money was right away blocked in -- at the bank. And what was awful, of course, to go on the street, and to see that Jews have to kneel down and to scrub what's an artist put paint on, and the Jews have to kneel on the street and to brush -- to try to brush them away. That w-was --

Q: You -- you s -- you were seeing this in -- right a -- right away in '38?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I don't know whether it was right away, I can't -- that I can't say when it was, when it started there, but I saw it. And that was awful, it was really heartbreaking, yeah.

Q: Did you -- did you ever --

A: No, I never had it and nobody of my family had to do it.

Q: Why do you think that was?

A: Pardon?

Q: Why? Why were other Jews required to

A: We have -- a-as -- it happened to be then on th -- I wa -- we were lucky not to be on the place where they just gathered them, you know? I -- I only pass them. But I mean, it was so that this was an awful, an awful sight. My time was not yet a concentrate -- that people were deported to concentration camps. That was not yet at that time. I don't know when it started, frankly.

Q: Although, wasn't the -- the idea of -- did they call it Judenrein? Was Judenrein, or Judenrein -
-

A: Ju-Judenrein wa -- were --

Q: -- the -- was that -- was that -- that was one of the slogans of the anschluss, wasn't that? We-
Were people -- do you remember that phrase then -- then?

A: Yeah, yeah, people who were -- no. No, I don't. This phrase I don't remember. But you have to be completely Jewish when you had a Christian father also, and a Jewish mother, you were not allowed, I mean, to stay or to do things. That way if you -- of my sister Hella Streicher, a brother of my -- of [indecipherable] Streicher, was married to a Gentile li -- doctor. And they stayed there in Vienna. But now I remember, he was once put also to the police and he jumped from the third floor down and broke several things. So he got to the hospital and survived. But he stayed there, and the children were all brought up Catholic, because mother was Catholic. Not very

religious, but they were. Of course, I mean, one had a hard time when one was half Jewish. One -
- then it was called Jewish. My brother-in-law, for instance, another from my husband's side,
Hans Hartman, who was a -- i-is still -- he's dead, but he's a very famous psychoanalyst, and he
had -- he had both parents at that time were not Jewish. The grandfather was still -- one
grandfather of him was Jewish, but he had a Jewish wife, a Karplus, so they had to leave.

Q: What about your -- your -- I think it was -- was it your sister Risa whose -- whose husband
was in -- in jail and then she had to clear out the apartment?

A: No, that was Hella.

Q: That was -- that was Hella's?

A: No, to clear the apartment was my mother.

Q: That was -- okay, I'm sorry, I'm getting confused.

A: Yeah, yeah, no but --

Q: Now, you -- you --

A: -- it is hard, with my big family, it is [indecipherable]

Q: -- y-your mother had to clear the apartment and it was your father that everybody was worried
about.

A: My father was in the police.

Q: Now, were those -- were those -- what ha -- when she had to clear the apartment, what
happened to all the possessions in the apartment?

A: That was -- it seems she put it in storage, because it was then supposed to be [indecipherable]
on the way to America, and they pretended that it was bombed, but we all think it was pretended,
and in reality they have taken it. You know, one never could prove it.

Q: They lost it.

A: Yeah, it's lost.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: And they had the most beautiful antiques, everything antique. And lovely things, but that was all lost, so -- and my sister got my brother-in-law out from the police without emptying the apartment, it was my mother.

Q: Now, let me ask you, Mrs. Karplus about y-you -- you had a lot of friends who were Gentiles.

You -- you --

A: Lot is too much, say it's -- but some.

Q: Well, some.

A: Yeah, definitely.

Q: Now, w-were -- were any of those -- did you consider that you had close friends who later became sympathetic with the Nazis, or -- or --

A: No, no.

Q: -- members of the party?

A: They not. Only the secretary of my husband.

Q: So there's -- that one story was the only experience like that that you had.

A: Yeah, that have -- yeah.

Q: And --

A: That has us wi -- were -- with us, continue with us.

Q: They were -- they stood with you.

A: Y-Yeah, yes, they were really good friends, close friends. And also [indecipherable] and then

I told you two of them have left also Austria, who were married to non-Jews.

Q: Now -- an-and among the friends and associates of other members of your family, did th -- were there any other stories like that, of -- of people who had been friends who suddenly turned against them because --

A: No.

Q: Nothing like that.

A: I didn't -- I didn't hear of that.

Q: [indecipherable] hear about that.

A: I didn't hear of that. And we were -- I think one aunt died in a concentration camp, that was burned. I mean, at -- in a concentration camp, because we didn't hear anything any more. She had -- sh-she was a widow and she had no children, and she was in Vienna very long. And, for instance, my grandmother, who [indecipherable] she was in an old na -- old home -- no, no, for old people, you know, in a room, and died there. But one aunt, I think, died in the concentration camp, and that, with our big family, that was terrifically lucky that -- because my friends here all lost so many family members, and we didn't. One aunt died natural course in -- in the concentration camp, and sa -- my cousin Mimi, I told you --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

A: -- entration camp what she went through. Is there somebody who can translate?

Q: You know, I think if -- if we -- is this a copy?

A: [indecipherable]. Yeah, that's copy --

Q: I could send this copy to the Holocaust Museum. I don't read German, but I'll send this.

A: And somebody will there -- I made several, you know --

Q: Okay.

A: -- because I send it also to [indecipherable]

Q: And this the letter to --

A: That's -- this is --

Q: -- what is -- this says, mine inix --

A: -- inix -- ma -- my beloved Aunt Ella, and all my loved ones.

Q: Can you read just a little bit of it? I -- it's too long to read now, but maybe you could read the first couple of sentences. This is written from the concentration camp?

A: No.

Q: Oh this is --

A: From Prague.

Q: Oh no, no, yes.

A: She was in Prague.

Q: Reftele, Reftele?

A: Oh no, I think she was in Prague already. She wa -- and I -- in '63 --

Q: The seventh of October, 1945.

A: And there is a second letter, but I don't know wha -- where it's at, I don't know. He wrote to my -- one aunt went to Argentine, and one uncle went to Argentine [indecipherable]. "I can't tell you my enormous pleasure, I can't describe it when I saw your writing, my beloved Aunt Ella. Finally, I found you." I wou -- [indecipherable] I -- I -- I va -- "I didn't know where to look for you, but the world conquerors found my loved ones. When I read your letter, I had a -- v-very much to cry, because it was also still addressed to my beloved mother, but I will tell you in short" -- as you say, in short -- "in short sentence, my life what I had to go through. Mother and I were in July 1942 deported to Theresienstadt." They lived in Prague in Czechoslovakia. "When

we -- when we arrived there with the transport, all our -- our suitcase were taken away. Only 50 kilogram we had, with the most important things, but we never saw it again. I worked as a nurse, and I worked very hard so that I didn't -- so that we" -- because her mother lived there -- "that we didn't have to come in another the -- to Poland, in -- in -- to tra -- to be transported to Poland. So Mother and I were all right. Then I got an awful" -- you don't say angine in English, sore throat, but it is with an abscess -- "and with 40 grade fever," that means 104 or five. "And Mother ha -- Mother got an ear inf-infection, and her ears was very painful, and the doctor calmed me, said it can be only -- be taken care in the hospital and Tuesday early -- it's one of the specialist doctors, they said that see that she has an infectious -- infecting" [indecipherable], it's in the -- God, this is hard for me to know. "The brain infection. Some brain infection. And there is a little hope if one operates. One has to open the head, and during the operation one saw that the head was f -- full of pus, and there was no hope for her. Tuesday evening, at 10:30, November 17, 1942, sh -- is my much beloved, good mother passed away. It is one -- it is very good, they said she was not conscious and f -- the good God has at le -- didn't let her suffer long. My darling mother comes - - is [indecipherable] in the crematorium, burned, and I hope that I will get the urn" -- do you say urn? -- "wh-when -- when I come home, so -- so I can bury her with my brother, Bela. I am -- afterwards is I have four -- a 40 fever," -- that means 104 or something -- "during the sickness of my never to forget mother, the -- I was wa -- during the sickness all day and night I've taken care of her, I've nursed her. So -- I got so awfully sick mentally about the horrid loss, that I had to lie down for three months and I couldn't -- I couldn't get better and I didn't want to get better. Everyone told me that it would be an misery, and one ca -- one can't change this misery, and it was surely not Mother's intention mis -- that I wa -- I-I was so bad off, and I tried to get better. So I stayed til December, but I fell from the bed because I was in this" -- up, you know, it's sert -

- up, you know? It's [indecipherable] she said. "And I've got better and I worked very intensely. Then again the transports." -- do you see transport? "It started in September to [indecipherable]. I got in such a transport, but in the last moment, one had taken me out. Later -- later it -- there were no excuse any more, and so I had, in December n -- I was in the -- sent the -- to the -- it was called death -- death la -- death place. Auschwitz, I was there -- I was -- that's what is there. I had s -- through seven more months da-daily I saw the death -- I face the death, and a -- and I expected i -- myself to get into the crematorium, but I was lucky and had to clean -- to make clean and went to Hamburg. All these trips [indecipherable] with -- with my mother, and I -- to Theresienstadt, we made in a wagon for animals. It was a horrid, daily by day and night, very bad bombardments." Is this right? Bombardment?

Q: Bom-Bombardments, yes.

A: Bo -- yeah. "We thought always to be killed by the bombs. I was three months in Hamburg, then close to [indecipherable] there -- there were many bombs attacks in our concentration camp, and so I -- during the time I worked, I lost again everything. I did not have soap, no toothbrush, nothing, only the -- only I had the very bad what I had on -- on. Then we had to go away from there, and after two weeks again in a wagon for animals, 120 people in one wagon, were always te -- every day some dead. We had to stand without eating, water, without water in a very bad" -- oh, sometimes it's so hard, you know, [indecipherable] "we were in [indecipherable] and physically we were -- we came to the very badly -- a very known for bad, Bergen-Belsen. It was a -- it was known to -- to the -- for that to -- that people die there. I can't tell you, my loved ones to -- what I went through. Hungry, thirst and lice. We were sleeping on the -- on the earth without any cover, all cl-close to each other through four weeks. No piece of bread for many weeks, no water to wash, and if it's -- was alright, very seldom a water soup with beets. That was

all -- in all the concentration camps our daily menu. The people were all so down physically, that hundred died every day.” Do you want to continue?

Q: Well, I think --

A: I’m sorry I --

Q: No, no, this is interesting, but I -- I think I’d like to ask you a little bit about -- I mean, cause probably we don’t have time to read the whole let -- the whole thing.

A: No, and because I’m also not prepared to [indecipherable]

Q: No. No, no, th -- but this is -- this gives a -- a -- a feeling of a terrible time.

A: Yeah, a better idea that [indecipherable] happened horrid.

Q: What -- what do you -- what do you recall from having learned about Mimi’s experience?

What -- in addition to what you’ve just read, I mean --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- what kind of hell that she lived through.

A: She was very bad off. She had tuberculosis afterwards. And she had broken her arm, I remember. I went in ’63 the first time to Europe, but I went to see her in Prague, and she was in very bad shape.

Q: This was at -- so you hadn’t seen her since -- when was the last time --

A: The last time I saw her later because a cousin of mine invited her to Austria. They could get out of Prague when somebody guaranteed to take care of them, and so Mimi was lucky, through me, she -- the family learned then how she is in Prague, and my cousin who lived in -- close to Salzburg, at that time, invited her. So I saw her then also there. But I have sent her I don’t know how many packages, care was at that time, care packages we called it. And she always asked me for things what she could sell. For ins -- lipsticks it seems were not in Prague and she could sell,

and for that she could buy what she wanted to, food or whatever. And when I was in Prague in '63, there were still the communists. One person -- Mimi called for me at the airplane, and also one communist -- one official. And then I was in a very good hotel and got everything beautiful to eat and the people outside were standing in line to get something to eat and had no-not a tenth of it. So of course I invited many friends of Mimi and Mimi herself. And I was horrified that in the hotel they offer everything what you want and the outside the poor people didn't, and they -- in the trolley car one heard -- one woman heard us speaking German, so she came over and -- and said how horrid it is to live through all this with the communists. So I was at a very bad time in Prague at that time, but I s -- really did my best to help Mimi. At that time I didn't have much money, but at tha -- my husband died already in '58, so I was alone.

Q: He died in '58?

A: Yeah. But --

Q: So -- so Mimi's story is really a story of survival.

A: Yeah, it's unbelievable. It's unbelievable that she survived.

Q: What do you attribute that to?

A: I don't say what I think. [tape break]

Q: So we erased that part.

A: Yeah, but that is my m --

Q: But y --

A: I never talked with somebody about it, you know?

Q: Yeah. Well --

A: And I always thought, I mean, she was not a very beloved cousin, I have to say. And my cousin in -- of Salzburg was very decent to invite her. And it was very interesting, the little she

[indecipherable] there, it was Linnie and her sister Debbie, they were small. They only liked my cousin who lived in the -- there, but they didn't like Mimi. That was so interesting, the children had the instinct. But I felt so sorry for her, I mean --

Q: Of course, yeah, I can understand that.

A: Well, a horror to go through all that.

Q: Do you -- a-a-and her brother was the other one in the picture?

A: Yeah, and who committed suicide when Hitler came. He was a doctor.

Q: What -- what is -- what is the story -- tell -- what do you know about that story? When -- was this in '38, right away after the anschluss?

A: Yeah, right away, right away.

Q: What do you know about that?

A: Well, I don't know, but we thought, the family thought that he was baptized, he was baptized, I think and didn't want that they find out that he is a Jew. I think, but we don't know really.

Q: What -- what was his name again?

A: Bela. B-e-l-a.

Q: B-Bela.

A: Bela.

Q: His last name was?

A: Herz, A -- H-e-r-z. That means heart.

Q: Bela Hertz.

A: Herz, yeah. No, Hertz one writes with t-z, and they are only H-e-r-z.

Q: Okay. And --

A: And Mimi was not married. She was once married, got divorced, but very short.

Q: So -- so he -- so this is maybe a story of Bela as someone who was discover -- he was afraid he was -- be discovered as a Jew.

A: Yeah, I thought. I -- that was --

Q: So he was maybe making adjustments for his own survival by trying to deny his identity to some extent.

A: Yes.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Yes, I thou -- that is what I assume, but don't know, you know? And he was buried of course, there, but I don't know it.

Q: Well, let me ask you, Mrs. Karplus then -- we're jumping around in time a little bit here, but I wanted to ask you one more thing about just as you were leaving in '38. You went to Zurich first, you said?

A: Yeah.

Q: Who --

A: No, my brother was first [indecipherable]

Q: No, but I mean, but --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- you -- you first went to Zur -- I mean, in other words you -- your first --

A: I we -- we went to Zurich, yeah.

Q: -- destination after Vienna was Zurich, and --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- can you recall the details of the day that you left and how you traveled, and what it felt like at that time?

A: It felt -- of course, I don't remember exactly, but it felt -- I know that it felt awful to leave your homeland, and to go into an unknown country. America was so far at that time for us. We had an uncle I remember who came once from America. Oh, he was in America. You know, that was, really for us, so far. At that time we went also with the boat there. We were lucky, with the Normandie we went there from France to America. But flying was not yet there. Telephone was not yet between there, so it was really in an unknown nothing. But we were lucky that we had the friends here where we could live the first week, so that was very lucky -- in New York. We tried first New York. My husband tried first to get the job in New York. And I got one right away at Rubenstein, because they knew me from Paris.

Q: Did -- did you -- but it was '38 that you went to Zurich and -- and --

A: Yeah [indecipherable] '38.

Q: -- tell me how long -- how long did you stay there?

A: Where?

Q: In Zurich?

A: In Zurich, s -- very short, because we went to my cousin, who lived in Paris at that time, and then in -- in -- close to Salzburg.

Q: Oh.

A: And she was with her husband on vacation from Paris and s -- and invited us to come.

Q: And how long did you stay there?

A: I stayed there about two weeks. I don't think that I have it here, where we -- when we g -- went to -- my husband, I know went with na -- the [indecipherable] cousin to make arrangements for the going. In [indecipherable] I know we were in -- in August we came -- went to America and --

Q: So it was August of '38 that you --

A: Yeah, '38, yes.

Q: So you only -- you were only

A: [indecipherable] one month.

Q: -- in Zurich and -- and Paris for -- for maybe a total of a month.

A: Yeah. [indecipherable] in between, we were there.

Q: Those two? Oh.

A: Yeah. Not --

Q: They --

A: The most a month we were.

Q: And what --

A: Maybe we make -- we started -- we arrived maybe beginning of August here. I always said we are not a May flower, but August flower.

Q: You were on the August flower.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what was the trip like to the United States?

A: Wonderful, the Normandie. Yeah, that was such a wonderful boat, and so good to eat. And we didn't want to talk to all the immigrants.

Q: Why?

A: We talked not German to each other, I think, we talked French or English, I don't know any more.

Q: Why?

A: Bef -- we didn't want to hear from everyone the misery. There were so many people, so poor, you know? Everyone lost somebody, we were so lucky that we didn't lose people, you know? And there were so many people who lost [indecipherable] the concentration camp, they didn't know what happened and so on. And we didn't want really to talk to everyone.

Q: I-It's -- at this time in '38, of course it wasn't as much loss around you as y-y --

A: No, but sti --

Q: -- at that time, but --

A: -- no, tha -- you're right, at that time nobody was still concentration camp, but everyone felt miserable, of course.

Q: Yeah -- yeah, and you -- maybe you just didn't want to think about it any more.

A: We -- I didn't, yeah, yeah. And we -- my husband and I decided we never talk about Vienna, how would it be now to be in Vienna. We never talked about it, so not -- so to get used to the American life, to assimilate here and not what we lost. We didn't talk what we lost, we wanted to make our new life here.

Q: So you just stopped talking about it?

A: About, yeah, we didn't talk. Now we -- we would be this [indecipherable] now we would have the party, now we would -- we never talked about what we lost.

Q: But what -- what -- what about in 1940 and '41 and '44, and when the -- when the details of the Holocaust started coming out, did you talk about it then?

A: That -- of -- then, yeah. Then of course, we talked about the Holocaust, but not what we, what we lost, what we would have n-now in Vienna. The money, the positions, my husband never got the position here, a decent. So, we were so occupied with here, and wanted to be here.

Q: Right. Did you -- did you ever talk about what it -- would have happened to us if we had stayed?

A: No, it was clear.

Q: You didn't need to talk about that.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't remember that we talked about it. We -- we surely talked about how lucky we were to come out, and specially with our things because we couldn't buy a bed or anything, you know? We had no money.

Q: But you -- you left quite a bit of money behind.

A: We -- yeah.

Q: Can you say about how much, or --

A: I have no idea.

Q: But it was -- it was substantial amount of money.

A: But it [indecipherable] yeah, yeah.

Q: And so how did you put your life back together financially here, when you were here?

A: I got very soon a job at Rubenstein, Helena Rubenstein, you know, had a salon in New York.

And she knew me because I was teaching her sisters in Paris, so she knew me. And I [indecipherable]

Q: [inaudible]

A: I worked there, you know, and then my husband, we were told that he should take the first job, whatever it is. So a friend of ours worked in a store, and was asked whether he wanted to go with a couple to Canada and tutor children, high school's children.

Q: And -- and what the children?

A: High school.

Q: Tutor -- tutor. Tutor the children.

A: Tutor.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And this young man, Eddie, didn't want to go, so he asked my husband and my husband went to Canada for two or three months with an American couple and was tutoring all Latin and French and mathematic, everything, and skiing, because he was a very good skier. The only thing he said he didn't know was, when he was asked when friends came in and he helped to prepare, you know, the drinks and so, when he was asked for a Manhattan. He had no idea how to do mixed drinks because we never had them in Vienna, you know? And then they came back and we hoped through his -- that maybe there is a connection that they will get some job for my husband, but they got it only for me. She knew somebody "Vogue", at "Harper's Bazaar", and that was a write-up about me, and I got some private lessons through this write-up. So I earned faster than my husband. And -- but then this couple went away again, I don't know where, and offered us their apartment for three months on Park Avenue. So we didn't have to rent -- to pay rent, we lived there for three months. And then we went back probably, to a rented. But after one year, when my husband couldn't find a job because the publishers say you have no experience in America. A small job we can't give a man like you, and a high job you can't get because you have no experience.

Q: So they were saying he was overqua --

A: My husband would have gone everything, he would have done I don't know what, to rub the floor, I'd -- anything, only to prove --

Q: But they -- they said he was overqualified for the lower positions?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Right.

A: And he always loved Boston, and in fact, he [indecipherable] he paid very intelligently, not only storage, went to New York, but also to Boston, he paid in Vienna, because what he read about Boston he loved always. Close to the mountains, academic place, so -- so -- and my sister and Felix Fleischner were already in Boston. So he went ahead, and we went Boston. I asked Rubenstein, she had the salon here, to transfer me. I worked at Rubenstein and he looked for a job.

Q: And -- and when -- when was this, when did you arrive in Boston?

A: One year, '39. It was in '39, '38 August we came, it was probably September, October '39, I don't know.

Q: So that you were in New York about a year?

A: Yeah.

Q: And where in New York did you live?

A: We lived -- first we lived with a friend on Central Park West, then we rented, also in the west, close to Columbia [indecipherable] an apartment, and hert -- the -- there was h-high-ups, the s -- subway, the -- not the su -- the trolleys were awful noisy, but we got used to it. Then my husband went, I stayed alone in this apartment. Then we were three months in Park Avenue with mice, and then probably we went back, that I don't remember now, and mo -- probably went back to the west side because that was the cheapest at that time.

Q: Ha -- and --

A: And -- and in New York my husband didn't get a job, but here he got a job, and [indecipherable] in a very disagreeable job in wal -- Waltham or Watertown. He had to sell watches which are very bad and cheap. And for him to sell, to know it is bad, he suffered awful. It was awful for him. And then he had different jobs, but never a real intellectual job as he had, you know?

Q: So it must have been unhappy for him in some ways.

A: Yeah, he was very well balanced man. He went home and read, you see all the books we have? This is his books. He read and [indecipherable] away. And eventually he prepared all the dinner for me, and pre -- eventually he washed the -- he wa -- washed the linen, or laundry, because I worked long hours. I worked before Rubenstein, after Rubenstein, and after four years I left Rubenstein and finally we agreed that I risk to have my own st-studio. But nobody knew anything about exercises at that time. That was '41, I got my [indecipherable] four years [indecipherable]. I think '41, I started to -- to look for a studio, which was also very hard. Very, very hard, because I make noise. People jump, walk, noise. It has to be in a region where people can park. It was Tremont Street at that time, all right. Because now I wouldn't be on Tremont Street, but at that time it was all right. And it was very funny, there was -- it was for the Young Man Christian Association, a house. And I ask -- I talked to the director and said, I look for a place, but we have only money for three months rent. I don't know -- if I don't get pupils, we can't pay, and wa -- I have to move. And in fact, the purple -- the person who was there before, she left without paying. But he believed me and has taken me. I was then 15 years there, because I worked up, you know, to pupils more and more and more and more. And I never advertised. I get them all -- got them only recommended. And that was the wonderful thing, you know, not to get from the street anyone who smells or expects wonders. So, my pupils suit me.

Q: Mm-hm. Let me change tapes here, and just wanted to ask you a couple more questions.

A: Then I can --

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: -- with Mrs. Karplus. This is the side A of tape number three, and I just wanted to ask you a couple more questions. I-I -- I want to ask you how you kept in touch with you -- you all left your family, your fr -- -- your -- your parents. You were all together in New York, in -- but --

A: Yeah, first we were all together in New York. My --

Q: S-So you were --

A: -- the three sisters.

Q: So you really kept in close contact with your family?

A: Yeah, with my sisters. My brother was in Brazil, of course, and -- during the war it was not possible. But my mother went first to him when his wife died i-in Brazil. And otherwise, we three sisters were close because one stayed in New York, Hella and Richard Streicher with their children the -- my sister Risa and Felix Fleischner were here, they were only for a short time in Greenfield, but they came back because he got the job in the Beth Israel hospital, to be the head of the department, the [indecipherable] department. And he is really a famous man because there is all over the world an association called Felix Fleischner Association, which meet once a year and there are, from all over the world the people come, the doctors -- it is for the chest, lung, and they come, also surgeons and so on, and there are some who give the lectures. And there are hundreds and hundreds of doctors who get together, and I'm very proud that it is called Felix Fleischner lecture -- lectures, or association. And in fact, there is also, here in Boston once a year, called the dinner for Risa and Felix Fleischner and they give some prizes to the best young people who do research for x-ray. So, I always say I'm surrounded by famous people, really.

Q: And did you keep in touch with -- with your brother in Brazil?

A: Yes, yes, and then the first time when he came with his daughter, we were awfully excited, of course. But th -- it was already -- the daughter was already about 14 years old, so we hadn't seen my brother for a long time. We had no money to go there, and we -- and he probably also not. So when he came with his daughter, we were very, very happy and excited, really. It was wonderful. But luckily, that all close -- also for my husband that the siblings, everyone came out, and that was a wonder. Was really -- when so many people who were [indecipherable] no? And had to go through the concentration camp, and only my cousin Mimi, who --

Q: And even she survived.

A: -- went to the concentration camps.

Q: That's -- that is a -- an amazing thing, isn't it? I mean you must not --

A: Mm-hm, very. Very, and lucky. I mean, so lucky.

Q: Do you ever think about how could this be? I mean, you're -- you're -- so many people around you an-and so many other Jews all over Europe perished, and --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- and your family --

A: Was so lucky.

Q: Did you ever try to as -- attribute that to a -- a greater power or -- or any s -- fate, or any --

A: No, because we started early.

Q: Because --

A: The people -- that made a big difference, it -- we star -- we started early, before people were deported.

Q: Right. And why did you start early and not other people, do you think? What -- what was the difference between the --

A: I think, number one, if you had not still money, for instance, for the van.

Q: For -- for the what?

A: For the van. The van, it's called, where we had everything.

Q: The van? Uh-huh.

A: The van.

Q: Oh [indecipherable]

A: It is a big, big --

Q: Oh, oh, like a van or like a truck.

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I tried to -- so many had not the luck to get an affidavit for instance, you know? To America. Because, I mean, we knew someone who was living in New York, a Viennese survivor of -- a psychoanalyst. We knew here, and she was wonderful, she ta -- sent us right away a wire. So anyone who got an affidavit could leave to America. But many people didn't know anyone --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- in America, for instance --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and go to America.

Q: Were a lot of people going to Palestine at that time as well?

A: I don't think many.

Q: No? Not from Vienna?

A: I don't think many [indecipherable]

Q: You didn't know, did you?

A: Yeah, from my family, from my father's family some went.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: From Father's family some went there, and -- to Israel, to Palestine at that time, but I don't know whether many people went and frankly I don't know if --

Q: Did you have friends that -- that went, yourself, or --

A: No, and through [indecipherable] went there who only -- I only know of them, and they were a cousin and her children.

Q: Did you and your husband ever think about going yourselves?

A: To -- to Israel? But never, we never --

Q: Why?

A: Because he was not really -- he was Jewish feeling, but this was nothing attractive for us to go to Palestine -- and to --

Q: Why is that?

A: -- wa -- we never -- funny, we never thought of it.

Q: You never thought of the -- the Zionist dream of going back to --

A: No, no, no, no, no --

Q: Eretz Yisrael or anything like that?

A: -- we never -- we were not Zionists, definitely not. And we thought -- I mean, and everyone of course thought of -- toward my husband, he will never have any difficulty to find a job, a man of this caliber, of course he will right away have a job, people thought. And we thought too.

Q: Course, even in Israel today, there are many very, you know, people with Ph.D.s that are lucky to get a factory job --

A: Of course --

Q: -- even, I know.

A: -- nowadays it is different --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- everything different. At that time Palestine -- at -- it wasn't so attractive. I mean, it isn't attractive for me today because it is much too much going on there. It is -- it is a horror to see this shooting forth and back. And I hate also when the Israelis shoot.

Q: Yeah.

A: I hate it, because it is a oc -- no, we never thought of Israel.

Q: And --

A: Of course, I only thought of Paris, because I loved Paris and I knew the people who want to -- want to have me there teaching again, you know? That -- that is attractive, of course. But luckily we came to America, wi -- very lucky.

Q: And -- and like you say, you came early enough. I guess I -- I just want to ask you whether -- you know, I've talked to other people who've s -- y-you know, in -- in -- in doing other interviews with other people who've survived --

A: Oh [indecipherable]

Q: -- there was one other woman whose name I -- I'll have to look up --

A: Where is she living, in Boston?

Q: Yeah. I imagine you might know her, let's see.

A: I -- I th- --

Q: René Schorr? René Schorr?

A: Schorr?

Q: Schorr.

A: No.

Q: No.

A: But Schorr is th -- is -- is -- sounds familiar.

Q: I'm pretty sure she was from Vienna, yeah.

A: Schorr sounds familiar.

Q: René Schorr, yeah.

A: But I don't know where to put her.

Q: Yeah. She lives near here, somewhere. But -- but I don't want to attribute this necessarily just to her, but in general talking to Holocaust survivors, people who survived this -- this era, this horrible era, there's a f -- I felt a si -- a sense almost of why -- why me? How --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- how did I survive and so many --

A: It is the biggest one that there is, that our family was so lucky. It is really terrific, where we were so many, but I only think because we left early.

Q: Right.

A: And everyone a -- only mothe -- parents lost their belongings, but the si -- my both sisters had also all the belongings here, as I had. So it is really like a wonder that we didn't have to go through that. I mean, it was an awful time when my brother-in-law was in prison, because we didn't know, do they keep him for good.

Q: Yeah. Did you e -- did you or anybody in your family, do you think, ever feel guilty of the ti -
- you know, I mean -- not --

A: That -- that --

Q: -- not that it would be rational, but -- not that it was a rational thought, but that people -- I know pum -- some people felt oh, you know, it's not fair that I survived and so many other people didn't. Did you ever go through that experience?

A: No, I never -- I never -- I never heard of it of anyone.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: It might be, you know, you don't talk about everything.

Q: Right.

A: And I have to admit, I was only thankful. I didn't feel guilty, only thankful that my husband decided America is -- is the right thing, and not Paris. I am only thankful, because it was -- it was really up to him only to decide. And I didn't feel guilty, I felt only really, as I said -- I -- I feel it so -- such a luck is that we three sisters were in America, and could help each other, you know, in many ways. Because my sister and brother-in-law went to Boston and I've taken care of sitting her children in -- in New York in the meantime. You know, we could help each other with little things, which were important. And -- and I was lucky they were here because I love children and so I saw children. I had children here. And then the grandchildren came, so I was very lucky as long my sister lived. And now they try also to say al -- all nice to me. And I have two nephews who are my husband's side here, who are psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, and they are very nice to me, so I'm lucky, really.

Q: Do you feel that e-even though your experience was not horrific and direct in -- in the way that many -- many others was, do you feel that there's something that you want to say about your experience, or any lessons that you would like future generations to understand about what you've been through and -- and the way that you've thought about it in your life?

A: Yes. You know that I know that my -- for instance, Lynn. They will bring up the children with the knowledge of horror, what happened. And therefore Lynn wanted, I started to write -- which I don't write -- write -- she asked me to write about Holocaust. And then she was so happy when she heard that you will interview me, because she wanted her children to know what was going on when we left Austria. And she wanted the children know about it. And I had a wonderful experience with friends here sht -- all my friends were pupils, of course. And [indecipherable] invited in their house and the husband asked me about leaving Austria, about why, and so on. So I told him I'm Jewish and so on. And then children came for dinner and he said, I want that Erna repeats now, so that you know, what s -- what she went through. And I admired that. I was very happy, because these are people [indecipherable] of course not -- not Jewish. And I admire that the father told the young children, you should know what was going on, why Erna is here, you know? But I have really to say I always felt, because we are two. I never felt I did it for myself. I felt always I just make it as easy as possible for my husband. And I'm sure he felt the same for me. People who went -- came alone, I tried to help a lot, because I felt so bad for them. I had a girlfriend, for instance, from Vienna, and we knew her very well, and she was here in Boston, and she wa -- and every weekend, whatever we did we tried to -- to take her, because she was alone. And that -- that is hard, to come alone. And her mother died in Vienna, but not in the concentration camp, she was sick. So it's -- that is -- makes it really hard. I feel this was a really -- lucky that I had the partner for whom to -- to be. And I never regretted that I work hard, or so, I -- I didn't know it. I didn't know it, the others knew it, but I didn't know that I work hard. I'd -- we were -- and I'm very lucky now, because my husband [indecipherable] so little, and I also [indecipherable] to Rubenstein. We both earned 30 dollars a week, that I remember like anything. Then his mother came, and we didn't know whether we have enough

money for it -- to -- for eating. And -- and my husband always said, because we couldn't put money aside, he said, what will we do v -- when we both retire? And I said, we will be in a rocking chair and remember the good old times. But I thought -- I collected many things about exercises, I thought I will write in paper, in newspapers about exercises if I can't teach any more. And I'm a very bad writer, but I thought I would. My husband would have helped me. So is -- it is really when I think back to the '38, it was, of course horrid, horrid to leave your -- where you were born and where you lived, and all your friends there, and to leave the parents, that was the worst. And then, when we left with the airplane, I think it was the first time I was in an airplane, and the cook came -- or maid came to the airport and waved good-bye, you know, it was that -- an awful experience, of course. But I never thought again and again, of it. Because I really -- we both wanted to assimilate here, even if my language is not assimilating, but we both wanted really to make the best with our life, and not make it harder, and we had no money to get -- go back to Europe. '63 i -- i-is the first time I went back, after 25 years.

Q: You went back in si --

A: To Europe.

Q: Did you go to Vienna?

A: At that time -- I have to try to think. Yes, I went back to Vienna and there was the friend who married a non-Jew, and they were in New Zealand and they were back, and he got back his factory for the -- he made furniture. And the people kept the f-factory going, and when he came back, he and his brothers, they returned it to them. Which was wonderful, it showed what good bosses they were. And yes, I went then to Vienna, and with a car we went to -- with their car we went to Salzburg. So --

Q: What did it feel like to be in Vienna after that time, all that horrible things?

A: It was awful. I went to the apartment -- I wanted to go to the apartment where my husband and I lived, but I started so much to cry that I didn't want to ring the bell whoever was there. I couldn't. But whether I went the first time, or another time, I went to the apartment of my parents, where we lived. And that was -- that was very hard. That was, of course very hard to see again, everything you left.

Q: Did the people take you -- let you come in?

A: Yeah, the people -- the people were quite nice, but I think my sister was already here, she said, again somebody? I said, but I wasn't here yet. Because I-I think my sister was there, or my brother, I don't know who was there before, you know? But to the apartment with my husband, I think I tried in '63, and I think to my parents I went another time. I didn't go often to Vienna, only to take a course close to Vienna. I have taken a dance course. But I -- but every year I was in Europe to Salzburg because I love Salzburg, and my tra -- my favorite cousin was there.

Q: So you traveled back to Austria many times?

A: Every year I went after '63 -- I think [indecipherable]

Q: So you created new memories for -- for --

A: Yeah, yeah. [indecipherable]

Q: -- Austria for you.

A: But I didn't -- I don't like Vienna as much as Salzburg. Salzburg is -- do you know Salzburg?

Q: No.

A: It is so beautiful, and so lovely a-as -- it has such an old part of -- Vienna, of course, too, but it is a lovely place. So I went, and also I had a cousin whom I loved there much and they had at the lake, a house there. So that was very nice, and I went to Switzerland a lot, to the mountains, of course.

Q: Well, is there anything else that -- that you'd like to say that I haven't asked you about that you think it's -- in -- that you'd like to -- to share?

A: I'd say to -- I'd like to say that the Americans are -- were awfully nice to me. There was -- I -- e -- very slowly I worked up my studio where I had pupils, as an exercise teacher. I didn't do any photography here. And I feel always a f -- I started underground, and it was hard to get really on the ground. And during the war, or af -- right after the war -- '47 it was in fact, one of my pupil one day ask me, do you care to use our farmhouse in New Hampshire? I said I will ask my husband. My husband at that time had no job, and wanted that I go alone on vacation because I needed it, and he wanted to stay in Boston, which I never would have done, to leave him in Boston alone. And of course he was delighted. We met. Before, she didn't know my husband, I didn't know her husband. All I knew her during the time, during the war, she has taken me -- sometimes in the evening she invited me for dinner. And my husband worked for -- sometime in the evening at the -- to make teeth [indecipherable] teeth, false teeth. So I knew her only from that. This farmhouse was in New Hampshire, surrounded by 2,000 acres woods. It was a dream. Then she told me, but it has no electricity. And water it has only when the windmill goes, to get the water down. It was so lovely, it's -- the first time, of course, we were together. And then we were also some weekends, I think, together. And they saw that my husband repaired everything, whether it was on the roof, or whatever was to be repaired, he was very handy. And I, of course, cleaned the house. So we got the key. Until six -- '69, we -- my whole family went there. We always spent all of the holidays there together, the whole family. They came from New York, the Streichers with the -- then with the children, afterwards with the grandchildren. We had the house all the time, very seldom they went because they had a yacht, where they were in summer. In winter we couldn't, in the -- when it was snow. And when mud was, we had the Jeeps they

had there. So we left our car up, and -- but the first year, '47, when she asked me whether we want to use it, a f -- a farm, we had no car. They [indecipherable] another to -- pupil to ask me, would you care to use my car? I go on the cruise. So we had a car of another pupil. I thought that the [indecipherable] were terrific to us, really terrific. To let the house have us. All the time we were there. They moved then to Maine, so got -- first they lived on Brattle Street. Do you know where the -- the church is of the -- not Albanian, it's a -- it's Sparks Street and Brattle Street, the church?

Q: In Cambridge, you mean?

A: Yeah, in Cambridge.

Q: I -- I'm sure I've been past it, I don't remember.

A: Yeah, because there the parents lived, with the biggest garden in Cambridge. And they lived in the back, there was a kind of museum of a professor and they lived there. But then they moved to Maine and used -- very seldom they went to New Hampshire to the farm. So we were all the time there. In summer we were there, because it didn't cost us anything. And my sister Risa, Felix and the children and the grandchildren, everyone was there, til '69, and then they sold that. But then also my brother-in-law died and the -- we wouldn't have gone any more as much up there. But from '47 to '69, and it was so wonderful for all of us. And we learned how to make [indecipherable] and we learned how to cut trees, we never did it, but we learned it from them, you know, to saw wood. I learned to -- how is it called when you swing the -- and split?

Q: S-Split wood? With the axe?

A: Split wood. Not with the axe, I couldn't do the axe and I know now why --

Q: With the hatchet?

A: Pardon?

Q: A hatchet?

A: No, no, with that -- yeah, with a hatchet, but you have a word for it.

Q: A wedge?

A: A sledge -- sledgehammer.

Q: Sledge -- yeah, okay.

A: A sledgehammer.

Q: Sledgehammer.

A: That I could do, but I couldn't do a axe, I think I was astigmatic and couldn't point, you know, the axe. But we worked in the woods, and it was just wonderful for us. We -- the first year when we didn't know what to do in the woods, when we were there, we went on all the mountains around, because we loved so much. So it was really, I have a very good experience. And now, walking with a cane, and walking with one eye black, people want always to help me. They are so kind, and I always hope not to be seen by my pupils with a cane.

Q: Well, Mrs. Karplus, thank you very much for sharing some of your stories.

A: Yeah. D-Do you think you have enough?

Q: I think this has really been a -- a very, very good afternoon. Thank you for your time.

A: No, I -- I -- wa -- it wasn't --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Conclusion of Interview