

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Lore Perl
November 13, 1996
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Lore Perl, conducted by Arwen Donahue and Scott Miller on November 13, 1996 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

LORE PERL

November 13, 1996

[Transcriptionist note: There were two interviewers and two respondents. Lore's husband, Dr. Perl had a difficult accent as well as his speech was very slurred, therefore making him very difficult to transcribe.]

Question: This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Lore Perl. It's November 13, 1996 and we're here in the Perl's home in Beltsville, Maryland. And the interviewers today Arwen Donahue and Scott Miller. And Mrs. Perl, I'd like to start by asking you when you were born, the exact date.

Answer: On the 13th of March, 1913. That, it's a very long time ago.

Q: And where were you born, exactly?

A: In Askersdorf. That was a suburb of Vienna.

Q: What was your name at birth?

A: A very long, Leonore Maria Luise. For such a little thing, imagine.

Q: And your, your maiden name?

A: Was Rollig, R-O-L-L-I-G.

Q: Would you say something about your family background, your, your father, first his name and then what he did?

A: Fine. My father's name was Franz Xaver and shortly after I was born, World War I broke out and he went into the Army and my mother and I, we were alone. My, then there was no money for soldiers' wives and so on and my family wasn't rich so Mother had to work. And she went to work at a very unusual way. She worked for, as an, importer for a firm that reproduced wooden barrels. And she went all over to buy the right wood, I don't know any more and I never knew and never will know what kind of wood it was. But she was very good at that and when my father came home in 1918, I was five years old. I hardly recognized him. I told my mother, "There's a strange man out there, would you go look for him?" Then I knew it was Father. During the war he occasionally came and brought food because food was very, very rare in Vienna. I have very bad memories as far as food goes that Mother and I, we were standing in line for a long time. I've, now, if, I try to remember, it seems it was the whole night in order to get some food ration that, that was supposed to come to us and when we got there, was sometimes there was no food left and sometimes, once at least, I remember when we came home, there were potatoes and they were all spoiled and Mother cried. So I was then maybe three years old. Occasionally, we went to my grandparents. They had a farm in, in Silesia, no, in, in [talkover], no, Moravia . . .

Q: Moravia.

And my, my father's parents had a farm in Moravia. My father's parents, they had the farm in Moravia and Mother and I went there several times in order to get some food. They, they did not suffer so much because they had all kinds of animals and, and, and, it's, it, it wasn't too bad for them and when we came home, we always had food for the few weeks to eat, until that went low again and then we went back to them again. They were very good to us and I have very vivid memories of my grandmother, who carried me on her back, no perambulator or something like that. She just carried me on her back. So I must have been very little and probably very light also. So when the war was over my father came home. He was a mechanical engineer and there was no job

for him to get so he worked as a ditch digger and in a factory as this and in a factory as that until the situation had settled.

Q: What was your mother's name and her family background?

A: My, my mother's name was Anna Steiner, and my grandfather had, well factory is said too much, he had a little, what would you say . . .

A: Shop.

A: A little shop where he produced linen and I still have napkins from him. And one tablecloth that he, he produced, it's a long time. And he lost that and my grandmother and two sisters and a brother were alone. Grandfather died. And she . . .

Q: He lost that because of the war?

A: No, that was before the war. There, I do not know whether you are familiar with European history but there was a very, very hard time and people like now, they just had to close up. There was no more, asking for good supplies and good things. People bought whatever they could and as long as it wasn't too expensive and apparently what he produced was very expensive. You can see if I have now still something that he produced, it must have been good. Now it's more than hundred years now almost. So, my mother and my father married in 1909 and I was born in 1913.

Q: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

A: My mother had one stillborn child. That, that was all, no more. That was before me. I was an only one. He claims you can still see it. But it doesn't, _____.

Q: What were your parents' political leanings?

A: My father was a Social Democrat. He was very much concerned with the welfare of poor people and he tried to help as much as he could. He became a councilman in the city council and he was, he was kind of, well shunned, because wherever it was and wherever he went he would say, "That's fine but, but you have to do something for those people." For instance he organized that, at Christmas, baskets would go out with food to poor families and of course, he wasn't loved for that by the people who had to fill the baskets. And, I guess I grew up in that spirit. I still love to send baskets too but I send them, so. And my mother was very helpful in everything that had to be done in this respect. In fact, my father used to say, "If you want something from Mother, she will give you her last shirt." And it, it was true, so.

Q: Did you have a particular religious upbringing, religious education, also?

A: Yeah. My mother was very religious. She was Catholic. She was very religious in the way that she thought you have to, you have a certain amount of obligation and you have to help wherever her, you can. That was mostly her religion. The rest of her family, there was one aunt who went to church almost daily and my father didn't think very much in religious terms. He always said that religion is the crutch of the poor and the church tries to keep them in bondage. That was his feeling so as you can see my, for some time, I went to parochial school because apparently it was then already, also better than the public schooling. It was not too good an experience for me, and I dropped out.

Q: What was your father's attitude toward Jews?

A: I don't know, he never had any. For us, in our house, my father had a friend who was a priest. They came and they came together and they argued for hours. And my father used to say, "And where was God when, on the, on the, in the war when the people were lying on the ground moaning and dying by the hundreds? Where was God then?" That's what people ask now about the Holocaust, too, right? He had the same attitude. We had, we had Jewish friends. I had a very, very good Jewish friend. She died last year in California. We, we kept very close all the time. Whether somebody was as he always said, "Whether somebody's green, blue or red, it doesn't matter, as

long as they are good.” And this was his attitude. And for religious reason, he didn’t really, I don’t think he had any feelings for or against any kind of religion. He just didn’t believe into the doctrines of the religions. [talkover]

Q: Did you, do you remember from your childhood seeing any type of anti-Semitism or any type of discrimination? Were you aware of, of that in Vienna at that time?

A: Discrimination, really only against me. My father, we, I was once detained, wrongly in the afternoon and my parents were very concerned that I didn’t come home, even then you didn’t know what happened. If your child is supposed to be home at one thirty, and at three or four o’clock, it’s not at home, you wonder. So my father came to school and I recall that the, the priest had kept me and a few other girls in school for a very funny incidence. He asked what was Christ when he was for 40 days in the, in the desert and there was no food and that was at this time, the time of the people who were called “hunger artists”. I don’t think you know what that means here. There were people who were going on a hunger strike for so and so long in order to, to show, to prove something. And when, when the priest asked what was Christ, one of the girls said, “A hunger artist.” And then he said, “Who said that?” And of course, nobody did say so I was one of the ones who were supposed to have said it and three or four others were there too. And my father came and he told the priest that what he did was wrong because he can keep me at, if he thinks I did something wrong the next day, am I too wordy?

Q: [negative grunt]

A: That he can keep me the next day but not on the day when my parents don’t know about it. And from this day on when the priest came into the class, every morning he said, “_____ go into the corner.” And then I had to stand all, all the whole hour until the hour was over. So this was the discrimination I experienced. Well, then there, of course, the girls or the boys that were not Catholic, they could sit in the rear of the class but I didn’t find that this was discrimination.

Q: When you, when you say not Catholic, were these Protestants or, or Jews?

A: Protestant and Jews. They were, they could sit in the rear of the class and they could read or do anything else. I never felt that this was discrimination. [talkover] I, no, not exactly, but I know that three girls I was close with, they were in my class . . .

Q: Three, there were three Jewish girls.

A: Three Jewish girls. I was pretty close with, I visited them, they visited me. We played together and it was, it was, well a very close relationship. So, of, of course, when the Nazis came, it changed drastically, then. Everything changed and they were resettled. I didn’t have any contact then with the three girls. I was, I did go up because I went then to school in Vienna and I wasn’t in Askersdorf and things had changed quite a lot. And then when the Nazis came, I tried to contact one of the girls but they already, the father was a physician, they already had left but they were not resettled. They had left for, I do not remember, America, anything, anywhere.

Q: When, when did you move to Vienna?

A: I lived in Vienna all the time but it was a suburb and I went then, I moved then into the city, proper, in the first district. When was it? I think in ’37, ’36 or ’37. I worked there. My father wasn’t very happy that I moved there but I, living in the suburb as it is here, in order to go from the White House to Silver Spring or to even Beltsville(ph), it takes you an hour and a half because we didn’t have cars at this time. You used public transportation and it worked out well. I had a good job. I, I liked my job and, and I met my husband.

Q: Go back just a bit. In ’34, as I understand it, Dolfus had banned all political parties including the Socialists. What effect did that have on your father, on your family life and on your perception?

A: I don't think it had very much effect. My father did anyhow what he wanted to do. He always did. Like almost all men do, right? And, well, Dolfus, he had a party of people and he had many people around him who were thought kind of ridiculous people, die Hamenschwenzler?

A: Yah. They, they ridiculous.

A: Hmmm?

A: They were ridiculous _____ Poland.

A: Yeah, they, they were, they wore hats with a, a cock feather on their hats or they were called according to the cock feather and were made ridiculous, this is about all I know.

Q: But he wasn't persecuted any way.

A: No, no, no, no. He was not persecuted. Whatever he did, he got away with it. He was, even when I was arrested when he went, no, no, out.

Q: We can get into that . . .

A: Yeah.

Q: That time later.

A: Right.

Q: Did you have any knowledge of the, did, did you have much political awareness, what was going on in Germany?

A: No. No, no, I did, unfortunately I didn't have very much political awareness. See I went to school and I worked and it really took up all my time. And my mother was sickish and I also took care of her. So whatever time there was, I didn't have time for politics. I was interested in it, but I could never take an active part. I took an active part in politics only after Hitler came to Vienna. Then I started to become much more aware of what was going on and I, because many of my friends were affected by it. And, and I, I tried to fight it.

Q: Tell me about what you were studying in school [talkover] and what you were doing for work after?

A: Oh I worked, first of all I, I went to the Institute, Lehrerbildungsanstalt, I don't know now . . .

A: Teacher college.

A: It's a teacher's college, okay, and while I, in my free time, I worked in the Jewish kindergarten which I enjoyed immensely. I, I never knew that I would love children that much but it was a delightful job. I even thought sometime that I would write about the sayings of the children and their behavior. I never did of course, that was just a dream. And then after I had my degree I started, I tried to start to work in a public kindergarten but it was absolutely impossible because as I applied for the job, the interviewer told me, "Well, I tell you, we do take two people a year. We hire two people a year. We have hundred and three applications so you figure out how long it will take before you are being hired." So my, my aspects of being a being a public kindergarten teacher went all the way down. Then I just tried to get all kinds of jobs and it was '33, the time when it was very, very hard to get jobs. It was in America the same. There was the big crash on the, on the Börse, on the stock market and in Europe it was the same. Jobs were very scarce. So finally I did get, I worked as a secretary in a, in a factory, no, no, in an office that imported wood from Yugoslavia. Then I worked for sometimes in an office that imported from Germany, dryers, commercial dryers and what else did I do? And then I, one of my father's acquaintances lost his wife and he needed somebody to take care of his books and help him in his praxis. I took that job and this is when I met him while I was there and I, I stayed in this job until I was arrested.

Q: Let's go back to your working with children. You were working with, in this kindergarten immediately after you got out of school?

A: No, no, no, while I was studying. I was working two or three [talkover] three days, yah.

Q: As an intern.

A: Studying to be a teacher in Vienna is quite different. I do not know whether this like that here but I remember that we had to work for three months in an institute for the blind. Three months in an institute for the deaf¹ and three months we worked in an institute or institution for the retarded. And I remember that this was the hardest part of my studying, so. And whatever I had on free time, I worked in the kindergarten, partly as part of my training, partly also because I liked it.

Q: What did you like about it? You said you were surprised by how much you liked it.

A: Yes.

Q: What was that experience?

A: Well, I always liked children but I never knew how much you can do to help them grow up and to help them to develop their abilities to see the world, to learn how to talk. I remember that I tried to teach them English, English songs and one of the first one was pitter patter pit pat, listen to the rain. You know that? No, you don't know an English children's song?

Q: You want to sing it?

A: No, it was, pitter patter pit pat, listen to the rain, falling in the garden, running down the pane. A big song and the, another one that we, that I tried to teach them was the teensy weensy spider [talkover] you know that, went up the water spout. And those very tiny little things and the kids were just delightful. I remember that once we went out to the park and one of the little boys says, "Will you please excuse me but the fire engine has to make pee-pee." [talkover] So those, all those things made me to get so much closer to the children, to understand them so much more. You learn a lot from books but you do not learn what you can learn from a personal contact. Their warmth, their love and later on I often thought how many made it. That was the hard part because I am sure that many of them and their parents perished.

Q: And this, these, this kindergarten was a Jewish kindergarten specifically?

A: Yes, it was, it was run by a Jewish organization but I do not remember anymore by what organization.

Q: How did you end up in a Jewish kindergarten?

A: This was arranged from, this, from the college. The college sent people out to this, and to this, and to this kindergarten and I happened to get this one. _____ sit, you'll fall down. [talkover]

Q: Did you have, you mentioned that you had, you had many Jewish friends and that you had Jewish friends in your family and your father had Jewish acquaintances and yet there, there was a growing perhaps sense of anti-Semitism especially after Hitler came in. Did you, did you have friends who weren't Jewish, who were, who were questioning your teaching Jewish children and enjoying them so much or did you experience any sort of derisive comments for doing that sort of work?

A: No, no, I, I did not. I don't remember, I didn't have very many, no Jewish friends and so I had one or two and I don't think that they ever questioned anything. It was more, we were young people and it was more, you do what you think is right and I do what I do think is right. I only knew one young man who was an SS man later. He helped me get somebody out of concentration camp so he was in the way, he helped also partly to get Bill's family safe. Those, this is my only known Jewish acquaintance Bekarntsdaft, Bekarntentkreis(ph) who had anything to do with my activities.

Q: How did it happen that you had mostly Jewish friends? Wasn't that unusual?

A: No, because the school I went to was mostly Jewish. So, as I told you we, I had a friend all my life, she only died last year (1995) in California. We visited her often. We supported her financially and she died last year. We were very close to the very end, I'm now very close, no, close with her,

with her daughter and even the grandchildren send me invitation to their bar-mitzvah, bas-mitzvah and so on.

Q: What was this school, what was, was this your college? What was. . .

A: A teacher's college. The Vienna teacher's college. And like most of the colleges, no I shouldn't say most. But in all the colleges there was a large percentage of Jewish people and large, and it was more Jewish than anywhere else because Vienna had the large Jewish population.

Q: Now . . .

A: I, I also worked with Jews a lot. It, somehow, I, I can't tell you how it happened but my feelings were kind of, well, not biased in any way. A person was a person and that's it. That's what my father's teaching was.

Q: Did you consider yourself unusual? Were you aware?

A: No, no. I was always just a very ordinary person.

Q: You must have been very surprised when the, during the Anschluss . . .

A: Yeah.

Q: When the Germans were . . .

A: That was a very, very major blow for me first of all because I was worried about Bill. We were going to be married in March and in March Hitler came in . . .

Q: March of 1938.

A: 1938. And then Hitler came and the euphoria of the people of Vienna when they were lining the streets greeting Hitler and his entourage. It was, it was just unbelievable. Just thinking of it, I cringe.

Q: Would you describe your meeting with, how you met Dr. Perl and that day?

A: I do not know exactly the date but it was sometimes in June, [talkover], '37. And I had a big argument with my father, as I told you he wasn't happy that I moved out of the house and moved into the city proper and I was sitting in the park, crying and there was a very long row, in the park there was a large row of chairs and you know in Vienna, the chairs were chained one to another so that nobody could take one away. And I was sitting there crying and as Bill says, he walked by several times. And I don't remember that but he says so. And finally he asked me, "Is this chair here free?" The chair next to me. And I just spit at him something like, "Oh you idiot, there are hundreds of chairs, leave me alone." [talkover] So of course he sat next to me and then we talked and he started talking and he started telling me and then we found out that I live in Postgasse 11 and he lived in Postgasse.

[End of side 1 of tape 1]

Q: This is a U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lore Perl. This is tape one, side B and you were describing that you and Dr. Perl found out you were neighbors the day that you met.

A: Right and he, we, he accompanied me to the house and then we made a date for a later date and, and that's how it happened.

Q: What were your first impressions of him?

A: A very brash young man. But he was very likable because, and he was very lively. He told me a lot of things that he had done, about his traveling and so on and so forth and I found him interesting. And then we, we had a date and we wanted to go out. I think I told him, come and, he should come and visit me and then I met him in front of the door and I said, "I have friends upstairs. Come and come upstairs," but he didn't want to do that.

A: What was the point? So she says, "Visit me." _____ people there so I said, "No. Not if there are people there."

A: So then we, we went out a couple of times together and then we thought well, this is something that will go into something more, more earnest and I wanted, well then he said, told me that he would never marry a Jewish girl, a non Jewish girl and whether I would consider converting. And somehow I felt that converting was absolutely not necessary for me because my feelings were anyhow for, against Nazism and for everything that stood in Jewish life. But we broke up anyhow, so, because he didn't want to put any kind of pressure on me and we parted. And then came Christmas and he send me a lilac bush, a white lilac bush as a Christmas gift. It's, in a, it was for long time in the garden of a cousin of mine in, in Vienna. I don't know whether it's still there. He died and so on and a friend of mine when she saw that bush she said, "Eh! That means marriage." And I told her, "You're crazy, we just broke up." She was right. So we got the, I, I called him and I thanked him and we got in touch again and then the, our, the relationship became much closer and we decided we would marry. I would convert and we would marry. And then Hitler came.

Q: Were you aware of what it would mean for you, any personal dangers?

A: I was aware. I was very much aware. And especially my father was aware of it. He was, I think, much more aware because he was politically much more astute than I was. And after we were married, it was very kind of sad affair. My father, his brother, I and he. I think, I don't remember anymore who walked first. We went to the, to the Seitenstädter Temple where Rabbi [talkover] Tageslicht had agreed to marry us.

Q: You were converted?

A: I had converted, yeah. But there was no mikvah anymore so the conversion was not complete but it, I was converted as far as Tageslicht went and he, he took into consideration all the circumstances.

Q: What did you have to do to convert?

A: I, first of all I had to study and I had to tell him a lot about Judaism. I told him my thoughts about Judaism and so on and apparently, whatever we talked and whatever I had learned about, he, he was satisfied when he questioned me. And then, when we got married it was a very short ceremony and we all, I guess, listened, whether the SS is coming. And after, afterwards, we just all left the way we came, one behind the other and he went home and I, I don't think I went with you.

A: No.

A: I only later came to you.

A: Yah.

A: And, well it was, as I said it was a sad affair instead of a happy one.

A: Was illegal from both points, from the Jewish point of view and from the . . .

A: Nazi point of view.

A: Nazi point of view. From the Jewish point of view because she had not really fully completed the conversion. She had completed it according to his saying but she had not fulfilled all the requirement. She hadn't studied enough and there was no mikvah, but Rabbi Tageslicht was a good friend of mine from, I was _____ and he knew her and he felt that she's a very valuable person as he told me. And he said, "If she converts, well you cannot wish for better Jewish children than from her." He was concerned. So he says _____ and from the Nazi point of view it was a major, very major crime.

A: We both would have been killed if they would have found out so it was, as I said it was a rather sad affair.

A: He would have been killed too.

A: And probably he too. But killing for them was a very easy thing so . . .

Q: So you remember being there at the wedding and feeling a sadness [talkover] even at the beginning [talkover].

A: For years, I dreamt that the SS would come and chase us and I would run with him through the different rooms and the different steps up because the old building was, a very old building in Vienna [talkover]

A: Jewish community.

A: Where you, where you had to go this step and here some step and here a few steps and it would go all around and you could run and run and run and I dreamt again and again and again that we two, the two of us run. [talkover]

A: The synagogue was in this building. The Jewish synagogue still is in this building.

A: But it's a new building now. Well, and then, we never lived together. I went to my apartment. He was in his apartment and on the, we married on the 17th of April. And on the 10th of June he left for, after he had been arrested, and freed, he left for England.

Q: Did you consider yourself, were you able to consider yourself Jewish? Did you feel that you were able to really become Jewish or did you feel that that was just a side consequence of your marriage?

A: I did not feel the conversion had made me more Jewish in thinking and acting than I was before. That's the answer to your question. After Bill had left, I did collect food for the people who were sent to the East and I very often worked for Gildermeister. Do you know who Gildermeister was? And I do recall one woman and a, her son and until today, I sometimes talk about it that I couldn't, I do not know whether they got out because I was arrested before I could know whether they did really succeed in getting out. And until today I think of the little boy who was delightful and he had a charming mother. And I sometimes wonder if I would have said that I adopt that child. Nobody knew that I was Jewish. If I would have adopted that child maybe I could have made sure that he's alive.

A: You will never have adopted a Jewish child.

A: At this time . . .

A: No.

A: Maybe it wouldn't have been possible, I don't know. But I feel, for one reason or another I always feel guilty that I let those two down.

Q: Will you try to describe or reconstruct your growing political awareness?

A: It started to become more political, not only feelings after I had met Bill. He told me about the plight of the people in Poland and he told me about Palestine. And that was, Palestine was something that was not in my thinking at all. It was too far away. But through him I became aware of so many things and I recall the first time when he told me that he had collected some betterim(ph) from Poland and they would go illegally to Israel and he showed me and introduced me to them. It was always very clandestine. It always had to be very secretly so that I wouldn't be caught with any one of them. And then he asked me whether I would consider keeping his, we were not married then, keeping his, the passports of the people. And I remember that I kept all the 16 passports and I was a very, very big secret agent. I put them into a leather chair here in the rear and I thought that would be absolutely safe. But fortunately nobody looked for them and nobody came and asked so it was safe. That was the first time when I really was involved in saving some people's lives. I, I knew about it but I, I only knew intellectually but now I had met the people and it was quite different. And from then on as I was aware of his and became more and more aware of his activities I, I was, let's say caught.

Q: It sounds like you and Dr. Perl were in many ways very, very different. He had a different level of political awareness than you certainly.

A: Yes.

Q: What was the bond or the attraction? Can you, do you think you can describe or characterize it?

A: I think that I was, I was drawn to him. As I told you before it was his spirit and it was his mentality that drew me to him and then when I realized that he was going out, out of his way and forgetting about himself and helping other people even to the, to the maybe end that he's would be killed, it, it formed a bond. And if I think about it now, it might also be that it reminded me of my father. I never thought about it, it just occurred to me now. So you are now my therapist. But it, it might be that because my father was always so concerned with the underdog that this was another attraction.

Q: How did your father feel about Dr. Perl? Did, what was . . .

A: He didn't have very many feelings except that he said, "You'll get into problems and you, you don't know what you are heading for." But he would never say don't do it or don't do that, never. He just said, "He will be working and he will have to work and at times he will have to forget about you and wherever you will be. If you are together, you will be an albatross about his neck and if you are not together, you will have to worry and worry and worry." And this is how it was.

Q: Did your friends know of the marriage?

A: Nobody except my father, his brother and the two of us.

A: Nobody _____ the whole time.

A: So. People did _____ suspect. People did suspect my closeness because I always kept alone. I didn't go out and I didn't go and see anybody. It was seven years, right? So.

Q: When Dr. Perl went to London, when he left Vienna for London . . .

A: Yes.

Q: Soon after you were married . . .

A: Married.

Q: Was there a possibility of, of you going? Did you want to go, just the idea of escaping, getting out of Austria?

A: I could have probably gone because I could travel very freely but it, at this time it was for many reason not possible. My mother was very sick and I, I just didn't want to abandon her. And then as my father always pointed out again and again, "You'll be an albatross about his neck. Don't go. He will have so much to do, so much to worry. He has to worry about his safety and the safety of the people whom he tries to, to get into Palestine. If you would go, it would not be a good thing." I realized that and I didn't go. And then when Bill was in America he sent an affidavit for my parents and for me but the war had broken out and it was not, and my mother had died and very shortly after my mother died, my father died. Fortunately in a way because then when I was arrested I didn't have to worry about anybody but myself. I knew he was halfway safe. I knew he was in America.

Q: Meaning Dr. Perl.

A: Right. And my father and my mother didn't live anymore so I was on my own.

Q: Soon in, after the war broke out were you aware _____ being as they said in quotes resettled in the East. Did you have any idea what that meant to be resettled?

A: No, I did not know in the beginning but after I saw that they took sick and old people to resettle, I am a very gullible person. I hoped against my better knowledge because I went to the resettlement centers with food that I had collected from a very good friend of mine. She had a delicatessen store and whatever she could, she gave me. And whatever I could get from other people and food, there were already rations then. But whatever anybody could give, I brought it down to the settlement

station. So I believed first that it is resettlement but when I saw the misery, the illness and everything I knew that, because Hitler at this time had already ordered the, the killing of the mentally ill in Vienna. So I knew that this was not resettlement. I mean knew in quotation mark. I, I, I felt that it was not resettlement.

Q: You were aware of the killing of the mentally ill?

A: Yes. I was aware of this because I had a friend who was a nurse in the hospital for mental, mentally disturbed men but I, and, she had told me that they came in and took the incurable out.

Q: And she knew what this meant?

A: Yes. There was also one special institution, Steinhof, the, the Yard of, of Stones, literary translation. There were only incurable mentally ill and this, within a short time, it was completely emptied and you knew that. I think all Vienna knew it.

Q: When you used to go and bring packages, food packages to the resettlement center, were you, were you, was that a risky thing to do? Were a lot of people doing that? Were you under suspect?

A: I do not know whether a lot of people do it. I do not know whether I was a suspect and I tell you I didn't care. I just went there and I brought it and that was it. There are times when you really don't, I hope you never will be in a situation like that, when you do not really care what happens to you, you just do what you think you have to do. And this is, I knew I could not help everybody there, that there is, but I knew I could give one or the other people hope. That was, that was all I could do. I, I, if I would have been able to bring wagons full of food it might have helped one segment of settlement but with my little things that I brought, it, it, it was just a little bit of hope and maybe also not only hope but seeing that somebody cares that helped a little bit. That was all.

Q: Can we go back to the Anschluss once again and that period immediately after . . .

A: Yes.

Q: And you had that shocking realization of the welcome of . . .

A: Right.

Q: Of the German army. Would you describe your, your awareness of anti-Semitism was, did, how did that grow?

A: I knew then because as I told you I had very many Jewish friends and right after the Anschluss when the SS started rounding up Jews, that was for me, let's say a very hard awakening. I knew about anti-Semitism and I knew what it meant but I didn't realize that it would go to that extreme. That, for instance, I had many friends, one cut his wrist, died in the bathtub. Another one jumped off the window from the fourth floor and another one shot himself. So all this, you can't help but being more aware of what's going on. Then you saw the people in the street, how the SS made old Jews with long beards wash the sidewalk, how women had to scrub the sidewalk, ahh. It was a horror.

Q: Did any members of your family or acquaintances of yours join the Nazi Party?

A: Only the one I told you about, that was the only one. I think, wasn't Mundle(ph) also a member?

A: _____.

A: I had a cousin who joined the Nazi Party but I do not know what he did. He was not active. He just had, was a member. Some, in some organizations you had to become a member in order to keep your job. Maybe he did that. He was much too complacent a person to be active in anything and I know something. I, I just remember something now. We had a Jewish butcher and this cousin went to him and told him that if he need some help, whatever he can do, he would do. So.

Q: So there seemed to be a real, did you have the impression that there was a real sort of split personality going on among the Austrian people? Or did you, do you think that you just weren't immediately acquainted with the people who were really rabid anti-Semites?

A: No, I was not acquainted with anybody who was, who was real an anti-Semite. I, if I tried very hard to remember, no, no. Some people were saying, oh well, the Jews, the, the women flaunted their jewels, their jewelry and so on and people got very jealous and, but I don't think they were aware that those were anti-Semitic feelings or anti-Semitic statements.

Q: So do you think that the majority of the Viennese people were perhaps, apathetic toward . . .

A: Yes, yes. But, but when it then came to looting, I should say it, it's ugly to say but I feel that the Austrians are very, very big opportunists. Every single one of them and when it came to looting then, the Jewish homes and the Jewish stores, they were all for it. All. I had a cousin who's, once, when the Nuremburg Laws came out and when the laws came out that you, that non Jews shouldn't buy at Jewish stores, she said, "Hell with them." And went to her store where she always bought and for the whole day she sat in a window, in a display window with a sign in front of her that said, this Jewish, this Christian swine buys in the Jewish store. It rhymes in German. This is, _____. She sat for the whole day there in the window. That's, many people saw, but many people didn't have the courage to do it.

Q: When, when the Nuremburg race laws were imposed in Austria, how, how did that make you feel? You were . . .

A: Well, I knew about it from the beginning. For me it wasn't anything new and I wasn't going to marry a Jew anymore. Right? So it really didn't affect me. But I know, I know for instance an acquaintance of mine went to, to the prison where I was also because he had a Jewish girlfriend and I, I visited him in the prison not knowing that a short time later I would be in there too. So.

Q: So you, did you, would you say that, you described that when you, when you were married that there was a sad feeling . . .

A: Yes.

Q: And perhaps a feeling of danger. Did you continue to feel that or did you feel . . .

A: No, I, I felt very, in a way I felt euphoric. Now we did it, hell with them. And, and the other side I said, "We don't know what's in store for us. But now we are together."

Q: So you didn't feel that somehow you . . .

A: An, an oppressive mood. No, no, no. I felt, for him, for my husband, I was always trying to get him out of the country as quickly as he could because I knew he was in danger. Before we were married, we once walked very close to where I lived and with a friend of his and three Nazis . . .

A: That was before the Nazis came to power.

A: Three Nazis came towards us and this Jewish friend of ours had a very heavy Polish accent and when those three came they mimicked our Jewish friend. They were so tall that Bill had to practically jump and hit one into the face. I was paralyzed with fear, what will they do? They didn't do anything. They just walked on this way and we walked on that way in the opposite direction but I think my heart stopped beating. So I knew that he would do things like that. I knew him and I always tried to push, go, go, go. Until he went. And his going, no, it didn't take seven years because I came visiting him in Yugoslavia for two days, three days on his birthday the next year. I went on the train. [talkover] Right. In September '38 it was?

A: Yah.

Q: 'Kay. I went down to Yugoslavia and I met him there in the hotel and we, we tried to forget everything bad even as we knew that the Gestapo was very close by, watching us. It didn't matter. He had then dealings with the Greek Underground for ships that he rented in order to bring illegal immigrants to Palestine and the three days went by very, very fast.

Q: This is September of '38.

A: September, '38. His birthday is the 21st of September. So I came down, I think it was a Saturday or Sunday and I stayed Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Then I went back to Vienna.

Q: Were you aware of all that Dr. Perl was doing?

A: Yes. I was aware. [talkover] Yes. I did, in some way even try to help. I do not know whether I was much help but I tried anyhow.

Q: In what way?

A: With his office. He had the office and I went very often there to, to see what is going on and what the, the girls, he had a, a number of secretaries what they were doing. 'Kay?

Q: So you were just checking in on them?

A: Yes and if there, when I thought that there was something to be done that could be done that they didn't think of I told them get in touch with this person, get in touch with this person, and so on and so on.

Q: Let's pause.

End of Tape 1.

Tape 2

Q: This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Lore Perl. It's November 13th, 1996 and this is Arwen Donahue, Scott Miller is also an interviewer and this is tape number two, side A. And Mrs. Perl, tell us a little bit more about your visit with Dr. Perl, how, [talkover]

A: Now the first, he came, first of all I had smuggled money out to cousins of his which I gave them in, in Fume and then I went to his hotel. I, I think he wasn't even there and when he returned and he found me he was quite happy. And then we went out and we came into a demonstration that was very, very scary for me. The, the people were shouting Hitler, Duce of, Hitler and, and Mussolini.

A: _____

A: Yah. And Hitler and the Duce should go down.

A: The Duce.

A: The Duce, the Mussolini, they should go down [talkover] and, and he brought, no pulled me into a doorway and we there we were standing. I, you cannot imagine the, though the street was filled with people, one next to the other, it was really a horrible feeling. And after the whole thing was calmed down, we went into the hotel and we, we tried to forget what had been and what we had been through and we just were happy to be together. And then we went out for dinner and it must have been a long dinner because I do not recall how long it took. We took home a carriage.

A: I had been drinking. I, that's one of the three times I have been high. I wasn't drunk in my life but I was high and she always tells me how in the carriage I was singing at the top of my voice.

A: Yes, he was really singing at the top of his voice. When we came to the hotel I tried to shush him. And I think I probably succeeded because it was already very late, so, this, this was our honeymoon. And the next day I had to leave.

Q: Did you, it sounds as if you both may have had really a feeling of, of hopefulness for the future.

A: I tell you, I always thought if Willie promised me to get the moon, he will get it. And well, so.

Q: It's okay.

A: At this time I knew that he would not stay in Europe, that he would go to America and he will make it. I, I had so, I can't talk, can't talk. There might have been dangerous times, I knew that also but I knew that he would make it. I knew it. As I always told when I came home, when the war was over and I came home from concentration camp, I always told everybody Willie will be here in May. Well he was, he was here on the 22nd of June. So every, every soothsayer can make a, a three week error, right? That's it and he was there. So I, I really knew whatever will happen it will end well. And I think he is an eternal optimist, he, anyhow, for him there's nothing that can be bad. Everything will turn out well and it did. So.

Q: Back in Vienna, it was September of '38 . . .

A: Right.

Q: Do you remember Kristallnacht and the events?

A: Oh sure, sure. I remember that very well. His aunt Liesel whom I loved very much, no Valerie. .

A: Valerie, yah.

A: Valerie called me and said, "Can you help?" And I said, "I, I really don't know what to, you couldn't come here because you are two." She had a friend. And the friend was a very, a person whom you could see because he was very tall, very heavy, very big so you would not be able to miss him, you cannot hide him.

A: He was very Jewish looking.

A: Yeah, you couldn't hide him. So I told her, "I'll come to you and we'll see what we can do." So, and when I was there, we developed a plan that the best thing would probably be to take a taxi and drive around. And this is what we did. The whole night we drove around in the taxi. I sat next to the chauffeur and the two of them sat in the rear. And, we were driving and we saw everything and the guy, we told the guy just drive here and there and we drove into neighborhoods where we knew that there were very few Jews so that it wasn't too obviously. But the guy was very good a driver. He drove us and drove us and in the morning when it, when the sky got gray he drove us back to the house and the two were safe. By the way, her two sons were saved too. They had come with the first transport to Israel.

A: Too risky for _____. Risky for a few days before the so-called Kristallnacht which is a misnomer, the Germans give it the name Kristallnacht because the crystal, the broken crystals cover the streets and this is a, _____. Kristallnacht makes, takes away of the horror. _____ Kristallnacht is the night of the national German pogrom. That's how I call it. And you, I think you should, she should _____ tell you of some of the things which she saw during _____.

A: No, no. This doesn't help, I'm sure you have heard this a hundred times. How the mob went and broke into houses, into, into stores, how they carried as I told you when it came to plundering, they were all not anti-Semitic but they were on the bandwagon. They carried furniture and everything around and they, it, it was, it was horrible. You saw the flames leaping up. No, I can't talk about it, really.

Q: Were any of your friends hurt?

A: I, I do not remember that. I don't remember any more. This is, I told you that I'm very good in repressing and this is one of the things that I have completely blocked out. Even you as a psychiatrist or, or a pseudo-psychologist wouldn't be able to get it out.

Q: And then in September 1939 of course, is the beginning of, of the war.

A: Right, right.

Q: The, Germany invades Poland.

A: Right.

Q: What were your feelings then as a . . .

A: That, that's very odd. I remember that I wanted to go swimming and a cousin of mine came and, and she said, she shouted at the window, "War has broken out!" So we, I'm not going swimming. That, that was the _____ side of the war breaking out. No, but I knew and I hoped it would be the end. But of course I hoped wrongly. I hoped that with the break, the breaking out of the war, that America would get into the war right away and it would be an end. And then the Russians came and the Russians said now Germany, kaput, then America, kaput. That was their motto. So.

Q: What activities were you involved in? What did you do in Vienna in the early years of the war until your arrest?

A: I was working and I was arrested at the place that I told you that imported from Germany dryers, from there I was arrested. I worked there as a secretary and the guy was a very good Nazi and I remember that there was a, a lady working there. She had one son and that one son was killed in the war. And I remember that she put an ad into the newspaper, was proud, so I announce the dead of my son. Those were the people I worked with but it didn't affect me in any way. I was Miss Rollig and that was it. And when I was arrested I know that he right away ran to the Gestapo to find out what I had done. I had never heard from him again, of course not.

Q: What reports were you getting from Poland by 1941, 1942? The, the final solution was underway.

A: Well, you know that we could not listen to foreign radios. Foreign radios, there were trucks going up and down the streets which checked who is listening to foreign broadcasts. We did it anyhow but the broadcasts were scarce and they really did, at least for me, they did not tell me too much. I knew that when the Germans went in that there would be massacres. I knew that. But I knew only through my feeling, I didn't really, it was not certified.

A: _____.

A: And no it wasn't also information it was just my feeling that they would do horrible things. Then I, I was arrested. My arrest came about, I had a very good friend and she came to me and she told me, she had married one of the richest men in Vienna. His name was Tappish Rockshine(ph). Shine was his name and the Rock because he had the largest Oriental rock stores in Vienna. And she married him in the hope that with his money, they might come to America. Well one day she came to me and she told me, "We have received notice that we have to go to the resettlement point." And the resettlement point was there, there and she said, "I know he will go, I won't go. Can you help me?" Said, "Sure, stay here." So she stayed with me and my father had just died and I, I was very down and I wanted to go on vacation and I went to relatives in Silesia to, for two weeks to recuperate. And in order to not make it obvious that, that she is alone in the apartment, I ask a cousin of mine to stay in the apartment with her. So when light is on, the water is running, that people do not say hey, who's there, this apartment isn't empty, she isn't there. And while I was gone, she did something very stupid. She went to her lawyer. And when she came to her lawyer, the Gestapo was there because he had a Jewish wife. So when she came, they said, "Eh, come on in," and so on. And I do not know what they did to her but she told them that she had been hiding and the Gestapo came from my cousin and, and told, and she told him then the Gestapo that I am away and when I will be back. And when I came back, she told me, "You have visitors." So I thought that maybe that SS man of whom I told you that he was so nice, that he had sent them. But they, he hadn't sent them. They just interviewed me and they took me to the Gestapo headquarter and there they were telling me all kinds of things and threatening me, me with all kinds of things and telling me what a threat I am to the, to the German spirit with my doing what I am doing. And then they let me go again. [talkover] Don't, don't, yah, I said to them, "Listen I, I have, I didn't know that she was Jewish. I have been friend with her for a long time and she came that she had a fight with her husband and she wanted to stay away from him for a while." So the, I don't whether they believed it but they let me go. But don't do it, don't do it again. And then, I went home and I stayed at home for some time when I got the letter from this friend, Valerie, that she is in, in a very bad situation. She needs food and she needs clothes. Would I please send it to her. Of course I made the package and I send it to her. And this is when the Gestapo came and arrested me.

Q: Where was Valerie at the time? Where was the package sent?

A: To Poland. To some place in Poland, I do not recall anymore to where at, but it was the end, I never heard from her again, and, and I was brought to the Gestapo and from the Gestapo I was brought to Rossaeur Lände(ph), that was the prison where I told you before that I visited a friend of ours who had an affair with a Jewish girl who was there imprisoned. This is where I went first.

Q: So you were arrested, not because you were Jewish, married to a Jew.

A: No, because I helped Jews. Oh I can show you . . .

A: The arrest . . .

A: The arrest report. I, I can get it. I have an arrest report that says that I was arrested for behavior that's not worth a, a Gentile woman and that I do sacrifice the, the, the, for the person it would be health, I do not know what [talkover] it is. Endangered the, the security of the German people. So that, that was my arrest report. I think he's going to find it. And I was for three weeks in Vienna at

the Rossauer Lände Prison and then I was brought to Ravensbrück. The trip to Ravensbrück lasted weeks because they, we were in a train and they used the train for troop movement so whenever we were somewhere in the way, they put us aside so that the, the troops can move. We, I was in a little cell that was meant for two people. We were five in there. Three had to stand, two could sit. And it would always change.

Q: Was this in the jail, in . . .

A: No, that was in the, in the train that was used for transporting prisoners. And then we stopped at every little place where they had prisons that they could put us in. We stopped I know in Sanpurltin(ph) and then in, there was one prison that had just been built that was a very clean one. We were very happy to be there even if we were in a one-man cell, five or six people. It was clean. We also stopped at the Pankrus(ph) that's the big prison in Prague. That was a horrible experience. We had to stand there with our back to the wall and our hands stretch out that, try to do that for an hour. And try to do that for five and six hours and you will see how hard it is. Then finally when I got into a cell, there were Yugoslav partisans in, there was such a stench, you cannot imagine. It was a stench of, of, of flesh being, being eaten up by illness. And those partisans had been beaten badly on the soles of their feet and on their backs. Their backs were raw. There was no bandage, no nothing. I remember that I tore up chemise . . .

A: Cloth?

Q: Huh?

A: A rag, a cloth.

A: No, no.

Q: Shirt.

A: No, an undershirt [talkover]. And I tore it up to strips in order to help one of the women to cover her back. There was no salve, no medicine, no nothing and the groaning and the moaning I have still in my ears. From there we went then on Wieherachen, there was another big place and some other prisons which I do not remember into Berlin. Berlin Alexanderplatz. This was the, the big prison in, in Berlin. While we were there, bombs were falling. Bedbugs were one of the first things. You could hear them when they came down and fell on you. And the stench, unbelievable. And while we were there, the bombs were falling and people were praying. Some were crying and I always told them, "Don't worry, we'll get out of this." We did get out of it. We came to Ravensbrück and until today, I do not know how we get from Berlin to Ravensbrück. I know we got there because I was there but I couldn't tell you how. I only know when we arrived in Ravensbrück we were had to stand in formation, two holes deep. And all the time in the prison and on the trip from the prison to Ravensbrück I, I always had the feeling it's not I that's happening to, somebody else, and I was outside just watching what was happening. When we came to Ravensbrück I learned, I had to wake up. While we were standing there, there were two witnesses of Jehovah coming and they had a big basket in between them. They were walking on the street the so-called Lagerstrasse and a big truck was coming. And the truck would, was going so close that the mirror that a side mirror that he had, hit one of the women. The women fell and the rear wheel went over her. All the people who were standing there in formation searched for what. But the overseers right away did sick the dogs at us. And this was the moment when I awoke and knew, I can't dream anymore. That's I, that's not somebody else. So sometimes I think that that woman died so that I can live, okay. _____ Now while I was in Vienna there was a girl there who told, who had come in from Ravensbrück for an interview of, at the Gestapo. And she had told me when you come to Ravensbrück I'm sure that's where you're going, ask for so and so. She will be able to help you. She is a very tiny dark-haired girl and she has, she is in the, in the receiving line

for all the people who come in. And she'll help you. And this is what I did and the girl told me, "I'll come visit you in the block in the evening," and this is, this is what she did. I stayed at the receiving block who was run by a Viennese prostitute. Everybody went into this block first. And we stayed there, we, there were the bunks. And every bunk was supposed to hold one person. There, in every bunk were at least three. Two this way and one this way. And in the morning when I woke up I noticed that my cloths were missing and I couldn't go for to a _____ in clothes without shoes so I, I called and the block, the Blockalteste, the leader, this prostitute she came and she said to me, "You are Viennese?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Wait." And a few moments later she came with other, with other clothes, not with my own so I was saved for the moment. And for the while, I think for about three or four days we stayed in this block which was horrible because there was really everybody in there. And then we were separated and I went into block number one, the older, not old but some political prisoners were. Rosel Jochman who became a member of Parliament in Austria after the war, she was there. Helena Popptetts(ph) who became also some kind of big wig in the Austrian government after the war, she was there. And I was there and oh I didn't tell you one story. When I came in Vienna into the prison, I had to wait out in the hallway for the little while and for, for the few hours, a little while. And then a door was opened and I was pushed into a room. The room was, you couldn't make out anything, it was so full of steam, of smell. Everything was kind of hazy and out of this haze somebody came towards me and said, "Don't cry, it isn't so bad." And this was a former teacher of mine. Muti Tiechman was her name. She also had helped Jews and this was, was, was the reason why she was arrested. And when I came to Ravensbruck, she already was in Ravensbruck, also into, also in this number one block. And there we, we kept up very much contact. I was her former pupil, she was my former teacher and somehow a bond was formed. After the war, she adopted Saul whom you met now as her grandson. And she came to visit us in America twice. When we went to Europe we always visited her. Then she died. Now. The number one block, is that all? No.

Q: You mentioned that most of the people in the number one block were political prisoners.

A: Yes.

Q: Were they mostly Viennese?

A: No, no, no. There were some Viennese but there were of course a number of Germans. The Germans, the young German girls mostly were arrested for distributing Communist pamphlets into the population or printing them or they were Communists. They were the real Communists. And one person was there

[End of side 1 of tape 2]

Q: This is tape two, side B of an interview with Lore Perl. And before we flipped the tape you were talking about Ravensbruck and your block and I wondered also if you could say something about your, what happened upon arrival. Were you, were you given a uniform or a badge of some sort?

A: No, first of all, I do not remember our arrival. I just know that we went then into a building. We went through a line where this young lady was I told you about who was supposed to help me and I talked to her and they took all our belongings away and then we went on and we came into a room where we had to undress and where we got Lager clothes. And, and then we were again assembled and then we went out and went to this block to, no, in the beginning we all went to the block that was the receiving block where everyone of us had to go. In our group that arrived there were French nuns, Polish youngsters from, the SS had closed up or emptied the whole, the Lyzeum. I think you can say Lyzeum in English too. Lycee? No, I don't know. And they were all there and all, the baby's crying, and all of them were of course stand frightened, bewildered. That was all that you could be. Then you were thrown into this mass of people in the, in the receiving block where

everybody was there. From criminals to political prisoners. They all were and all, the women were all unwashed, dirty. The clothes that we received was not the cleanest either and, and it was miserable.

Q: You mentioned seeing the two women who were Jehovah's Witnesses . . .

A: Witnesses.

Q: How, how could you tell that they were?

A: Oh, they had, everyone in the camp had a different, the triangle on the sleeve and the purple triangle was the Witnesses of Jehovah. And those two women had those triangles.

Q: So at the time you, you didn't know that they were . . .

A: No, I didn't. I only learned later what they were. I recognized the, the triangle and the color of it but I did not know. Maybe somebody told me also. I couldn't tell you.

Q: Do you remember, were you given a number?

A: Sure. Right when you entered you were given a number and you were supposed to sew the number on your sleeve. I had some 80,000 and some, 18 thousand and something, I do not know how much it was. I don't remember anymore. I just know the 18 thousand. My baby's asleep.

Q: What color badge were you given?

A: Red. Red. All the political prisoners had red badges. The so-called, the Jews had yellow, yellow triangles and the people who were, they were the, some of them had black triangles, those were like the, our block and the, and the receiving block the one who was a prostitute or also the, I, I think that's all.

Q: Was there segregation between the different classes of prisoners? Or did you have . . .

A: Sure. Sure. Sure, we would not have associated with criminals, right? The criminals also had black and I think that the political prisoners did keep a lot together. By the way, in the same block that I was was also Jan McGlock(ph). Jan McGlock(ph) was the sister of LaGuardia the mayor of New York. When the camp was liberated, Eisenhower wanted to bring her over on a special quota but of course LaGuardia was very much against it. He wanted her to come the regular way. She was there with her daughter and her grandson. For a long time they had been in the bunker because the SS didn't want them to be in, in the population, in the camp population, but finally all three of them were released.

Q: You had quite a, a group of people in your block, it sounds like . . .

A: Yes.

Q: You mentioned several people who really . . .

A: Yes.

Q: Became prominent later on.

A: Right, right. And I think that amount of Germans, there were also people who became prominent later. But I, as they were not Austrians and not from Vienna, I didn't keep track of them. But the people in our block were really special, altogether special people, not that I claim to be a special people but the others were, most of them were.

Q: Did you know at the time that LaGuardia's sister was there? Did you know that she was the . . .

A: When, after she came . . .

Q: Sister of the mayor of New York?

A: Yah, after she came out of the bunker and came into our block, she of course told us. And you know that she was the one we practiced English with? If there was a word, I remember she brought me a book that I should read, the first book in English in the camp was Men Against Death. Do you know? I'm sure you don't. It's about Sammelvise(ph), the guy who found out in Hungary that so many women died, died in childbirth because the doctors didn't wash hands. That was the first, she,

and there were of course words that I didn't understand in spite of the fact that my English was, let's say, pretty good for European school English. But there were certain words that I didn't get and then she would be the one who, to tell me what it means. So, I did _____ something for my education in Ravensbruck.

Q: Did you . . .

Q: Were Jewish prisoners in a, in any way . . .

A: Separate.

Q: Separate, were they in any way singled out in terms of harsh treatment?

A: No, no. Harsh treatment was really for everybody the same. It was just the kind of work that you could get that would remove some of the harshness of the life. See for instance, I worked in the library and I worked in the book binding. For me, life as such wasn't that harsh because I didn't have to go out in the morning and pull the . . .

A: Steamroller.

A: The steamroller. Women used to every day go out and pull the steamroller and I had, later on I made a friend whom I got away from there because somehow prisoners did have some influence on what could happen to prisoners and I got her away. Her name was Annemarie Thiele. She came then to America as a cousin of ours. We sent her an affidavit.

A: She was not Jewish.

A: But she was in camp because she had an affair with a Jewish man. And she wore the black and yellow star, so. We sent her then an affidavit to come to America. She was a cousin of mine.

Q: Did you witness other brutality?

A: Yes, but, but I do not want to talk about it. It's, it's too, too, it's too harmful for me and it wouldn't do any, and it wouldn't do anything. I have here still a big dent where a SS woman kicked me. I have this where an SS woman slashed against me and when I made like that, she stabbed my hand and you see the finger?

Q: She stabbed it.

A: Yes, she was angry at me because I wasn't fast enough with something or I didn't understand what she meant, so she grabbed a scalpel and she went like that to me and I made of course like that and, did you see it? So, I knew that there were experiments going on because when you went on the street that ran between the barracks, the two rows of barracks, you could hear the moaning and the groaning. And, so you knew what, what happening. Some . . .

Q: Medical experiments?

A: Yes. Medical experiments and some of the prisoners, some, there was one block where they kept the prisoners who had gone over the edge. And it was really terrible. It was so bad that after I had my first son, in, within a very short time, he, he found out if he cried in a certain way, he could have anything he wanted, because it did remind me so much of Ravensbruck that I just wanted him to be quiet and not cry. In this way, he found out very early. Children do.

A: You couldn't drive through the tunnel in New York.

A: Oh yeah, a long, late, when I was in New York, for a long time when we went through the Lincoln Tunnel, I felt sick. I felt like throwing up, die, I always told him, "Please, let's not," told my husband, "Please, let's not go through the tunnel anymore." And then we talked and we talked, and after all he's a psychologist. And one day he said, "Let's go and look what's what." And it was a very slow traffic and I really looked and you know what's really amazing, at the bottom end, pardon me, and at the top of the tunnel of the tiles, were black stripes. I do not remember now anymore whether they were double stripes or single stripes. I knew that was in the shower room in Ravensbruck. From then I could go through the tunnel without any problem. We had found out

what caused the problem. So. When I already was in America I could for instance, not eat steak. The smell of seared flesh just made me sick. Courtesy of Ravensbruck.

Q: What was the first job that you had there? What was your first work detail?

A: My first work detail was in the SS library. Working with the SS like for instance in the library, in the book binding and so on, we, we, _____ were mostly political prisoners and we had all one advantage. We could take a shower once a week because the SS was afraid that they might get lice too if we get lice, right? So they, they tried to keep us clean. And I remember that the shower was something that was very, very important for us, because it separated you more or less from the dirtiness of the camp. Because the camp was not paved. Everything was dust. And then you were standing for hours and hours at attention whether it was cold or hot. It didn't do very much to your image.

A: Roll call in the morning.

A: Yeah.

Q: Every morning would you go for roll call?

A: Very early in the morning. We got up, I don't remember the time anymore but it was very early. It was either five, four or five o'clock. And we had about so and so many minutes to get ready and have our breakfast, then we had to stand at attention, at the apell(ph) as it was called. And then we were standing there as long as the SS did feel it was good for us. And then a bell rang and we could go to work.

Q: Did you, were, was it cold?

A: Sure it was cold. We didn't have any clothes. We had very thin prisoner's clothes. And you didn't have, you hardly had any underwear. Later on when I was a little bit familiar with the camp, I went to some of the Witnesses of Jehovah who were in charge of all the clothing that had come in and they stole for me for my bundle, underwear so that I could have underwear. You, you had some very flimsy stuff. You, you must know from, from the museum and so on, you know how thin the clothes was that you had and sometimes when it got very cold, we got a jacket which didn't very much against the cold either. And up there it can get very cold. The wind is extremely cold and if somebody, for instance, out of fatigue or not feeling well, if somebody fainted, that was fatal because he was just trampled, or she was just trampled to death. Not that somebody picked her up and brought her to the doctor, to the hospital, she was just trampled to death. That's if somebody felt sick, we always tried to lean one against the other to hold her up. Sometimes it failed.

Q: How was your health?

A: Pretty good until one day I had a, a very odd episode. I reached for something and when I reached I, I collapsed. I got all blue and I don't know, until today I don't know why. I just collapsed and they brought me then to the so-called Revier. Revier is infirmary. And there the, there was a Czech heart specialist, a prisoner and she looked at me and she said, "That's the camp." And I remember, I thought, I thought it's my heart because I'm all blue so they didn't have any medicine. I just was lying there for some time and she ordered some rest. I went to the hospital and I stayed in the hospital a few days and then I went out again. That was all. So. And with this here I got bandaged and they couldn't do anything because they didn't have suture material.

Q: With the wound on your hand.

A: Yeah, so it just grew the way it is and when I came to America, the friend of ours said, "Have it done, you can have this all fixed." But then I had a baby, I had a new life, a new, a new house and really a new husband because we hadn't lived together for too long a time. I didn't want to be in a cast for six months. This is what, no, six weeks. That's what they said. I didn't want it. So I still, until now, I don't play piano, I don't play guitar anymore, so . . .

A: You can't type.

A: I cannot type because I hit another type. Now it comes in handy because I don't have to work the computer. So, see? There's always some _____ silver lining, even if you don't know it.

Q: How many, how, what were your hours of work each day?

A: Of, I believe from seven 'til twelve but this, I'm not absolutely sure. Billy, you're banging.

Q: Twelve . . .

A: From, twelve noon. And then we had an hour for lunch and then again of, until five, until six. I, I really don't remember. But in the evening we could sit together after dinner, when after work we had dinner, the food was brought in very, very big . . .

A: Pockets(ph).

A: No, kettles, a kettle with handles on the side. They were almost as big as we and they carried it, I remember that we sometimes four, two on each side tried to hold onto the handle and drag it. And every block got one of those things and this is the way we were being fed. In the morning we got something that was called coffee. It was some kind of a brown water and a piece of bread. And at lunch we got some soup. It was again water with a little bit of something swimming in it. And in the evening sometimes it was rice with milk, also very watery. Well, when I came out, I had, I weighed 90 pounds. So you know I weigh now 127. So I, I looked like that.

Q: Did you have any supplemental food at all?

A: Oh yes. Yes. I was very, very fortunate. I tell you all my life long I was always fortunate. When I came to camp I had the, the name of a woman who helped me to get into a good block. When I was in camp such, I had the support of Muti Teichman and the support of Rosel Jochman and Helen and so on. And I had really a lot of support and from the outside as I had sent packages to other people, now other people send packages to me. It wasn't much, because there was rationing going on but it was always a big joy. For everybody around. Even if you got only a bite, it was already, well I mean it was life.

Q: You would share the packages that you received?

A: Of course, of course. So would other people. The only people who did not share anything were the Polish girls. They didn't give.

A: Jewish people were gentle.

A: This I don't know. But the Polish girl, Poland still had a lot of food and they really got food but they rather let it spoil than share it with somebody who was not Polish. This is something I, until today, I do not understand. We worked with one Polish girl, she worked with me in the library and I could never understand how they could do this.

Q: What about your work in the library, what did you do there?

A: Just play in library and work, I, I gave books out, I note, marked it and I got the books returned and if books were late I sent out a reminder, that was all. Was not a very hard job. And in the, in the, in book binding, it was interesting, I really learned book binding. So if you have a book to bind, don't bring it to me.

Q: Who was checking out books at the library? Who was the library for?

A: The SS people. That was the SS library.

Q: What sorts of books did the library have?

A: I don't remember. I didn't read a single one. I would assume, and just an assumption that this were all political books. They wouldn't have novels or anything of that kind. My assumption. So.

Q: But the prisoners were not allowed to check out any books.

A: No, no, we did not, the prisoners did not have a library. So there, this would have been too much of a privilege.

Q: Were, who were the other people working in the library, were they all political prisoners?

A: Yes, yes. One of them was this one Polish girl. She was very beautiful, a blonde, a little bit dumpy, Jewish girl and she stayed dumpy because she got a lot of food from the outside. I do not remember anybody else. I think Helena Pottetts(ph) came sometime, as kind of an overseer, checking whether everything is okay. But not for us, for them. 'Kay?

Q: And then, was the work in the book bindery a separate job where you transferred?

A: Sure, sure. Book binding was together a, it was a separate job and the overseer of book binding was also a Fursorgerin and he help out.

A: _____

A: She was leading the social work program of the camp. That was all in one and she was a miserable, miserable thing. Very tiny, very dried up with the, pardon me, with the hair around in, in, braids around her head, on the top of her head. And she told us that she was in love with a Jewish man and he jilted her and she's very happy that she didn't marry him. So you know what kind of a person she was. She wrote, if people inquired how prisoners are, is, how is so and so and how is so and so. I remember answering one letter for her. I sometimes did typing there and I answered one letter, writing to the parents of a girl who was there. She is okay, she's very busy and she's too lazy to write, but I'll make her write. That's what I typed. The, that girl was dying of TB, so.

Q: Did you, did you know the girl personally?

A: After I had sent the letter I wanted to tell her your parents inquired. In fact I went to her, she was dying. But, she was a very young kid, maybe 18 maybe 19. So.

Q: Did you have any contact with the outside world? For example did you have any contact with Dr. Perl at all?

A: Oh yeah, I had a, I had a telegram going through Red Cross. And one day I had a, a call that I have to come to the Kommandant to his office and when I came, he asked me, "Who is Mr. Lindpeutner?" And I said, "Mr. Lindpeutner is a cousin of mine." "How come you have contact with America?" "Well, he's in love with me and he wants to marry me." That's what the telegram said. So he said, "Oh, and is he a Jew?" I said, "No, how can Lindpeutner be a Jew? Right?" So he let me go and I knew that Willie knew where I was because the, I'm sure the Red Cross did tell him. I had occasionally a letter from a friend of mine and that was about it. I could write once, I think once a month, I do not remember.

Q: You mentioned that people were sending you food packages occasionally.

A: Right, right.

Q: Who was it that was sending them?

A: There was one couple that, whose daughter I had tutored to get through school and they were always very fond of me and while I was in Vienna in prison still, they said they would help. And he went with the Postal Service to Romania and to Hungary and so on. And he got at those other countries, food. That was really all that counted. And they were one, that was one couple that send me food. Then I had another friend, her husband was a painter and they were absolutely apolitical. I, if I ever saw a person as apolitical as those two were, they were very much concerned with holistic medicine and, and, and all kinds of things . . .

A: _____ psychology.

A: And not, they were not interested in life per say. So they also, she was a very lively person and she also, she went to this friend of mine who used to give me food for the transports. She went to her and she got there food for me. So that's how I, those were the two people who send packages.

Q: And did those showers that you were allowed to take every week prevent you from getting lice at all?

A: Yeah, sure, because you see when you are able to change your clothes, lice don't grow and if you're not too, in too close contacts, I mean a louse doesn't grow on your body, you have to get one from somebody else, right?

Q: So no one in that block one had lice.

A: Right, right. We were very, as I told you I was, through all that tragedy, I was always very fortunate. For instance, when I was released, why was I released? I had an uncle who worked in the Foreign Ministry and he was what you see in there, the grouch. The picture. That, that was he, pardon me. He was one, he never became a Party member, never. Being in the Foreign Ministry and not being a Party member, they were all scared of him because whatever it was, he found a hair in every soup. And when he heard that I was arrested, he went to the Gestapo and he bothered the Gestapo day in, day out, saying, "I will . . ."

A: I'm lying comfortably _____.

A: "I will, I will take her into my house and I'm sure she won't do anything anymore against the government." I was called and I was told that he will vouch for me but I should live in his house. I was very stupid and very stubborn because I didn't like him. I said, "Why should I go to him? I have my own apartment, right?" Well I was released anyhow, much earlier than was expected. And after I came home, I didn't even find the heart to tell him thank you. Because I really thought that not he but his son-in-law who happened to be an SS man that he was the one who got me out. I do not, I do not recall anymore how my release went. I know that I was called in the morning

End of Tape 2.

Tape 3

Q: This is tape number three, side A of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lore Perl. This is Arwen Donahue and Scott Miller is also with me doing this interview and it's November 13th, 1996. Go ahead.

A: I told you when I was released how it went but I still remember I got kind of a ticket for the train. I got a few marks and I got the bundle that I had brought to the camp. And then I do not know how I went to the train, how I got to the train. In any case, before I left one of the girls whispered to me, "If you are stuck in Berlin, call this and this number. They will help you." So when I came to Berlin, it was nighttime and there was no place for me to go and I didn't know really what to do. I was at the station, there was no train the same night anymore. An air raid was on. I went to the shelter and when I sought my release from camp they said for people like you we don't have a space in the shelter. [talkover]

A: _____ an i.d.

A: Right. When I stood and while the bombs were falling around the station I stood in kind of _____ hoping that nothing will happen. But all the time I was sure nothing will happen. I hadn't lived through camp and through all of this and now I should be killed by a Allied bomb, no. That was just simply impossible for me. And then I went to a telephone and I called the number that the girl had told me and the people told me, "Go and this and this railroad and we'll pick you up." And they really did. And I stayed there overnight and I had the first meal. That was another thing that could have landed me right back again, right? I did it anyhow. So next day I went to the station and I got the train and of course the trains were constantly checked by SS and when an SS man came and saw my release from Ravensbruck he just looked at me and disgustedly gave it back to me. Fine with me. And then I arrived in Vienna. I do not remember anymore the how and when and what. I just went to my apartment and there lo and behold in my apartment was an aunt and a cousin of mine because they had been bumped out and they had moved into my apartment with all their furniture. So, the, everything was just stuck full and the second floor, two rooms were filled with furniture from top to bottom. Now, if I wanted one thing or I did not want one thing to live with women after I had been forced to live with so many women for so long a time. So I moved up into the furniture. Into the furniture rooms and left them down there.

Q: I just wanted to backtrack a bit and ask you how long all told, you were in Ravensbruck.

A: About a year and a half, about, so.

Q: And when you, on the day that you were allowed to leave when you were hauled to the Commandant's office, what were you thinking? Were you scared?

A: Yeah, sure, because you never know. You really never knew what will happen. It was the second time within a short time. The first time when his telegram came . . .

A: What was in the telegram, I don't remember the telegram?

A: Just longing to be united in marriage with you. That was it. Hans Lindpeutner

Q: Had you agreed on that name before?

A: Yes, yes, because we had correspondent. We did write to one another via the friend in Switzerland. He wrote to him, the friend put the letter into an envelope, send it to me and I did the same. So I knew, I knew who Hans Lindpeutner was.

A: _____

Q: I don't remember that.

A: I remember.

Q: Were any of your colleagues in the block one on transports out of Ravensbruck or was the population pretty stable while you were there?

A: Stable, pretty stable. There were occasionally one or two new ones came in but usually it was, I can say only while I was there because after I was gone, I heard Rudy's mother . . .

A: Yeah.

A: She, people were sent out into ammunition factories to work and so on and they were mostly killed. But those were also people from block one.

Q: What were your thoughts about the future? Did you still feel hopeful during that time?

A: I tell you one thing, after I came home, I was euphoric. Then when the bombs fell all around, I hoped one would hit. Then later on, I would question, why am I alive? Why are all the others dead? Why? And it was very hard, so, the future, I knew really would come. I always told my, as I told you before, always told my aunt, he'll be here in May and she would say, "Ha!" When May was over, she said, "He still didn't come." [talkover]

A: When I came to pick her up she was all packed. _____ packed, ready to leave.

A: There wasn't very much to be packed because while I was gone and the Russians came near, my, the cousin who had moved into the house, she had taken all the clothes that was mine. She had put it into suitcases and send it to, into the Burgenland [talkover] It's a province of Austria. And to, to a, a farm, a wine growers farm that was, that belonged to the people whose daughter I tutored and who sent packages. She sent all the suitcases there, hoping that when I come back that I have something left. Well what happened was, the Russians came via this village, they opened the suitcases and everything that was wearable they took out and the evening gowns and the afternoon gowns, this _____ way, I still have one afternoon gown.

A: I remember that you had your trunk ready.

A: Yes, but the trunk was ready with, with bedding and with linen [talkover] and so on. And I, I still have [talkover] comforters, comforters. So? I still have comforters from Vienna. You won't believe it? It is so.

Q: May I ask why you had such a strong feeling of not liking your uncle that you would have preferred staying in Ravensbruck to going and living with him?

A: He was a miserable _____. He was just a miserable person.

A: He's very stubborn. _____ you wouldn't expect it. He's very stubborn. _____ and that's it. And nothing will change.

A: No, he was, he was just miserable. I, listen, my aunt loved a dog. He knew that she loved the dog so he killed the dog. Is that miserable? I, I just, I just did, there are very few people whom I do not like but I disliked him with a passion.

A: When I asked her once why she did it, she told me, "In everything, _____ I went in the concentration camp, I tried to keep my dignity. It would have been undignified if I agree to stay with this man."

A: I really disliked him so utterly, I would have given up everything I stood for, so.

Q: But they let you go anyway.

A: They let me go anyhow.

Q: Do you have any idea why?

A: No. Because I was lucky. I told you, I was in all my life always very lucky, very fortunate. The house where I lived 56 bombs fell, all around. The last bomb hit across the street and destroyed the house here. All the windows were blown out . . .

A: Of your house, where you lived.

A: Yeah, the roof was gone but a flowerpot stood on the window intact. No? Isn't that a good sign? And then Willie came. Yeah, I started as, as I told you before I love children and everything was disorganized, the Russians came closer and there were no schools or nothing so I collected all the

children in the neighborhood and went to a place that used to be before, the kindergarten. And I, I taught them and I spoke to them and we played. I had them there. And one day I got a phone call that a, the, the wife of a friend of his called. Her father had died and I should provide a casket else he would go into a mass grave. People always came to me if they needed something. So I, I knew a carpenter so I went to the carpenter but not right away. I went down the hill in order to go the carpenter. When I went down the hill I saw a jeep passing me, a jeep held in front of the house. And a man got out and I said, "Those damned Russians," only Russians were in Vienna at that time. And Muti Teichman's son said, "Uh-uh, those are a British or Americans, Lore, those are not Russians [talkover]." I said, "British or Americans, that's Willie." And I started running. It was Willie, see.

A: You were _____, how we met in the operation action _____ in detail, how I got her out. I still have this passport, _____ provided for the Russian who let me in.

Q: But . . .

A: And then you know, yeah?

Q: Oh, before we go, I, I think it's, it would be very interesting to hear how you got out of Vienna but I wondered how you came back to Vienna. You had nothing, you were coming back to a place that had really been destroyed. How did you manage and on top of managing organize these children?

A: Well, there are certain things, you cannot say I will do this. You see there are children on the street, there you see that the children are scared. You see that the children need some kind of direction that there is nobody here so you just say come, come with me and we will play together. It worked. Somehow I was also able always to get a piece of candy or a cookie or something. It helped.

Q: How did you get food for yourself?

A: That's a good question. I remember that the cousin who lived in my apartment did give all my records, I had a record collection, to an SS man and she got a big shopping bag full of sugar. That was one way. So you bought it. I went with Muti Teichman into the countryside to get some flour and some butter or whatever it was. We bartered clothes, whatever we had and survive.

A: And you went to this, to the SS _____.

A: No, no, no, no, no. That was not SS. The, there was, I don't know, we should turn it off. You ask me what we lived from. Very, very frugal but one day when, after the SS had left and the Russians came close, we went to the pig farm and everybody was there, trying to get a pig and everybody who never had slaughtered a pig slaughtered the pigs. So a, this neighbor of ours who send me packages to, to the camp, he also had gone up there and he brought home a pig and he slaughtered it. And of, from the meat and the fat that we got from that pig, we lived a long time. Besides this, there were bread that was rationed. Every now and then, you could get, if you stood in line very early in the morning, you could get bread and it wasn't very much but you had your ration and it help for the, for week maybe, if you really were very careful. So we, we lived very frugal. Maybe you cannot even call it living. But we survived.

Q: Do you remember when the Russians entered Vienna?

A: Oh sure. Day and night we heard this, I do not know how it's called in, in Vienna it was called the Russian Organ(ph).

A: The Italian(ph) Organ(ph).

A: No, the Russian organ(ph), the _____.

A: _____

A: And it was going constantly, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. And this came closer and closer and we had SS in our house and they were duck in the garden and what the bombs didn't destroy, they destroyed with their shooting. And one night, you heard only [sound of footsteps], the SS had run. Oh they first came to us into the basement whether we would like to go and with them. And I remember I said, "If I die, I don't want to die on the roadside, I die rather here." And then in the morning all was quiet and the Russians came down the street. And there was a delegation of people who were very happy that the Russians came. One of them was Helena Pottsett's(ph) father. And he greeted the Russians with open arms and the Russians were very happy to see them and they took everything they had off them. The rings, the watches, everything. So Helena Pottsett's(ph) father was then no Communist anymore. And we had next to the house a little park and this is where some of them settled down. And I remember that, the saying, now Germany kaput. Then Amerika kaputt. Fortunately, they were not right. Germany was kaput but they couldn't get America kaput. And well, the rest I told you. How I came to Willie and how I had everything packed, the story about how we met in front of the door you have in, in the book to read and . . .

Q: Did you tell anyone after the war had ended that you were married?

A: Sure. We could. Now nobody could arrest us anymore, right? So . . .

Q: Did anyone suspect it? Did anyone react?

A: No, no. No, they just thought he's my boyfriend. In fact it was so much that he's my boyfriend that my cousin had, what she ever had left in jewelry, she gave, gave to me and said, "Here, in case Willie should change his mind and leave you." So.

A: The Russians didn't behave well.

A: No, the Russians behaved very poorly but they were an occupying force. Those were the, the front troops. I guess you cannot expect anybody else, why should the Russians behave better than anybody else, right?

A: They raped the women by the dozens, by the hundreds . . .

A: Yeah, we, my cousin who lived in the apartment together now with me, she and I we slept for two weeks in the hospital for mentally ill that I told you a, a friend of ours was the head nurse. We slept there on benches because the Russians would . . .

A: _____

A: Yah.

Q: At this point in, in 1945, did you, had you realized what had happened to the Jews of Europe as a whole? Had you, at what point did you realize the full story?

A: I tell you, while I was in camp, we were pretty much isolated. We didn't know very much. When I came out, it was more or less a question of day to day surviving. I do not think that then I did realize what happened. Only when Willie came. Then, and we talked.

Q: And he told you?

A: And he told me, then did I realize what had happened.

A: _____ a little piece of margarine?

A: Now, once a week I got in Ravensbruck a little piece of margarine. Now I knew he was in America and I knew American women are beautiful. I didn't have any skin cream so what do you do with the margarine? You put it on your face so in order not to get wrinkles. Today I laugh about it but it really wasn't a laughing matter. So. Now I have told you all my secrets. When Willie came then, we, I got into the jeep and we went with the jeep with a Russian soldier that they had given him to accompany him and with a sergeant whom we called Red who by the way was here a few months ago visiting with his wife. And . . .

A: And his name used to be _____ but he changed it now and he's Franklin, _____ in New York, _____ and he for himself wrote for some magazine the story of how we're going to Vienna and my _____ and it is the same with the exception of a few details which I don't remember anymore as mine.

A: So we went back and the trip back was something like going into a fairy tale. The roads were not roads. They had big bump holes and we, we had to go around and around the riverbeds, no bridges there. And towards us came those little Russian wagons with those little Russian horses and on top were women sitting with fantastic head draped into drapes that they had taken, that they had looted and it was such a, a unbelievable, colorful picture that you cannot forget it. And I remember that once we had lost the way and a truck came towards us and the Russian asked the truck, we had lost the way, how to go and the Russian told him. And by the way, he showed him, look, how many watches he had. He had . . .

A: _____ "I have a watch," he told you. " _____ the watch."

A: And that's the, the truck driver said, "Look here." And he had watches up to his elbow.

A: _____ few people in each village had their watch. _____ watch for me. When I left for, to pick up Lore, I _____. _____ couple of watches from the PX. [talkover]

Q: I think we got this on, on your interview. I think we got that information.

A: Yeah. [talkover] _____ he showed this proudly to this Russian truck driver who showed us the way, we always, we got lost and the Russian said, "Look," the whole arm full of watch.

A: So. And then we came to the first American station and Willie was very happy now, I will get a good meal. Couldn't hold it. Not even the coffee and there were, all the toilets were only for men so he chased everybody out, he stood in front and if somebody wanted to go in he said, "Uh-uh. My wife is in there." And they wondered, a wife? But it, it worked. Then we came to, back to the station and he drove me then to Bottnow-hime(ph) where I stayed in the hospital for three or four months. And, and then everything, from then on everything went smooth.

Q: Were you very ill?

A: Yes. I had angina acquired and I was physically all the way down.

Q: And after how long, it wasn't so long afterwards that you became pregnant, was it?

A: Yeah, about from June until March. So, I wanted a child very badly. We had lost so much time, so, it turned out fine. And now he, we have two grandchildren from him, so.

Q: And you knew at this, at this point you were going settle in the United States, you knew you weren't going stay in Europe?

A: No we did not know where. We had a very, very funny decision made. On the way over here [talkover], I was, I was on a bride ship.

A: I had managed to be in control of this or something on this bride ship. _____

A: I, so, we looked at, at a magazine and we saw a Peter, a Peter Arnoo(ph) cartoon. There, there was a woman, one of those women standing on the podium and saying to secretary down there and now you send this resolution to Marshall Tito(ph) so he should know where, what the women of Mamal(ph) think about him.

A: _____

A: So he said, " _____, let's look it up." And you know what, we bought a house in Mamal(ph) when we came back. A Peter Arnoo(ph) cartoon, see? You never know what influences your life. And I remember when I had Rafael(ph), he was a baby, and Willie went out into the country to look for houses and he came and he said, "I found the house that, that I, you will like." Because I always said I want soft ground under my feet. I don't want to live in the city. And I ask

him, "What's, how's the house?" And he says, "It has a beautiful garden." That was all he knew about the house. But we bought the house anyhow.

Q: You . . .

A: It, it had to be a _____.

Q: So you knew you didn't want to stay in Europe to try to rebuild your life?

A: No, no.

A: _____ suburb of New York.

A: No, Europe was completely out for me. I could, I couldn't even, when after years we went back and we picked up our car in Lugano, and drove back with the car towards Austria, close to the Austrian border Solomon had to . . .

A: Rafael(ph).

A: No, Solomon had to go to the bathroom and I threw all the papers that I had on my lap, I threw them out. And when we came to the border, we didn't have a passport, we didn't have car papers, we didn't have anybody. That's how much I hated to go back. I didn't throw it up, out on purpose and I, but I remember then where it must have happened and we found the papers. We went back. They were still lying there. But that's how I felt about Europe.

Q: What had become of most of your Jewish friends from before the war?

A: With some of them, I had still contact. Come when they were in America but most of them, unfortunately were killed. Most of them. One was in, in London, I do not recall anybody else. His family of course, they were all in America but, and this one friend I was really close to, she came also to America and I had contact with her. And that's about it, I do not know anything of anybody who was close to me in Vienna. It's sad but things were so, in such a tumult that from one day to the other, you didn't know what would happen. And you just lost contact and I think with the other people, it was just the same.

Q: Did your feelings about faith, particularly the Jewish faith grow over the war?

A: I tell you something. I always believed in God and God is everywhere so give it any kind of stamp. It's God. And I really believe that God was not only during all that time with us, that God is with us all the time. I really believe that. That, and somehow, sometimes I feel that it's like an, pardon me, like an umbrella above us so that really nothing can hit us and I always tell it to the children. They, so that they should feel the same way. I think that the Jewish religion in, in comparison with the Catholic religion has so much more positive. The Catholic religion has so many restrictions which the Jewish religion doesn't have.

Q: Such as?

A: Such as. You can talk to God, you don't need an, a mediary. You can, you can even scold God if you feel like it, right? You are not forced to do this and this, this. There are certain restrictions in the Jewish religions too and you have to obey certain, certain laws but it's not as harsh as the, as the Catholic religion.

Q: Did you have any struggle in accepting God's, [talkover] God's role perhaps in the, in the existence of the Holocaust _____?

A: Yes, yes, yes. And I, I, I always if something bad happens, I remember my father saying, "Where was God when the soldiers were dying?" Where was God when all this happen in, in, in Auschwitz and everywhere? Where was God? And I have talked to our rabbi about it and he said, "I do not know where he was but it was for the good of the Jewish people." What good can this do to the Jewish people? You learn, can't you learn differently only so misery of others? You have to accept certain things and that's it.

Q: Have you found any answers?

A: I haven't found any answers. If the rabbi doesn't find an answer, we have talked through this many, many evenings, right?

Q: Tape number three [talkover], side B, [talkover] tape number three, side B of an interview with Mrs. Lore Perl.

A: One thing that she always tells me she appreciates in the Jewish religion is that it counts what you do not what you feel. What you believe. You can believe and listen to _____, you feel this but what you do is the final decision.

A: Yes. Now you see, if, I think that both of us and also our children have accepted my conversion. I didn't tell you when I came to America, in order to make it really completely prove and secure I went through another conversion with dipping in the, in the mikvah and cutting the lace and cutting the hair, I did that all over again, so. In order to make it foolproof. That's, that sound all very odd to you?

Q: No.

A: No, okay.

Q: After the war, did you consider at all going to Palestine?

A: Yes. Yes. We both did but there was a price on Bill's head and he couldn't go back to Israel.

Q: Price by who?

A: By the British. The British had put a price on his head.

A: Thousand pounds.

A: Thousand pounds he was worth, see? And there, there was simply no way we could have gone there. We even considered later when Rafael(ph) our older son, was twelve years. He wanted very badly to go to Israel. We were in Israel [talkover].

A: The state of Israel exist . . .

A: Yah.

A: We could have gone by then.

A: Right. And we went there for the first Yom Ha-Atzmaut.

Q: It's really Independence Day.

A: Right. And Rafael(ph) was so enamored with Israel. He begged, "Let's us, let us stay here, let us stay here." And, but Willie had a job here, we had an existence here. In Israel we didn't have anything. So we went back. And now our oldest son married an Israeli and he intends to go back to Israel when he retires. He even bought some property there now.

Q: This is Solomon.

A: Rafael(ph). Say?

A: His children are being brought up in _____?

A: His children.

A: His children are being brought up in _____. _____. Twice a year they go to Israel, early in the, the spring and in, in the fall. And he, when he retires, he's in the federal service, he's going to retire to Israel.

A: So. I do not know whether we did things wrong, whether we did them right. I think we did the best we could, both of us. And that's all you can ask of anybody. [talkover]

A: Jewish is when we came back from Israel, she always tried to persuade me to walk to the synagogue regularly because she had the idea from the Catholic school that you have to go to church every week. And I didn't want to, to the synagogue every day or every week. So she dissatisfied with this.

A: _____.

Q: Is there anything else that you'd like to say?

A: No, that I appreciate that you came. I appreciate it very, very much. It's your time and it's not very pleasant. Mostly not a very pleasant experience to listen to other people's misfortune.

Q: Well we thank you very much.

Q: Thank you very much.

Q: This concludes the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum [talkover] interview with Mrs. Perl.

Conclusion of interview.