United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Hedwig Rose
July 14, 2005
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PREFACE

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HEDWIG ROSE
July 14, 2005

Beginning Tape One

Question: Good morning, Hedy.

Answer: Hi.

Q: It's really lovely to see you after all these years, we met --

A: Right.

Q: -- maybe what? 10 years ago, I think.

A: Right. I think you're right.

Q: So it's -- it's really lovely. Hedy, what was your name -- what is your name now? Tell us your name now.

A: Well, sort of formally and legally, it's -- it's Hedwig C. Rose. On my passport it's Hedwig Cohen Rose. I do have another middle name, it sort of got dropped along the way, which is Hella. So I was Hedwig Hella Cohen, and then became Rose after I was married.

Q: So, at birth you were Hedwig Hella --

A: Right.

Q: Cohen.

A: Right.

Q: Right. And when were you born?

A: February eighth, 1936.

Q: And where?

A: In Amsterdam, in The Netherlands.

Q: Right. Now, I -- I have no idea whether it's possible to do this, but as we're speaking, since you were such a young person, if there's a way for you to distinguish what you really remember --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- as that kid, versus what you were told later, if there's a way of doing that as we speak --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- it would be -- it would be very helpful.

A: I think so. Of course, it's anybody's guess how accurate I am about that.

Q: Right.

A: But it's -- it's certainly true that I am able to at least comment about what I think are later deductions as opposed to early memories, mm-hm. Be glad to do that.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about your family, your -- let's talk first about your father, who has one of those longest names that I've ever heard in my life. Can you give us his full name?

A: Jacque Theobold Alfred Karl Cohen. Did I leave out one? Oh, Frederick --

Q: Jacque Theobold Alfred Karl --

A: I may have left out --

Q: Frederick.

A: Frederick, right, Cohen.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: Where do all these names come from, do you know?

A: I don't know because my paternal grandparents had already died when I was old enough to remember anything as a toddler. So I have no idea where they came from. It may also have been

the fashion at the time to give people more than -- although that's not really true because my uncle who was born in Vienna, only had one name. So maybe it had to do with Sephardic as opposed to Ashkenazic Jews. Maybe it had to do with Holland versus Austria. Maybe it had to do with whatever the background of my father's parents was, which I don't know. I don't know what their occupation was or anything.

Q: Do you remember if he was called Jacque? Was he known by his first name, or --

A: Yes.

Q: He was?

A: He was.

Q: And what did he do?

A: He actually was a baker, but a baker in American parlance has sort of -- sort of a vague meaning, but the kind of baker he was, was one of these European bakers who did all these specialty desserts. And he -- I only recently learned from my sister, my older sister, that he was a baker on the Holland-America line. And apparently before he was married, he -- that's what he did. And at some point, I don't exactly know where in -- in the yearly chronology, he decided he wasn't going to do this any more. And they prevailed on him to do it once more, and do it once more, and I guess he did it, he did -- went one more trip and they said we want you to take one more trip, and I -- I guess he put his foot down and said, I'm not doing it any more. And the -- that voyage, that ship that he said no to apparently was detonated by some torpedo that was left over from World War I. So that whatever it was, fate, whatever, saved him when he decided no, he wasn't going to do this any more. But that's what he did. And he had a bakery in Amsterdam, but I was never there, and we had already moved from there when I was born.

Q: So when you were born, did he have the bakery?

A: I think he still owned the bakery, but he didn't work at it. And I -- I know that he left the house every day, but I'm not really sure where he went.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And the only baking that I was familiar with was what he did on Sunday mornings. It was traditional that he baked a pound cake. And so the house was always filled with this wonderful smell of baked goods, and his pound cake was incomparable.

Q: Really?

A: I have spent my life trying to find one like it, but it is impossible, it seems.

Q: Is that one of your earliest memories --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- of your father, is -- is baking at -- the pound cake?

A: Well actually, the more prevalent and early memory is probably one of -- of him playing games with me. Being left at the dinner or breakfast table with my father is an early memory, because I didn't eat. And they used to say I lived off the air. I just was not a child who ate a lot, and I -- or at all, and so he was the one elected to amuse me and tell me stories. And he would pull out the contents of his pockets and make up stories, and then occasionally try to slide a spoonful of something or other in my mouth. And that -- that's sort of my earliest recollection, it -- it's one of the very early ones.

Q: Huh. You took walks with your father also. Was -- was that after the occupation, or do you remember [indecipherable]

A: I very much remember it before also.

Q: Also.

A: It was sort of our special time of day together, and he would come home from -- as I say from wherever, I don't know from where. And -- and then he and I would go for a walk just the two of us, and we would walk in the neighborhood, around the block or whatever, and it -- it was both before the occupation and for a short time after.

Q: Did he also walk with your sister, or was this very special for you? Do you know?

A: If he walked with my sister I don't know about it, but he may have been one of these wonderful parents who knew how to make each child feel very special and -- and he probably did something with her, or maybe a walk or something else with her. I-I don't know, I actually never asked her. But there was always this little bit of time for us, and it was generally -- I don't remember if it was after or before supper, but it was either very late in the afternoon, or early evening.

Q: And you'd have conversations?

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: And would you tell -- would he ask you what your day was like, was that the -- or was it different?

A: I don't think he asked me what my day was like. My sort of recollection, and as I say here, I'm not really sure this is a recollection or whether I imagined this, that we talked at a child's level about something very present. There wasn't stuff about what did you do, or what are you going to do, but more -- more about do you hear that bird singing, or s-something rooted in the present that a -- a -- rooted in the experience we were having together at that time.

Q: Was his way of behaving with you, it -- as -- from what you can remember, different from other fathers? It doesn't sound like the usual story of a father being so concerned about the kids.

A: I -- if I say this is unusual, it comes from a -- a long backwards and adult perspective and certainly not a child's memory because I had no idea what another father might have been like. But I would say yes. I would say for several reasons. Number one, he was an extremely gentle and patient man, which is the reason he took -- took all the stuff out of his pocket forever and ever and ever, and in fact one of those things sort of backfired, because I knew that among the treasures he had in his pocket was a small pair of scissors. And one time he and I were sitting in the living room of our house, and we had very heavy oak, dark, dark oak furniture, sort of dark, dark -- you know that heavy European furniture. And over the big, big table in the middle of this living room -- w-why this living room had this great big table sort of like -- more like a dining room table, I don't know, but that's the way it was set up. And the table had these heavy crosspieces underneath. And there was a plush tablecloth, if you can imagine, it's more the kind of thing you can imagine over a piano, but it was over the table, and it had long fringes on it, and it was over the table in such a way that the points of the cloth were on the ends and so forth. And it was great place for me, I always had my little hideout there, it was a little -- like a little house, and I asked to borrow the scissors one day, and I climbed under there and I gave the tablecloth a haircut. Not fun at the time. But was he different? I think he was also different because I think my mother was probably an early feminist in many ways, although I don't think she called herself that at the time. She was the working partner in the hou -- in the home at the time that I remember, anyway, and she had, apparently, a very unusual and important job for a woman in some kind of financial activity. Just exactly what it was, I never really knew or understood, and -- so she was out of my circle for much of the day. She was also not the one who was either as patient or as fun loving as I re-remember my father being. Not that my father was necessarily fun

loving, but he was -- h-he smiled readily, as opposed to maybe yelling at me, which is more what I remember from my mother.

Q: Uh-huh. So she was the disciplinarian.

A: Probably, although from my point of view it wasn't -- you know, it was never fair, and it was never --

Q: Right. So who took care of you during the day then, if you -- both of your parents are out -- you don't know what your father's doing, but your mother's certainly working.

A: Right. Well, it wasn't unusual for people of even modest means to have help in those days. I mean, this is now the 30's we're talking. And we did have what was known as a meisje, or a girl, who -- who worked for us, and -- and in fact I remember -- I -- I remember s -- being served, when I was still in my crib, I remember her bringing me breakfast in the crib, and the breakfast consisted of these things called Dutch rusk. I don't know if you know what those are, but it's sort of a light and airy kind of toasty thing of about a half an inch thick. And she always had them drenched in honey. And so she would bring me these things in the crib, and the honey would be all over the place, and I hated it. I just despised it, and everything was st -- then sticky and drippy, and you know, and you can imagine a toddler in the crib, and the honey. So yes, I think she was probably one that took care of us.

Q: So how old do you think you were when you were in the crib? Two, three? Ye -- ye -- I mean, that's a clear memory for you.

A: It's a very clear memory, and since it was a crib, I must have been two or so. Couldn't -- couldn't leave that sticky memory behind.

Q: And your sist -- tell me what your mother -- what -- what was your mother's name?

A: Rosa, Rosa Schwarz.

Q: And was there difference in your parent's age, do you know? Or were they pretty close together?

A: I-I'm not really sure. It's possible that my mother was maybe a year older or so.

Q: I see.

A: Or maybe more. I-I don't really know. I know my mother was a very -- with me was a very late parent -- mother. I mean, there are eight years difference between my sister and me.

Q: Right.

A: And I think that she married rather late, as well, so I'm -- yeah, I'm -- I'm sort of guessing that she was in her 40's when I was born.

Q: Right. Hm. Was pretty late then.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And your sister Betsy was eight years older than you. And do you have a recollection as a kid, of this older sister?

A: Oh yes, very clearly, because I -- in addition to -- to a meisje who was taking care of us, she obviously as the big sister was often put in charge, and I always resented that terribly. And I think my poor sister suffered horribly because of that, because I would probably always giver her a hard time. I guess I was fairly headstrong. I'm not above throwing a temper tantrum and screaming, yelling and crying, and my poor sister had to put up with all that. So -- yeah, and -- and basically, I think my sister and I are -- are -- are somewhat different personalities to begin with. So I don't think that was an easy thing for her, and -- and it wasn't fun for me, you know, and there was -- it created this sister sibling sort of irritation. I because I didn't want to be told that I couldn't do something, and she because I didn't want to do what she said I had to do.

Q: Right, right. What was the house like where you lived? Did you live in an apartment, did you live in a house?

A: No, actually we lived in -- we lived in this very, very -- I guess bourgeois is probably the English equivalent word for it, but in a -- a very, very nice residential area, not too far from the Rijksmuseum, on the Pieter de Hooch Straat. And it was all residential, so there was no commercial activity going on there at all, which makes the presence of what was going on in our house even more puzzling, because my mother worked in the house, in -- in two rooms of our house was this contore or -- or office, as she would call it. And in Holland as you -- well, certainly in Amsterdam, all the houses are built so that they are smack up against each other. And there is no sort of stand alone housing. And it goes all the way around the four sides of a block that way. And what you have is people living on the ground floor, people living on the first floor, and another couple second, and another on the third. And then the house part, what we called ground floor, or caw -- or house, has access to the backyards. And the backyards are all pretty private, all surrounded by wooden fences, both in the middle and on the sides. So you really have a-again, a -- a greater European sense of privacy, while at the same time you can see into those yards from the first, second and third floor, not only of your building, but the one next to you on either side, and the one behind you from the other street. So there's -- yes, there is privacy, and no there isn't privacy in -- in some way. And this house that we had was brick, as most houses were, and there is not the front lawn kind of thing, and there's not the -- the curb lawn and so forth as we know it here, but -- but a city street, really, although it was residential. And we had -- that was unusual too, we had the ground floor, the house part and the first floor. But the first f -- two rooms of the ground floor were this office. But there was nothing on the front door, there was no mark of any kind, or title, or -- or -- or whatever. So I'm still a little bit

at a loss as to what this outfit was, I'm only learning now from my sister who were the name -- what were the names of some of the -- well, I did know one of the names, th-the boss was Mr. Halle. And I know that my mother disappeared in these two rooms for much of the day, but that's about the extent of it.

Q: So sh -- you don't know if she was an accountant, or she was a -- noth -- you have no idea?

A: N-No. My sister might actually know that better.

Q: She might. Uh-huh. But she didn't come out, for the most part, during those --

A: No, she might come out, you know, for -- briefly for a couple of minutes during the day. At least that's my memory.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: You know, I don't know --

Q: Right.

A: -- actually if --

Q: Right.

A: -- if it's accurate. For all I know she spent considerable time outside of it with me, only I don't remember it.

Q: You don't remember it. But you weren't as comfortable with your mother as you were with your father at all, were you?

A: Mm-mm, mm-mm. No, I th -- I think partly because -- I mean later on becoming a working woman myself, I had a little more sympathy for that. Because you may have limited time, you're trying to spend it with your child, the child doesn't understand that urgency of the moment. You want him or her to do x, y and z before you go back to the office, and they're not doing it. It

creates a lot of stress and strain. And I always had the sense somehow that my mother was very nervous, that she was anxious, that she was tense. And I never had that with my father.

Q: With your father.

A: Now, as I say, that may all be -- I mean, the older I got the more appreciation I had of all of the difficulties that these adults were going through, right throughout.

Q: Yeah, right throughout the period. W-Were there kids around in the neighborhood so you had friends?

A: Well, the only child I remember being around was the child next door. And this child lived I -- it was either the second or the third story apartment next door. But because as I explained you can look into these yards, very often I would run into the yard and call up to her and she would come running out to the veranda, and so forth, and then she'd say, oh I will come over, or whatever. And she'd come over and play in our yard because we had the yard and they didn't, they only had the veranda. And -- and of course one of my very earliest hurtful and -- and shocking memories is of me doing exactly that, running out one day, as I did so many days and calling up to her to come out and play and she came to the edge of the veranda and she yelled dirty Jew at me and spat on me from the veranda. And I think it was the first really sort of crushing childhood blow for -- for what that means when someone does that to you. And something that we sort of underestimate always in terms of its impact when we, for example, deal with kids in school and their interactions and the bullying that takes place and the yelling and the -- y-you know, the sticks and stones line doesn't hold.

Q: Right.

A: Words can and do hurt.

Q: That particular scene between you and -- and your friend, was that -- that's after the occupation of 1940, that you remember [indecipherable] happened --

A: The thing that I have trouble with of course, is the chronology here.

Q: Yeah, yeah, sure.

A: I'm not sure.

Q: Cause you would have been four years old. During the occupation you would have been four, right?

A: Yeah, right. So my guess is it was some -- it would have to be after. It would have had to be after, I'm guessing. What I don't remember is exactly when and where this happened in relation to my starting school, which was more of a -- what do you call that, sort of a marker, y -- a time, chronology marker for me. I just have the recollection of that incident, and -- and it's sort of a -- a little bit -- perhaps out of sequence maybe now.

Q: But it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. You started s -- so y-your -- y-you don't have a clear perception of the occupation, beginning of the occupation, or do you?

A: I have a clear recollection of the beginning of this sort of -- what I later understood as a really sort of maniacal way of building up the fear in the population. So the first time that I was aware that there was a major difference going on outside my home was the fact that I had started school, and then I had stopped school. So that was probably the first, although it might have been preceded by taking one of these walks with my dad, and the same wonderful walks that we used to take, and going down the street, I remember the -- there was a school opposite our house. It wasn't the school that I went to, but it was some other school, and again there was no lawn in the front, but they did have these sort of both ornamental and -- and physical heavy iron chains. And I used to love to sit on those and swing on them. But I wasn't doing that with my father, we were

-- we were going out for a walk and going down the block and turning right as we did, and I remember there on the opposite, diagonally opposite side of the street used to be an empty lot. And all of a sudden this particular day we went there, and it was all surrounded in wooden fencing, but not your attractive fencing or whatever, but in these -- it's the stuff that they used to have around baseball -- corner lot baseball thing -- I mean, I don't know -- exactly know how to say it, but you couldn't -- there were these vertical planks next to each other and you couldn't look through them. And so all of a sudden there is no empty lot except for this wooden fencing all around, and all of a sudden there is an opening in the fence, a door and a -- and a Nazi soldier walks out. And he is striding down the street and he comes towards my father and he asks him for a light for his cigarette. And I -- I remember almost as if it was yesterday, that my father, this patient, gentle man, really tensed, and lit the soldier's cigarette. And the soldier very politely said thank you and walked on. And my father swore under his breath. And I could sense this man's behavior was so out of character from how I knew him, that I knew that there was something amiss, but I, again had no -- no -- certainly no knowledge at the time what that meant. And what he said under his breath was Rotmof. Rotmof being the -- mof being the derogatory term used for the Nazis, and the rot meaning rotten. You know, so he was saying basically, rotten Nazi. And I didn't know what Nazi meant, and I couldn't understand why he would be saying this. I -- when I saw this soldier coming out I didn't know s -- I didn't know from soldiers, I really didn't understand anything. If you're asking me what was my childhood memory, I knew he was a soldier, that was --

Q: That was it.

A: -- that was it. And I only knew he was called a Rotmof, because that's what my father said.

Q: Did you know at the time that it was a swearword, or -- or was it --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Y-You did.

A: Well, hard to say, I -- I knew that it was something that was probably not good because he didn't say it out loud. And I knew that it was probably something that I wasn't supposed to copy, because he didn't say it out law -- loud. I don't think -- I don't remember, but I don't think I asked him what he said.

Q: But you re -- but you do remember it.

A: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Q: Is it possible that you felt his anger, possibly even fear, and you were very hesitant to say what --

A: I'm sure.

Q: [indecipherable] felt something.

A: I'm sure I must have felt something, because it wasn't like me not to either question, or to --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- I -- I -- I'm sure I must have absorbed something that was of that nature. It was probably anger at that point, and not fear. I don't remember -- I do remember the anger. And I c -- I sensed that he had suppressed anger. And it was a whole new emotion for me because that was not what he ever displayed.

Q: And you, when you went to school, were y -- are you five years old or six years old at --

A: Six.

Q: Oh, six. There's no ki --

A: Th-There was no public kindergarten, no.

Q: So you were -- it's 1942 when you go to school.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: So you were only able to go for a couple of weeks?

A: Right, right.

Q: And as I understand it, that was really upsetting to you, because you very much wanted to go to school, yes?

A: Yeah. Well, in talking -- in referring back to this tension between my sister and me, I mean here she was not only this big girl who had all this responsibility and this power over me, and she was a schoolgirl and she had time set aside for doing homework and it was very much respected what she did, and -- and actually she was in the -- a student in the gymnasium, which is the Dutch so -- college preparatory, and the heavy duty curriculum of history and geography and algebra and geometry and German and French and English and Greek and Latin. And here she was partaking of these mysterious disciplines and this must have something to do with the fact that she had the responsibility for me. So I thought, well if I can access that also, then she won't have to do this any more, maybe. So I was very excited about starting school. I thought this was just going to be, you know, this was -- this was my way to heaven. And -- and -- and I couldn't wait, I really couldn't wait, I was so excited. And I don't think I really had more than a couple of weeks when I was no longer allowed to go to school.

Q: We have to change the tape now.

End of Tape One

Beginning Tape Two

Q: Hedy, do you have any recollection whether your sister was as unhappy about school stopping? Cause obviously she couldn't go to school either.

A: Right. I don't have any real recollection, but having just visited her, as we are always wont to do, we tend to try to spend some time both reminiscing and sort of corroborating memories. And we've tried to make that a little bit more formal project, but that hasn't worked too well because of our individual lives sort of diverging and so on. But she shared with me, and I actually have it, I haven't had a chance to look at it, a book that was written about what happened at that time, to her school and her schoolmates. And -- and herself for that matter. What -- what happened was that before the stopping of school, what -- what was done was one of these many decrees that was offered. And the decree was that no -- that all the Jewish children had to go to the Jewish school -- to a Jewish school, or a school that was set aside as a Jewish school. Now, why they didn't do that with the elementary school kids, I don't know, and for all I know they did, except perhaps it was too far, or it -- my folks didn't think it was important, I don't know. But for the high school, they did set aside something wa -- which they called the joodse -- I think it was called the joodse lyceum. And so -- so all the Jewish kids were sort of pulled out of their s -- respective schools and told to go to this one school. And then they were tol -- and then were told there wasn't going to be any more school at all for the Jewish kids. And then, what I just learned, which I didn't know, was that apparently many of the teachers continued to try to teach these kids, and that the kids were meeting at respective parent's homes, as many of -- of them as could. And this book that she showed me was a book that was written by her -- one of her teachers from the gymnasium, who came with these kids and -- and taught them. I think I have this correct. And the book is basically not only a story of how this unfolded, and how they moved from

whose home to which home and where it was located, and what happened when a particular student wasn't there, and everyone knew what had happened, which was that that family had been called up and deported. So there was this constant threat that ran through the meetings for however long they were able to -- to -- to carry on, about people disappearing, and the students being quite aware of this, and the teachers being very aware of this. And yet, trying to continue to keep going and to keep going, and then as I say, I have not had a chance to look at this book, but the book has since -- she was also interviewed for that. And one of the appendices in the book has the lists of all the students by the year that they should have been in -- in this school, and basically tells you what, to the best of this man's a-ability, happened to each of these, and -- and how -- how this all just came to pass. And it's -- it's all there documented and the -- and the difficulties of meeting in the homes, and the -- and the effort on people to try to create some sense of normalcy for these kids, who were clearly much, much, much more aware of what was happening than I certainly was. I mean, I had not a clue that she was even doing this at the time.

Q: Right, and she would have, at your -- when you're five, she's what? Thirt --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 - 11 -- 13 - 14.

A: Right.

Q: 13 or 14 years old. So she's much -- she's clearly much older. Do you not have any schooling then? The school stops, there's no tutoring, there's nothing?

A: Nothing. But then again, it wasn't very long until -- until it stopped for everybody.

Q: Yes.

A: For my sister, as well.

Q: Right, right. Now, I -- as I understand it, your father is picked up on a number of occasions and then comes back. Do you have recollections of his being taken?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you in the house and saw it?

A: Yes. I do remember seeing it, I do remember being aware of it. I had, for example a very -- I have still, to this day, very clear memories of not being able to move about without wearing a jacket that had the Jewish star on it. And I can't remember in the order of things when this came, but I do distinctly remember that -- th-that our walks had to stop because we weren't allowed -- after dark we weren't allowed to come out -- s -- go outside. And I do remember him being taken, and I remember the anxiety and the tension. And I do remember him coming back, and this imme -- enormous relief when he came back. And this happened several times, and it's -- again in -- in reflecting about this time, and thinking about it over these many, many years, I'm just struck by another psychological manipulation of the population, you know, th-this constant instilling of some activity that would raise the level of anxiety, certainly among the Jews.

Q: Do you remember learning later where your father went? I-I'm sure they didn't say anything to you when he came back, but do you have any idea where he was taken?

A: I have no idea where he was taken except I remember being told or hearing -- overhearing them say that he was being taken away for questioning. And I have no idea why they took my father, I have no idea what they were questioning him about. I don't know whether my sister knows that, or whether this conceivably was now coinciding with the beginning of the deportation of the eastern European Jews who had fled to Holland in an effort to escape what was going on on the eastern front.

Q: Right.

A: And -- and so many of these people were originally housed at Westerbork and -- cause there was no place to keep them.

Q: Right.

A: And so they, in a sense, were sort of sitting ducks for being the first de -- deportees. And -- and that then later became a kind of holding camp, really. It's possible that they were trying to do this kind of random questioning in order to make sure that the rest of the Jews didn't flee. I mean, Holland being what it is, and where it is, there wasn't really a lot we could do on -- as was the unfortunate fate of those who fled to Holland. It's a tiny country, about the size of New Jersey, I think, flat as a pancake, a lot of it reclaimed land from the sea. You know, you can kind of look -- stand in one place and look to the beach and the shore and so forth. There were no hills and mountain caves or thick forests where people could flee or hide. So you were in a s -- in a sense a captive, you know, with your back against the sea. And I know that all these countries made a desperate ef -- or at least the Jews in those countries made a desperate effort to get across the channel, get across the sea and -- and -- and go someplace else. But unfortunately that didn't work for a lot of people.

Q: D-Do you remember that you didn't have very much food during this -- this is -- I'm -- I'm now asking before your father is actually arrested and you don't see --

A: No, I have no memory of not having enough food at that time.

Q: You don't.

A: No. Of course not -- not being a big eater, I might not have registered that. But I -- I re -- don't have any recollection of not having food at that time.

Q: So you remained not a very good eater, which -- which ended up, I suppose, being fortunate.

A: Perhaps.

Q: In the e --

A: Perhaps.

Q: In the end.

A: Yeah, I think that a -- in fact, I have an early memory -- I have early memories and they probably were beforehand, before occupation -- maybe not -- of going to the market with my mother, but then again, that was one of the things that became forbidden. We couldn't go to the public market, but I remember going at some point in this time with my mother, and I always loved animals, and I always wanted to pet the horses. I mean, the -- the market consisted of all these horse drawn carriages lined up and -- and people peddled their wares from the -- from these carts. And she was always, forever pulling me away from the horses, and I -- that was not where I wanted to be. But I -- I always wanted to talk to the animals and pet the animals and so forth.

Q: Did you have an animal?

A: No.

Q: You didn't. Did you want one in your house?

A: At -- I think at that time I was so young that I didn't know that that might be a possibility.

Q: I see.

A: Also I'm not sure whether -- whether that was frequently the possibility in the city. Certainly would have been very happy to have one, but I don't -- I don't know. My -- my limited world at that time did not make that something I wanted, cause I didn't know it was possible.

Q: Do you remember being bored, or did you -- did you have all sorts of things that you were doing in the course of the day, so not going to school wasn't too bad?

A: You mean, when I could no longer go to school?

Q: Yeah.

A: That time I think was fairly short, between the time that we had to go into hiding, and the time that I was out of school. I -- I think there was a brief period I might have been bored.

Q: Uh-huh, not so --

A: But I don't remember it too well.

Q: Right.

A: I remember a little bit sort of rummaging around the garden and sort of finding things to do. I- I don't remember toys at this time at all, no recollection of -- of things that were mine, I only had recollections of things in the house, or things in the yard. I remember there must not have been good and adequate refrigeration space because my parents kept limburger cheese in the coalhouse in the backyard, you know, the house that contained the coal for the heating and so on. And so it must be that that was because it was cold. Or maybe it was because it was smelly, I don't know. Or both?

Q: Right.

A: So -- and no, I -- actually it must have been refrigeration because I have this vague recollection sometimes of a pitcher of milk --

Q: Being put there.

A: -- also going back there.

Q: Uh-huh. Do you remember any religious observance in your house?

A: None.

Q: None.

A: None. I -- I have actually no recollection of anything that I would tie to -- to a remotely religious thing except that possibly there was a -- a large dinner with a lot of people, and that

might have been a holiday, or a Passover Seder or something, but I didn't register that way in my mind.

Q: Did you know you were Jewish?

A: N-No, I don't think I did. I remember once going to some -- some kind of Sunday school assembly hall or something, and I -- I -- I sort of think that my folks might have been sort of exploring the possibility of having me go there. And I didn't really like it, it was very chaotic, and th -- and there wasn't any fun as far as I could tell. I mean, it was nothing that I remember with any positive or negative feeling, but I remember this sort of one time trip there, and then that was more or less it. There was no -- there was no discuss -- no -- no keeping the Sabbath, n -- as far as I know. No candle lighting, no -- if there was, I don't know it, and I don't remember it. It might have been part of the every day world, and -- but I don't recall it. I had no idea what it meant to be Jewish, none. And wa -- and I think when this child called me a dirty Jew, I --

Q: Cause I was just going to ask you that. Did it mean anything to you?

A: Nothing. It was by the fact that she spat on me, and the manner in which she threw these words at me that I understood it was something negative. But I had no sense of what that meant, none.

Q: Did you ask your father, or your mother? Did you go in the house and say why did she say this? Do you remember?

A: I don't have any recollection of it. It would seem strange that I would not have, because I remember being very upset. It's possible that there was no one around at the moment and I couldn't talk to anyone about it.

Q: Right.

A: It's possible that I was given some answer by somebody but it didn't register.

Q: What registered was what the -- what -- what --

A: What registered was --

Q: What the kid did.

A: Right.

Q: Right. When you have to put on -- when you put on your jacket and it had a Jewish star on it, did this mean anything to you, or was just well, this is what I have to do. Do you remember?

A: It was th -- well, this is what I have to do, and it was also a way in which I began to put pieces of the puzzle together in a way, in the sense that I did realize there was some connection between what the girl said to me -- what this child spat at me, and the word on the jacket. There was a connection and I did realize that there was -- that I basically was now being labeled, that I was, you know, that I was Jew, and that that was -- that that was a way of making sure that everyone else knew I was a Jew. And th-that left a kind of -- what's the word I want? Sort of an unclear, but an -- a -- a -- it left a feeling of understanding what was happening, but not -- there was no understanding of why and how come and who was making us do that. I d -- I just began to sense that there was a connection between what was on the jacket, and what the child had said, and that there was some reason that people needed to be able to recognize me and knew that -- and know that I was a Jew. And why, or how come, or what was it about being a Jew that needed demarcation labeling, I had no idea.

Q: So, when you're given the jacket with the Jew -- you -- it says Jood?

A: Jo -- J-o-o-d.

Q: J-o-o -- yeah -- on it, nobody explains this to you?

A: If they did, I don't remember.

Q: You don't remember.

A: I don't remember.

Q: Do you remember seeing other people wearing it?

A: I remember my -- yes, I think I did, actually. I certainly remember my family wearing it, and I think that the -- there were -- I -- we were not actually living in a Jewish area, in a pronounced, predominantly Jewish area, so I didn't really know about the whole Jewish section of Amsterdam until I was an adult and went back to Amsterdam and -- and actually toured that area and saw the synagogues and was in the Jewish museum and saw the statue commemorating the uprising and the strike and so forth. I -- I knew nothing of that as a child, so that may account in part for why I didn't see more of that. And it wasn't really until I was an adult and I s-studied lots of stuff, including the whole psychological phenomena of -- of labeling and what that means. And -- and I'm sure you're familiar with a very, very powerful piece that was done right after Martin Luther King died, by the teacher in Riceville, Iowa, which "Frontline" featured on PBS, and I have since used with my students a good many times, which is just basically having the children experience what happens when you do -- do label and stigmatize people. Sometimes it's called -- the program is called, "Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes." There's another version of it that also takes this woman into prisons and other areas of -- in -- of human interaction where she tries the same thing with adults, and it works almost more successfully even. And -- and that's called, "The Eye of the Storm." I've forgotten which one comes first, but -- and then she also has another -- she has a reunion with that first class with whom she tries it, and it is incredible how positive the influence on these people this early exercise was, where, you know, she -- she makes the attempt to have the children understand what it's like when you do that to people. And she separates them according to the color of their eyes. And then she says to the children, you know, I understand that -- first she tries it with whatever, blue eyes, and she says, I understand that you

-- I -- I have just learned that -- that blue eyed people are just not as smart as brown eyed people. And then later in the day she says, you know, they're not even as attentive, and they're not as good as -- you know, she goes on and on with this. And then she said, you know what, we should label these people so that we can more easily recognize them, and then we don't have to choose them on the team, and we don't have to play with them, because they're not as smart as we are. And so why don't we put collars on them. And then you see this whole effect of what this labeling does to these third or fourth graders. And -- and i-i-it's -- it's an eye opener. It's shocking.

Q: Do you think that that's -- that happened to you, that -- that having this star on you made you feel inferior, or you -- because you describe it as not really knowing what's going on.

A: I -- not for me, but I was six years old.

Q: Right.

A: Now, when kids are nine, there's a whole different ball game. And when you're an adult it's different, and when you're 14 like my sister, it's altogether different.

Q: Right. [indecipherable] right.

A: And of course the -- the things that you associate with the label also have something to do with it. If you put the collars on and you tell people they're smarter, then you get the reverse effect.

Q: Right.

A: And you do, you do. You tell the kids they're smarter, they behave, th -- I mean that this is -- a lot of educational research is out there. You tell the kids they're smarter, they perform better.

Q: Right.

A: But -- but that was not the intention here by the Nazis, clearly. And actually this is the kind of thing that -- that when I was talking to you earlier about sharing recollections of the war year, the pre-war years with my Dutch friend, who became the professor of religion at Smith, he remembers when this was being -- this was going on in the town where he grew up, I think it was Breda. And he said all of a sudden the kids, his buddies at school took this as formal approval of doing stuff like yelling epithets at people who were wearing the star. I -- I mean, th-they took this as open season, essentially, so that there was a yi -- and he -- he recalled -- I remember this very clearly, he recalled when we were doing our joint recollections, walking home from school with a bunch of his friends, and there was an old man who was wearing the star and was clearly elderly and so forth and so on, and that the boys who the day before had been perfectly polite and passed this man without any events happening at all, started to stone him. Now, you know, here you have this kind of institutional approval because as -- you now say to everybody, we've labeled these people as untermenschen, as dirt, as people that you can do anything you like with. I mean, it's unfortunately a little bit of I think what we did in Vietnam is we socialized the soldiers to be willing to do unheard of, inhuman things. I mean, what these guys did in My Lai didn't come about because someone wanted to have a heyday. So -- so the dehumanizing effect that you can create, that you can program essentially, you can socialize people to participate in, even though their teachings and everything else would have you believe that they wouldn't and shouldn't. And happily there were people who didn't, and who stood up. But then -- then you see then the Nazis come in and they manipulate that, so they arrest the people who were protecting Jews, or they have a shooting in the square to basically call attention to anyone who was trying to live up to his or her Protestant or Catholic teachings, and not do this to their fellow human beings. But it's -- it's -- it makes you think about how incredibly thin the layer of civilization

really is. And when the chips are down, you know, the scapegoating, the stereotyping, the labeling all play one against, another against, but with the other, to -- to create -- I don't know what it is about us that we always have to feel better than somebody, and in order to feel better we have to put someone else down. And that's what they were successfully doing.

Q: Do -- do you remember any other instance before you go into hiding where somebody calls you a dirty Jew, or uses an epithet, or -- or is that the one incident that you recol --

A: No, it's really the one incident that I do remember. I d-don't know whether my sister had more. It's the only incident I remember before the war. The next one that I remember actually came after I came to America and went to elementary school, and I was -- I was always a bit of an activist I guess, and I was anxious to fit in and blend in and do all the things that all the other kids do, and lose my accent and learn to play baseball and all those kinds of things. But I was on the safety patrol, and so I was -- my job was to see that the little kids got on the bus first and weren't trampled by the big kids, and all that stuff on the school bus. And -- and I remember I was in sixth grade by then, and there was a boy who was trying to sneak into line and get on the bus and I yanked him out and said he couldn't do this, or whatever, whatever, he had to let the little kids go first. And he turned around and he called me a dirty Jew. He was a classmate of mine. That was my first experience with it in America.

Q: Did you respond?

A: I don't remember. I don't really remember.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And of course, then you get in -- then you get caught up into something else which is by the time you're 12 years old and you get the message that you don't want to be a squealer and you

don't want to this and that and the other. And I don't think I responded, and I don't think I told anybody. But I don't remember.

Q: Mm-hm. Right. Your father is arrested and doesn't come back. And it's 1942, so you're now six --

A: It's -- n-n-n-no, it's not 1932 --

Q: It's not -- it's not th --

A: -- it's 1942, it's --

Q: 1942, no?

A: W -- did you say?

Q: '42, I thought.

A: F -- '42, yes.

Q: Yes.

A: It's 1942.

Q: Do you remember?

A: I do remember because I remember it so distinctly, and at first I thought that it was maybe in my memory that had been clouded over or colored by the nature of the events. But that was in fact not the case because it's been corroborated that in fact it was twilight. It was early evening, and again that's sort of not a time when you expect people to come to the door. A-Again, I -- I sometimes think about these things much -- much -- I mean way after the fact in the sense that when I first remembered that -- th -- or any of these experiences, I didn't remember them with all of the stuff that I bring to it now, which is to say, lord, just think about the minds that devised all these schemes. So usually by the time you think you're -- you know, you're in the evening, and unless you're expecting company you sort of think you're safe inside your house. Well -- and I

think this was the first time that he was called up by these Gestapo that was in the evening. The -- the other times had all been daylight. So they came in the evening and they knocked on the door, and I remember -- I think I was somewhere not far behind, watching the scene. And they asked for my father very politely, and they said to my mother, "We'll be back for you later." And to this day, I think and think of -- about this, and I keep asking myself, were these soldiers trying to give my mother the high sign? Were they trying to give her an opportunity to do something? Were they ineffective and inefficient Nazis and slipped, and shouldn't have said that? You know, what -- what was going on here in the minds of these guys?

Q: Right.

A: I'll never know.

Q: I'm going to continue asking you about this, but we have to change the tape, unfortunately.

End of Tape Two

Beginning Tape Three

Q: Are -- were you surmising that these were Nazis, or they were Dutch soldiers who came?

A: Oh, definitely not Dutch soldiers.

Q: They were def -- they were definitely --

A: There were no s -- to my knowledge there were no soldiers in Dutch uniform around at this time.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: The -- the capitulization -- capitulization of the Dutch to the Nazis, as I understood it -- and I've only just recently begun to look at this, because for so many years, I felt this was not an area I wanted to study, this was not an area I wanted to look at as a scholar and so forth. Now, I'm beginning to have a little different sense, and -- and actually for a number of reasons. But a -- as I understood it, it was somewhere around this time that -- that the Dutch government basically was a sort of government under the aegis of a Dutch -- a -- no, I think it was a Dutch Nazi general some -- some sort of person like that, named Seyss-Inquart, who was basically put in charge, where the -- whereas the queen -- I guess the queen and the -- and the royalty wasn't exactly the ruling figure anyway, given the Dutch combination of a constitutional monarchy, and so on. But the queen left for England and the prince and princess and their children left for Canada. And -- and actually later on I-I remember hearing some broadcasts of the queen speaking to us from England and so on. But so this -- this -- putting this person in charge again, was -- was one of these pieces that I didn't -- I wasn't aware of at the time. I mean, what does a little kid know about government and how it operates? I didn't know where the rules were coming from that were being asked -- well, were being laid down. I knew that there was something about the fact that we were not any longer having lots of red, white and blue flags out, and orange streamers on

the flag poles, which all represented Holland and the House of Orange. I don't remember seeing Nazi flags either, but I didn't see the Dutch flags. And -- and it was again one of these ways of making things seem like they were normal. So there was a government and it was issuing decrees, and this was a Dutch, presumably -- th-there was a fair amount of collusion among the Dutch. Something that only has come to my knowledge somewhat from the experiences I had, but much more -- more real when I became an adult and read a little bit more, and heard a little bit more, because I'd always grown up thinking, you know, the Dutch were so wonderful, and the Dutch basically saved me, and my sister and my mother. And they did that also to some other Jews. But there was also a lot of collusion going on. The NSB was -- the NSB was known as the party that was in collusion with the Nazis. And it was -- i-it was probably a way in which -- in which all politics and occupation works, and which uncomfortably I'm aware of, the United States does likewise, which is you find your way in to some society by a group of people with whom you associate and with whom you vision a common goal and you infiltrate, basically. And so the -- the amount of collusion there was rather shockingly high, from my perspective. Not one I'm tremendously proud of. Holland, on the other hand, has had a long, historical tradition of religious freedom, going back to William of Orange, and was probably also one of the reasons that the Jews found receptive ground and receptive society, because they fled from so many places of persecution, including Spain. So -- and actually my -- my grandparents, my father's parents came -- now I don't know if they directly or their parents came up from Spain, but then actually that's something that I'm hoping at some point to get back to The Netherlands and do some of that research, because Holland and all other countries besides the U.S. have, of course, this incredible record keeping and documents, archive stuff going back to the Middle Ages, and so I'm hoping to do some of that research myself.

Q: Right. Now, when -- when you remember back to that twilight when your father was taken, y-yi -- do you -- you remember these soldiers as being, or gestap -- we don't know what they are, you don't th -- what th-they are.

A: I think they were Gestapo, yeah.

Q: You think they were Gestapo. They were polite with your father, so they weren't rough with him?

A: They very -- with -- these men, in my recollection were polite, they were soft-spoken, they were not m -- you know th -- a -- I don't remember at that particular time whether there was a heil Hitler associated with the interaction. I don't remember if it was German or Dutch at that time. I do remember at other times that it was German. And I do remember at other times -- a-and this is something now again, I can't swear to. I don't remember now whether I really heard this, or whether my current knowledge fills in the heil Hitler, I don't know, but I am pretty sure that some of those other times when he was arrested, I did hear it. I don't remember it the night that he was arrested this time.

Q: Did he say goodbye to you when he was arrested, do you remember?

A: I don't think so. O-Or if he did it was probably -- again, I don't know if this was because he, as a parent he was trying not to create greater anxiety, or because he really thought he might be coming back again, the way he always had in these past times. But I don't remember it.

Q: But -- so does he leave with anything, or he simply leaves -- he just goes out?

A: He just goes out.

Q: He just goes out. So the door closes, and your mother now makes a very radical decision. And what is that?

A: Well, in retrospect, I don't know how radical it was, but she basically grabbed a bag, and I still remember the looks of the bag, it was sort of a yucky brown, n-no -- not an attractive bag, but some sort of satchel [indecipherable] satchel of some sort of plastic or leather, or something, and throws in a hairbrush, and a toothbrush and -- for each of us, grabs our jackets, takes us by the hand and walks out the door, literally walks out the door and closes the door behind her. And we walked -- a -- a -- and we -- she -- we had to come down steps, it was up a couple steps, and we came down s -- and walked into the street and I remember being aware of the fact that it was curfew, because Jews were not allowed on the street, because there was a curfew. They were not allowed on the trolleys, they were not allowed in the libraries, they were not allowed in the parks. Alla -- aya -- they were not allowed in school. And -- and these decrees, by the way, were not given all at once, they were -- this is why I keep reminding m-myself and others about the mind that was operating to keep upping the ante, to keep this level of normalcy, but just enough fear and enough intrusion into the way of life that it was clear who was in charge. So one decree would be about you can't use the libraries, and you -- so you say to yourself, well, alright, we can get along without the library. Next time it's the park. Well, you know, we'll play in the backyard, we go -- we won't take walks. So it -- always it's also somehow to contain the population you're affecting, by making them adjust all the time. And -- and that adjustment, which is again something that if I -- if I can I may come back to later, but it's -- on the one hand, it's a peculiar characteristic of us humans, that we can adjust to an incredible amount of stuff before we say stop. And in one sense we should have said stop right there, and we should have risen up and we should have said we won't take this. And of course there were efforts at doing that, sporadically here and there. But by and large, the effect of this layering is to keep the people from not boiling the waters, and doing what I think Jewish populations have done since time

immemorial as guests in new societies, which is to say, well, you know, if we do what they ask, if we just comply with what people are asking us to do, then they'll leave us alone. But they didn't leave us alone. And so that's -- that always is something that comes to my mind when things happen, and I say, well should we accept this, or should we stand up and fight right here? And it a -- and one of these things happened in my town in Massachusetts where the question came should we make a noise about this or should we not. And -- and the general feeling of the Jewish community was led by the rabbi, which was, w-w-well, you know, we'll just let this go by kind of thing. And mine, s -- much to my surprise, cause I'm not necessarily a person who makes waves, but I said this is wrong. It's not right, and we should be -- here in America we should be calling attention to the fact that this is wrong. But anyway, the effect of this layering, as I say, was -- w-was t-to keep people in compliance, and to, at the same time instill this modicum of fear and anxiety. And -- and I -- I -- I don't know what my father's feeling was at that point when he was taken away. I don't know whether he himself had an inkling that this was different, or whether he really did think he was coming back, or -- I -- I -- I really don't know what they thought, and whether this is a question of radical behavior on my mother's part, yes and no, and it's probably a dual answer because as we walked across the city, and I longingly looking at the trolleys, I remember that cause I was little kid and I was tired and I wanted to ride. And the trolleys, I remember this eerie feeling as the trolleys were going by and I was -- they were totally empty. There would be one person sitting in the trolleys, because -- not that -- that the non-Jews weren't allowed on the trolleys, but the general tenor in the -- in the country was beginning to be much more concerned and so people weren't out going to the theater and doing stuff. And I remember us walking through the archway of the Rijksmuseum, which is a gorgeous Victorian building with all its towers and spires and so forth and part of it is arched over a

roadway which at that time still had the old fashioned heavy cobblestones that were like little miniature hills, each one of them. And our steps were re-echoing in that archway as we walked through, and I remember feeling a certain amount of fear. Cause I knew we were not supposed to be out. And I knew that my mother was afraid and that she was anxious and we had to hurry and we had to be quiet. And I knew that we couldn't help ourselves, there was this clatter of the footsteps. And so the sense that somebody might be coming for us, or coming after us was definitely there, in -- in my head at that time, because I remember the feeling. I didn't know why, but I had the feeling. I knew that we were leaving and that we were going someplace else and we -- we -- the -- where we lived was called Amsterdam South, it was the southern part of the country, and -- o-of the city, and we went to Amsterdam West, which was across town, through the western part, which was a much more commercial area.

Q: So that's a big walk?

A: It's a big walk. Well, for a little girl it was a big walk. I'm not sure it's a horrendous walk now. I -- I don't exactly know how far it is.

Q: So you've never retraced it?

A: I've never exactly retraced it, no. I've been to both neighborhoods again, but I don't think I ever walked it again.

Q: Did your mother, when she was packing this bag, say, we're leaving? An-And do you recall that it happened very quickly once the door was closed?

A: It happened very quickly once the --

Q: It did.

A: -- door was closed. I sort of almost remember her giving us the jackets, and the fact that we were leaving. How she did that, I don't know, but I think I knew we were leaving right away. I-I

don't think we even stopped to go to the bathroom. I [indecipherable] you always do what little kids are told to do before you go out. But it was just -- my recollection is there was no time to be lost. I mean, maybe she knew what these soldiers were trying to do. Maybe they were really good people and trying to give her the high sign. I don't know.

Q: But clearly, she probably had never heard the words, we'll come back for you later. Whatever they were doing. Either they were really going to come back, or they were warning her.

A: Right.

Q: Or they were just incompetent, who knows? But she may not have ever heard it.

A: And -- that's right. I don't think they ever said it at any other time. I think any other time it was a much more kind of belligerent, we're coming to take you to -- down to the station for questioning, stuff. And questioning I -- I -- wi -- I have to ask my sister, but I have no idea what this questioning was about.

Q: Questioning was about.

A: I didn't --

Q: Well, you also don't know who your father was.

A: Y-You mean --

Q: A-As a --

A: -- what else he might have been up to?

Q: If -- as a -- [indecipherable] yeah.

A: That's true. Well, that's true, and of course there was this whole other activity that was going on, that I only learned about later, which was -- well, some of which I n -- I was aware of, which is that everybody had to have identity cards, and the Jewish ones had a big J stamped on it. And I also knew, and I -- this was before, I believe before my father was taken, that a friend of the

family, who was a minister, actually provided us with fake baptism papers. Because -- I-I remember that at the time, and I remember sort of hearing about it, and perhaps even be -- being given one of those t-to have on my person. And of course, initially it was, I think as I mentioned, first when they started doing the calling up of Jews -- first of all, they also instituted another one of their pieces of madness. They started this thing called Joods Raad, which was basically translated as the Jewish councils. They -- they took various l-leaders within the Jewish community and created a kind of a self governance piece, so that essentially they gave them the orders of what they wanted done, and they made them responsible for carrying it out. So now what you're doing is you're creating this horrendous thing between people of the same marked, steri -- stigmatized group and saying, you do the dirty work, you choose who's going to be called up next. You are the ones that promulgates the decrees of n-not -- no access of the schools and this and that and the other. So the Jewish councils were having to do this to their own people. And the -- the -- the tendency to first of all condemn these people roundly, I think is very great, because you're saying, you know, what the hell were you doing tell -- sending us off to the -- be slaughtered. By the same token, I don't think they were all doing it from that perspective. I think some of them were doing it because, as I said before, they thought that well, if we just comply with that they're asking, and maybe I can help to keep my people sort of understanding that if we just keep calm and do what they ask, we can get through this all right. I think they were doing it from that perspective, some of them. I think others probably were doing it to save their own skins, sort of either realizing whatever was happening it wasn't good, but if they volunteered to do this, then maybe they would not have to go. And I have to say that, coming through this experience, I don't think any of us is ever able to say what we would or would not do under any circumstances such as these. I don't think you know what you're capable of doing, I don't think

you know what you're capable of tolerating, I don't think you're cap -- yo-you have any sense of the reality of w-what you might do if you or your family members were under siege or in peril of losing their lives. I just think it's impossible.

Q: D-Do you remember the certificate? W-Were you --

A: Vaguely, I -- I --

Q: -- actually carry -- you think you were carrying it?

A: I don't know if I was carrying it or whether my parents had them, to be able to produce them. But the reason for these certificates also was that initially -- oh, I guess I lost track of the flow of this, initially they called up the refugees from eastern Europe and deported those, and made nice space available in Westerbork and so forth, and then they began to deport various among the Jews. Now who they were and why these people were chosen, I don't know. And I don't know if perhaps my father was instrumental in perhaps helping other people get papers or something like that, I don't know. This went -- first they started calling up the people who were full blooded Jews. And then, when there were no more of those -- and of course, you say, or you might say, how did they know who those people were? Well, this is where this incredible record keeping. All they had to do was go to the municipal offices and get the birth records and the this and the that and the other. And -- and they did that. They did an incredible amount of this kind of spade work. So they would s -- first call up the ones who were hundred percent Jewish, and then they would call up the people who were 75 percent Jewish. And then they would call up the people who were 50 percent Jewish. And then they would call up the people who had -- the one ha-half of a couple who had intermarried, and they would leave the others. And this -- this is what gave rise to the papers. Could you show that you had not -- no -- were no longer Jewish? But it didn't help, because after awhile they said it didn't count, that -- you know, at first, yes, they'd leave

you alone, cause now you were not Jewish. But then they would say, anybody who was born Jewish. I mean they just --

Q: But yo -- but your parents had a certain kind of foresight --

A: Yes.

Q: -- about the situation --

A: I --

Q: -- that you didn't know, at th -- certainly didn't know at the time, because you just --

A: Ah, I certainly did not know at the time. I didn't know, for example, until much, much later, that my uncle, my mother's brother had come from Vienna, and had fled Vienna and come to Amsterdam in order to take the boat to go to America. And this is the story I heard from him once we came to the United States, that he talked to my folks and urged them to leave, and urged them to drop everything and just come, and they didn't want to go.

Q: And this was before the Nazi occupation?

A: This would have had to be before --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- because he couldn't have gotten out, nor could they have gotten out. And apparently it was my mother who didn't want to go, at least that's my recollection of the way this was told. And I -- I could be wrong about that, but -- and I often thought about this afterwards, and I thought, why would she not want to go when this was on the horizon? And I think it was just such an incredible disbelief that this would ever. I mean, it's like so many things that face us, and you kind of think, no, I mean it's -- it's probably just in human nature that you ke -- you have to either get your head in the wave rolling over you, or you have to be enormously courageous, or maybe a little bit crazy, or even stupid by some people's judgment, to drop everything, to drop

this good job that she had, to leave this lovely house and all the -- the material things and take off for no man's la -- I mean, America? [indecipherable] not that it was no man's land, in fact she had an uncle I know who came back and brought her s -- her brother some gifts and brought her some things from the United States and so on. So she knew about the United States. But she apparently said no, but then my father -- so the story goes, my father who took my uncle to the boat, apparently said to him, if anything ever happens to us, will you see to my children? And, you know, I've heard this story repeated from my uncle, and then also from my sister, but I didn't know about it. So if there was something pre-thought, or predicted, or anticipated, it must have come from both the news and reading what happened around Europe and this was coming closer and closer, and then actually having my father arrested. So, between my brother fleeing -- my -- her brother, my mother's brother fleeing, and saying to his sister, why don't you drop everything and come, and the actual things that happened after he left, they must have done some things, including the fact that when we finally ended up at the home where we -- where we were hidden for the war, and led into the basement, there in the basement were two beds that I recognized as having come from my home, and a quilt and some blankets that I knew were from home. So --

Q: So you haven't noticed that they were not in your house?

A: No, I didn't notice that they were missing at all.

Q: Oh.

A: Had not registered this at all. Well, one of them was a trundle, and it was the bottom part of the piece that would have gone under something. So that might be easy to miss. I'm not sure where the other bed came from. I did not ever miss it, I didn't see it going out of the house. And

that must have been some doing cause it came off the first floor of the house, it had had to go down the stairs, it had to be trucked. I-I don't know when that happened.

Q: Right. I think that's what I mean when I say that's a kind of radical move, because while your mother was not willing to leave to go to America, she saw something as soon as your father -- that was a real arrest.

A: Yeah, I think so.

Q: And she knew she had to leave, and --

A: Right.

Q: -- they -- she didn't leave for nowhere. She knew exactly where she was going.

A: Where she was going. And she must have done something to prepare for that eventuality.

Q: Right.

A: And I have no idea when those beds went there, because I never saw them go.

Q: Right.

A: I don't know whether they were there right after my uncle left for America, when they could still move stuff without alerting anybody.

Q: Right.

A: Whether they were clandestinely moved in the middle of the night and I was asleep. No idea. None. And the interesting thing about those things that were there also, was -- I mean there was no question that this quilt was from our house, and -- then of course there were three of us sharing these two beds then. There was something else there that I recognized. Upstairs in the lower shelves of the buffet were not only some staples that had been put there, which apparently my folks had been responsible for putting there, there was also my mother's best china. It was a beautiful set of china that I adored. It was sort of an ivory colored Rosenthal china with little

roses on it. And I thought it was simply beautiful. And here my mother has chosen, of all the material things, to bring that china. Not with her when we fled there --

Q: Right.

A: -- but obviously at some point beforehand.

Q: And again, you hadn't noticed that that china was not in your house, or at least maybe she had some pieces, so you wouldn't be confused.

A: It's not something we used every day, it was only sort of --

Q: I see.

A: -- for those special couple of big dinners that I remember.

Q: Was this walking, do you remember, was it an a -- I mean, could you even think about that? Was it an hour, was it two hours? A half hour? Do you --

A: No sense.

Q: No sense, right.

A: It seemed an --

Q: Interminable --

A: It seemed an eternity.

Q: -- yes.

A: It seemed interminable.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was much longer than I wanted to be walking. It was dark, it was clearly not any longer twilight, it was really dark, there were st -- there were the lights of the tram that I remember. I'm thinking to myself how ghostly it was because they were all so empty.

Q: And you were holding onto your mother's hand, and --

A: Yes.

Q: -- your mother was holding both of the kids.

A: Yes.

Q: And also carrying this little bag. You --

A: Yes.

Q: -- neither one of you were carrying anything, as far as you remember?

A: Not in -- that I recollect. Not that I rem -- m-maybe my sister was, but I don't know.

Q: Were you walking fast?

A: Yes, you -- we were walking fast. Very -- it was very business-like --

Q: Right.

A: -- very quickly. A-And that probably also gave rise to my feeling of urgency, the fact that -- I never thought about that, actually, til you asked that. But yes, we-well we were not sort of ambling, by any means. We were very purposeful. And I think she was walking as quickly as she could make me walk.

Q: And she knew, obviously -- y-you didn't know this, but she knew exactly where she was going.

A: Yes, no question.

Q: She may have known the shortest route to get there.

A: She may well have.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, for all I know, there was only one, but she -- a-and maybe it wasn't the shortest, maybe it's the one that might be le-least causing somebody to see us.

Q: Right.

A: I don't know. I-I -- I don't know.

Q: And this noise that you were hearing, was this only around the Rijksmuseum, or were -- there are a lot of cobblestones in Amsterdam.

A: Ah, you're right. I think it was only because the cobblestone -- walking in the archway, re-echoed in that enclosed space.

Q: Uh-huh, right, right.

A: So I was aware of both the sound as well as the echo of the sound, which I didn't hear elsewhere.

Q: Well, we're going to stop the tape and then we'll start with your going into this house. So let's stop the tape.

A: Okay.

End of Tape Three

Beginning Tape Four

Q: Hedy, did your mother ever carry you in this trip, or you just -- you walked and ran to get to this house?

A: I-I don't remember her carrying me at all, no, if my recollection is right, h-he -- I am six years old.

Q: Right.

A: So probably a little bit big for carrying. And I do have a recollection, actually, of my mother and my sister carrying me in some previous year when we were on vacation in what I think was Scheveningen, which is the beach resort town not too far from Amsterdam. And for some reason my dad wasn't either with us, or wasn't on this walk with us or whatever. And I got a thorn or something stuck in my foot, and I was complaining and making lots of unpleasant noises, I'm sure. And my sister and mother made a little seat for me by crossing their hands like this, you know, in four -- with four ways around, and carried me. So I'm sure that if I felt the need to be carried, I would have said something. And I have no recollection of her carrying me.

Q: Of carrying you.

A: Or the two of them carrying me.

Q: Do you remember when you came to the house, where you were going to go in?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know what happened? Remember?

A: I -- I do remember coming -- all three of us sort of huddling into this -- when we came to the street, the Jan Evertsenstraat, which I was not familiar with, I d-don't think I'd ever been to before. And this s-street was different from my street, in that it was clearly a somewhat later period when it was built, because the housing was very much the same in the sense that the

houses were up tight against each other, there was not space in between. And it -- they went all the way around the block, and it was a house floor and first, second and third apartment. But the house floor in this case, was the store, was the commercial establishment. And it had a store window. And so there was a portico between two stores, and in that portico, you had first of all the -- on the left side the store entrance, then you had another entrance that went to the three apartments upstairs, and then you had another apartment entrance for the three apartments in this side, and another store door that went into this place, which we now entered. And the store was a liquor store. And it turned out that my mom and my sister, which I now know, knew this person who opened the door.

Q: Your sister knew the person [indecipherable]

A: My sister also knew her, but I don't think she knew of these preparations. I don't think so. In any case, we were basically whisked inside and -- a-and shown to -- through the store, into the back of the store, which was sort of -- these people were of very modest means, they were people who were living in back of the store, which was not usually what people did. They had an apartment someplace else in town, or perhaps upstairs above the store, but they tended not to have as their permanent residence, the little bitty living spaces in the back of the ha -- of the store. And when we came to the back of the store, and went out of the actual store part, there was a little, small sort of in-between room, and in one end of the wall there was -- it's -- it's often spoken of as a typical Dutch arrangement with the bed inside the wall. And in that recessed bed was a much elderly man, and much older than the woman, and it was her husband, and he was also ailing in some way, I don't remember exactly what. And -- and his name was Uncle John, I mean he was referred to as onc -- ome -- ome -- Oome Sjon. And then w-we were shown another door, and the door led down into the basement. And we went down the stairs in the basement,

and there was a basement that ran all the way from underneath the storefront, all the way to the backyard. And in the part underneath the storefront, this is how modestly, if not poor these people were, their only son had a curtained off area that was his room, his place. And there were very few material things there, or anyplace else in the house. And then we turned to go towards the part that was closest to the backyard, and to these two sort of recessed, if you will, windows. I mean, it was sort of like -- I guess it's what you call a bulkhead, out in the yard. And instead of a door there were these glass windows. But it meant that there was a sort of sunken well with -- with -- with some iron bars across the top where people stepped i-in the yard. And -- and the only way to get any light or air would be to open those. And of course, it rains a lot in Holland as it did then, and these wells would fill up with water, up to the top practically, and we had to -- I remember we took turns trying to siphon that out, by mouth, literally, to get the water out of those things so that we could open them and have some air. But anyway, when we came into this cellar and went towards the yard part, that's where I saw two beds covered in quilts and blankets, or a quilt and -- and blanket that I remembered from my home. So that's when it first registered on me, even at that young age, that somehow this was part of what the grown-ups had in mind, something that they'd already planned. And that first night we just went to bed, that I remember.

Q: Did -- did this woman ex -- do you think your mother called her before you left? Cause she clearly was not surprised when you came.

A: No --

Q: Cause you just --

A: -- she wasn't surprised. I don't know. I really -- I have no recollection and I have also very little recollection of the use of the telephone the way we have it today. Well, never mind today, but even some years ago, it just -- y --

Q: But you had one?

A: I don't even know that.

Q: Ah.

A: I don't even know that.

Q: And who knows if this person had it, so I don't --

A: Likely not. Likely not. I don't remember any use of the telephone in either family at any time, so it's very possible there wasn't one. And -- and I -- I do remember that there was no qu -- I -- I can't say that we were expected, but it was sort of -- y -- she opened the door very quickly, and sort of very quickly saw us inside and closed the door. And then in the next few days, we were down in the basement and we were -- the store was still operating, so the store was open and there were people coming and going and so on. And -- and the -- the woman of the house, whose name was Katoos Koolhaas Revers, who we called Tante Toos, or cut -- it's a short form of Katoos, and tante, of course, is aunt. And she took care of the infirm husband, and the young son, who was a few years older than my sister, so a teenager, and -- and the store, as long as it ran. And we were in the basement and then for a fairly short period of time, we were, every few days or so, were allowed to kind of come up in the yard and sit and have a cup of tea or something, for a short while, as if to say to the neighbors who might have been looking in from three sides of this block, if you remember how I spaced this out, who might have been wondering who were these people that were suddenly over there. So we looked like visitors, or we were trying to act like visitors. And during this period there were still lots of people on this commercial street. Every day the stores would open, and of course you had your butcher and baker and gr- greengrocer, and stationary store. I mean, you didn't go to the market there, th -- you went to the individual stores, and you didn't have supermarkets, certainly, or grocery stores. And -- well,

you, yes you had grocery stores, but they only dealt with, let's say, dry good and so on. So at first it was decided that -- that it was okay for me to go out and meet -- mix and mingle with the crowd because I -- and this is when I heard it said, that I looked the least Jewish. Now, what did that mean? Uh-huh, and my guess is that since my sister is somewhat darker haired than I am, and also older, and might have been less comfortable pretending to be someone she wasn't, they thought it was okay for me to get out there and play and then just pretend that I was visiting an aunt, in case I was stopped. And this was also when I was supposed to be somebody other than Hedy Cohen, which was, of course, my maiden name, and in -- and I was drilled, actually, before being allowed out, to say that my name was Hedy Vermeulen, and that I lived at, you know, some other place, but that I was visiting my aunt over here. That stopped fairly soon, that I wasn't allowed to go out any more.

Q: Weeks, months, days? Do you have any recollection?

A: I think weeks, but I certainly don't think it was months. In --

Q: It was very dangerous for these people to keep you in the house.

A: Oh, extremely dangerous, and there was a l-lot of -- and I didn't notice at the time, but having talked to my sister about this in the meantime, there apparently was a lot of family dissension about the fact that she had agreed to do this. And she apparently had a brother who was openly and outspokenly against it, and told her that she should just, you know, turn us in, that she couldn't do this and shouldn't do this and so on. And somehow she prevailed. And -- and actually, when you asked before -- or maybe you didn't ask, but I said something about this -- the business of the yards, and people being able to see. At this time the Nazis were doing something else which is actually pretty well documented in -- in what's his name, Wyman's book.

Q: David Wyman?

A: David Wyman's book where he actually has photographs of these -- these broadsides that would be appearing on corner kiosks and so forth, of which there were many, and it would announce things like rewards for any tips that would lead to the arrest of someone who was either harboring Jews, or who was seen consorting with Jews, or who knew of Jews who were someplace or other. So the business of being seen, and the business of being in the yard, and the bi -- i-it -- it was a tremendous danger not just for us, but for the family who was sheltering us. And so this proved to be an enormous burden for -- for -- not only for the people who were doing the hiding but the people who were being hidden, to the point that there is a lot of evidence of people who apparently couldn't tolerate putting this kind of danger on the people they loved, and they would get themselves arrested. They would either run out during a search, and run into the street somewhere far away from the house that they had been in. And they were usually shot, or rounded up, or brought in or whatever. But that was not an infrequent phenomenon, because it was so terrible to -- everybody knew what was going to happen. And then the rewards were such that, I mean, when you think of the pettiness of, you know, something the equivalent of a dollar, or five dollars, would be the reward if you could give the Nazis a tip that would lead to some arrests or other. And people were out doing this. They were out trying to collect these rewards. And you didn't know who would and who wouldn't. So -- and in some cases I know it happened within families where -- and this might have been the case here, but it wasn't, where the brother was so opposed to having his sister do this. But, to our knowledge he never --

Q: He never did anything.

A: He never did anything about it.

Q: Once you are not allowed outside, because they were concerned, that meant you were inside for a few years. Couple years.

A: Right.

Q: Right?

A: Well, was all told about th-three and a half.

Q: Three -- three and a half years.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Wh-What was Tante Toos like?

A: Well --

Q: Can you -- can you distinguish the -- the time when th -- that first year, cause unfortunately your mother dies in 1944. So you're there for almost two years. And what is it like in the house with all of you? The elderly father, Hans, the teenage boy, your sister, who is a teenager, your mother and this other woman. And the other woman is younger than your mother? Or about the same?

A: Yes. No, she's younger.

Q: She's younger?

A: She's younger.

Q: Okay.

A: Well, some of it actually is to be expected, in the sense that many people have the experience as parents of doing something together with other parents and there is a -- a disagreement about what youngsters can be allowed to do or not to do. So there was some of this tension between the two mothers. A-About what, I don't remember, do I have an example, no. I just knew it was there. And because there was such a spread in ages, it was also difficult. There was s -- at least then, before my mother died, there was this. There was also a kind of o-obvious -- and I -- and I have to confess that this is a thought that came long after and not before. I knew there was

tension between the two parents as mothers, and kids have an intuition about that stuff. But there was something else and that had to do with the fact that clearly my mother -- my mother's freedom as a mother and a parent, and her freedom as far as objecting to and disagreements, and -- I mean to -- to the kinds of disagreements, was severely limited because of the nature of this relationship. We were totally and completely dependent on this family. So my mother must have, many, many times, been severely pressed for patience and understanding and compromise and so on. There was nothing she could do. I mean, basically her only alternative was to be quiet and acquiesce, or to leave. And -- and clearly she surely didn't want to do that, because there were the two of us also. I don't know what she would have done if it was just herself. So there was probably no real outlet for all that kind of frustration. Plus the fact that we were getting -- we were getting some letters from my father, and they c -- apparently came from different camps as he was being transported from one to the other, to the other, and then eventually the last l-letters came from Auschwitz. And the letters were always censored. They were alway -- they had heavy, heavy black lines drawn through writing, and there was no way -- I remember my mother holding them up to the light and putting them over a bright light and on -- so forth and so on. They could not see what was -- what was under that. And they came to us via a very roundabout route, having to do with some of Tante Toos's family. I don't know if it was brother or brother-in-law, or how we got some of these things, but we did get these letters.

Q: Because your father couldn't have sent them to you directly.

A: Exactly.

Q: Right? They would have had to have been sent -- so obviously, there are a number of people who know where you are.

A: Yes.

Q: There's -- there's some system going on.

A: Yes.

Q: And your parents must have been in touch not just with this woman, but within a context of a system, no?

A: Within context of the system, I think that my mother or parents were only in touch with Tante Toos. I think that she then did the --

Q: Did the rest, I see.

A: -- next steps and so on.

Q: I don't know this for positive, but I sort of think so. I-I -- I know that my sister has mentioned it several times, something of the family dynamic between the brothers and Tante Toos and -- and how often there was friction because of the fact that they were not wanting the sister to do this and so on. Then there was another dynamic that took place here in this confined quarter. First of all there was probably this -- this little kid who was always sort of -- sort of in-between and in the way and what have you. There was another dynamic going on between my sister and the young boy, after a fairly short time. And every time I think about this whole experience, and as I then moved on in my life later and worked with young people and studied young people and everything else, I am always caught by the uniqueness of that ad-adolescent era that each of us has, but which in my sister's case was so totally rent asunder, so that just at the point when life opens up for you and you're no longer quite a child and you're now moving into domains of knowledge and you're beginning to have some feeling of what the world's about, and when you start thinking about future and making plans and having relationships, and having groups of friends, and beginning to pull away from your -- your parental u-unit as the kids used to say. And this must have been so hard for her to have this cut off. Yes, I was disappointed I couldn't go to

school and so on, but the -- to compare that to what must have happened to my sister, it must have been so awful, to have everything just kind of collapsed, to have everything just sort of literally having the rug pulled out from under you and now you are in this sort of prison, sort of confinement, really. And then the knowledge that our very lives and futures depended on being able to s -- to make the most of what we have here, and to be able to get along, and to be able to make it work. And -- and some of this has been written quite beautifully by Anne Frank, and -- where she talks about some of these dynamics between the rescuer and the protectors, and the family and the internal stuff. And yeah, there was a lot of that going on.

Q: So was there a kind of romance between Hans and Betsy, your sister?

A: Yeah, I think so --

Q: Or the beginnings of one, yeah.

A: -- it -- certainly the beginnings of one, and I think certainly by the time the three and a half years ended, there was more of it, and I think then, for that one year that we were still there after the war, I think there was more of it, and then some knowledge of -- of some new people her age that she -- his good friend and so forth. I th -- I think that this was really tough. A-And I think there were expectations on her part when we came to America that this might continue and it didn't and she had sort of no place to go with her feelings. So that -- that was terribly difficult. Terribly difficult. And I think that the -- the sense on the part of Tante Toos was very -- I mean, I think she really -- she cared, if not immediately, she certainly came to care for us very deeply. And -- a-and again, as they say, afterwards, when my mother died, there was a new set of tangents, because she felt, I think in a very real sense, that it was her role as the adult maternal figure, to be the caretaker and caregiver. I think my sister felt, as the person closest to me, and now the older, responsible adult, that she should be the one to basically kind of take the initiative

about what I should do or not do and what things I might be criticized for or not, as the case may be. So there's the tension between those two.

Q: Between those two.

A: During much of this time when we were in hiding, again my poor sister was put to the task of teaching me, because here I had two weeks of school and no schooling again, so it was her job to teach me basic arithmetic and reading and writing and -- and so forth. We -- and she did a great job with that, and I'm not sure I could have equaled doing that, cause I must have been a real pain in the neck to -- to -- to deal with. And there was no television and no VCR and no computer, and no Gameboy and no, you know, record player, n-no radios, we weren't allowed to have radios, al-although we did have a radio, it was not permitted. Now again, really another example of -- of this madness and planning. Here you have a -- an occupied population and you cut off all their means of getting news from the outside. You tell them they have to turn in all the radios. So this -- this clandestine radio virus was already a first move of rejection of these decrees that our host family was part of, because there was -- no one was allowed radios, not just Jews, no one. And initially there were -- there were beginning to be food shortages after the beginning of this time when we were -- we -- we literally ducked under -- the Dutch word onderduiken is -- is to duck under, and that's literally what we were doing. And -- and --

Q: What does that mean?

A: Onderduiken means to duck under.

Q: Wha -- wa -- duck under, but wa -- what are you ducking under? You mean, bu -- by hiding, you --

A: We were -- we -- we're saying onderherduiken, which is we went into hiding, this is how you would translate it --

Q: I see.

A: -- but literally translated it is --

Q: [indecipherable] under.

A: -- we ducked under. You know, not necessarily what --

Q: Right.

A: -- but the fact is that we did that. And initially there were ration cards handed out for available food. And of course, instead of three people there were now six people in this house. And so it fell to Hans to -- the young boy, to go out and scour up -- I don't know how, black market, whatever, to go find more ration points, and -- cards. And so he did that reasonably successfully until there wasn't any more food that was handed out, and -- and little by little the shops all closed, one after the other, after the other, and had heavy wooden shutters to protect them from vandalism and people growing quite desperate for food. And then for awhile they had set up soup kitchens, where you could come with your ration points and get potato peel soup and that came back with Hans and he would -- we would all share that, of course. And -- and even the -- the liquor store now was closing, cause there was nothing, there was -- there was no more liquor left for the population and so that -- those doors closed. And there were bottles of colored water that were in the display window and so on. But he would go and -- and occasionally try to dig up something and apparently came back once with a smoked eel, one eel. And Holland's specialty of course, is all versions of fish, of all kinds. Smoked and pickled and you name it. And the one eel was divided among six people. And the piece that I got was the one that had the head. And what I didn't realize is that there was a h-hook in the head, and trying to get every last morsel of edible food out of this thing, I got the fishhook stuck in my tongue. And we are now in the basement, right, and I knew somehow, don't ask me how, that I shouldn't make a noise, that I

shouldn't scream, that I -- and even that spontaneous reaction that you think I would have had, was suppressed. Which probably came from by now having lots of times being told, don't make any noise, you've got to keep quiet, you can only whisper, and so on. Because for the first part of our hiding, the -- there was activity going on upstairs and there were people in and out of the store. And so we couldn't really talk, we couldn't really make any noises. And -- and somehow I remembered this, and my mother came over and she worked the fishhook out of my mouth and -- and that was that. But that -- again, how did I know how -- how did I control that impulse? I don't know, I just did. You sort of wonder often about how it is that you do those things as a small child, or a big child. I mean, big child I think it's mo -- it's a little easier to figure it out. When you're a small child, you kind of say, how did that work, you know? What was in my head? And I don't know what was in my head. I think I just felt it, just felt the whole atmosphere, the whole -- whole sense of -- everything was dangerous, everything about life was dangerous. And so you -- you kept a low profile and you didn't talk loud and you didn't scream and -- awful really, when you think about the effect of that on a small kid.

Q: We have to change the --

End of Tape Four

Beginning Tape Five

Q: Hedy, was there a special time when your sister was doing home -- essentially home schooling? Would she do it in the morning, or the afternoon, or the evening, or wasn't there a particular time?

A: I don't have a -- any recollection that there was a particular time. I don't even remember what actually transpired in those sessions. I don't think that they lasted all of the time that we were in hiding, but they lasted long enough to get me to be able to read. And -- and I'm sure she did some -- s-see again, we ha -- we had nothing, we ha -- we even had no paper. You couldn't get anything any more. You couldn't get crayons, you couldn't get colored -- well, we didn't really have crayons like they have Crayolas here. We had colored pencils and we had a few because when the newspapers were still being published -- which also stopped, but while they were being published we didn't have the comic section like you do here, but we did have one which I recognized later was a political cartoon and -- and it was on the back of the front page of De Telegraaf, which was the sort of -- s-sa -- probably right of center newspaper. And I would cut out -- after people had gotten through with the paper, I would cut out this little two or three frame thing and -- and color it with a few colored pencils that we had and that's one way I kept busy. And I loved these characters, I thought they were just so much fun, but again, I was an animal lover. And this was tom poes, which was tomcat, and Ollie B. Bommel. And Ollie B. Bommel was a bear, and he was a pretty dumb bear. And so it was always the smart cat who was rescuing him out of awkward situations or correcting his erroneous thinking. And so the political stuff kind of came through that. And this was my p-precious possession from -- from all of those years, and it's one of the few things that I had at the end of the war, cause I collected all these things until they stopped publishing, and I took them with me to America, and I kept them in the

attic and so forth and so on, and then at some later date many years later when I met my husband and he came to visit at the house and so forth, and I told him about this. And he said, "Oh," he said, "do you have those around?" I said oh yeah, and so I brought them down from the attic, and he opened the box and he grabbed them and the first thing he did was flip them over on the other side, because there were the headlines of what was going on during those early years. And I haven't tried to piece those headlines together, but I have started to do some research now on -- actually on the original newspapers, to see what was the context within which all of my personal experience was taking place.

Q: Right, right.

A: Because now, as an adult, I'm interested in knowing -- a-and not only interested in knowing, but I'm so appalled at some of the things that you keep seeing repeated and repeated and repeated in history. Not the least of which was these kinds of left, right and so forth debates about how to interpret what the Nazis were doing, and so I actually have been looking at some of the newspapers on the left, and some of them on the right and some of the underground newspapers which were being published. And some of that has proven to be very interesting -- very interesting to read.

Q: Were you bored?

A: During these years?

Q: Yeah. Or antsy, or --

A: Well, I --

Q: You know what I mean, I mean --

A: It -- it's a very hard question to answer because on the one hand I must have been, but on the other hand I don't remember it. Now one thing that I remember doing, I -- I know that because of

the severely confined circumstances in which we were, and if you remember, I mentioned the fact that these people were not very well off in this little daytime place for -- for the proprietors of the -- of the shop, th -- but the shop was part of the Chrispijn liquor store chain. It was a big, well-known company, and -- and Tante Toos was the proprietress of this -- this particular one store. But part of what -- what was also very difficult is that because it was only meant for daytime habitation, there was only a little half bathroom. There was only a toilet with a little teeny sink, just enough to wash your hands, as most toilet rooms are in -- in Europe. An-And there was no shower, and there was no bathtub. So matters of hygiene had to be taken care of rather differently, in basins and lots of hand washing and so on. And lots of washing, I mean. And also, I think what was -- I mean, this actually took time, I mean you had to carry water in basins and bring it downstairs and so on. And I remember my mother i-in very short order, decided I had to cut my -- or she was going to cut my long hair, cause I had long pigtails. And I remember not being very happy about that, but there wasn't any question, it wasn't do we have to, it was just -- it was done. Because she saw no way to keep washing hair in this difficult, confined situation. The other thing that happened during this time is when I learned to read, I found that Hans, our gentle, young man in the house, probably the only thing the guy owned was a set of books that was in his part of the cellar, which had been curtained off, and it was on a shelf in his part of the cellar. It was a series of books about the American Indians, about the Apaches in particular. And it was a series written by what I understand is an Austrian author, who apparently never set foot in the States, and I understand has done amazingly accurate writings and portraits of what went on among the Apaches. And I devoured those books, probably --

Q: This is Karl May, I think, yes?

A: Yes --

Q: Yeah.

A: Exactly, Karl May, and -- and the -- the image in my mind was always of this proud, courageous American Indian, of course, the Apache. And I just read those books over and over and over again. There wasn't anything else, there was no paper, there were no magazines. There was not a collection of children's books in the house. There was not -- there were very few books of any kind around the house. So this series, this whole series was just, you know, very precious to me, and -- and I spent a lot of time reading that.

Q: So you learned to read very quickly, though, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Cause you -- you s -- in '42, you were six.

A: Right.

Q: So by the time the war ends you're only nine anyway.

A: Right.

Q: So when you're seven or eight, you're reading Karl May?

A: Yeah. Probably seven.

Q: Probably seven.

A: Right. And they were big, thick, wonderful books. Yeah.

Q: Did -- did you have to stay downstairs in the cellar all day and all night, or could you come upstairs in the evening, what --

A: In the beginning, I-I think I mentioned we could go outside a little bit and that -- but that stopped within weeks. And then we had to stay downstairs certainly all day. And in the evening when it was really good and dark, we would come upstairs and spend some time upstairs, usually

huddled around this clandestine radio, or a s -- in fact, I seem to remember that we did not eat upstairs, so -- and -- and speaking of the eating as -- I think I was telling you about the potato peel soup. You know, after that -- after that stopped, there was nothing. There was absolutely nothing, and everything was shuttered and everything was a ghost town, all the stores were completely shuttered down with wooden protection shutters and so on. And -- and we heard stories about people doing all kinds of desperate things, you know, hunting down pets that belonged to somebody [indecipherable] or something, in the streets, and -- and going out to the country to try to find rabbits and so on. And another element of my parent's planning for this possible eventuality came in the sense that aside from the beds that I saw there, and the quilts that I saw there, when I came upstairs one day and saw also this set of dishes that I mentioned before, there were, next to the set of dishes were bags, large bags of staples. Just the way you find them in a natural food store, they were sacks of raw beans and peas and -- and barley and rice and -- I don't remember specifically which ones, but ther -- there were all these staples, which really saved all of our lives, because I was fr -- I-I was quite stunned, actually, to read in one of the papers I had been looking at, that they figured that some -- something between 1700 and 2500 people died simply of starvation in the city. And we were just very fortunate to have had this that we could then share with our family. Which -- which certainly saved us. But then that ran out, and that was still -- the war was still on. Also my -- my mother was a bit of a -- probably natural food type vitamin person and she had had -- also saved and put aside vitamins and -- and especially calcium pills, which -- I -- I -- I -- I've had rather troubles with teeth, which are thought to have had some basis in the war deprivation. But that -- that was part of what was there, and then when that ran out, then also electricity was out, gas was out, so you had nothing to cook on, you had n-no lights. There was -- for awhile there was wood for the woodstove, the

coal stove, i -- of course, coal was long gone -- in the living room, but then Hans would go out to the countryside and -- and dig peat, blocks of peat that he would really, literally drag back to -- u-undercover at night. And then after that, a-and there was no more food, he went out in the fields and dug up sugar beets and tulip bulbs, which we basically ground into some kind of mush, and tried to cook, as long as we had anything to cook on. And -- and that's how we survived during -- during this time. It was horrible stuff, but it was what kept us going.

Q: There's no kitchen in the basement.

A: There is no kitchen in the basement, right.

Q: So did your mother cook for you upstairs, did Tante Toos --

A: No, I believe Tante Toos did.

Q: She cooked for everybody.

A: At some --

Q: And you ate downstairs, I think.

A: I believe we ate downstairs most of the time. Certainly in the beginning and I think later on when the store was actually closed, and if we ate later we were upstairs, gen -- it was dark. Now, the store, I have to also indicate to you, the store's display window was maybe at, you know, this chair height.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And ran in sort of a semi-circle from let's say the length of this room wall, and extended back maybe three feet or so. And then starting at the height of the display window were mirrors embedded into a wooden screening. In other words, it was wood to the house side, and it was m-mirror to the street side, so that all these bottles were mirrored in -- and when you walked by you saw this profusion of bottles and so on. But this wall of mirrors only came up to about five feet,

so you could look over it and see people, and see into the living quarters in the back. So there was never any movement above that height, or in the back of the house during the daytime. And at night it was only by -- by being lower than those things in the back or having the lights off -- once the lights were off anyway because there was no electricity, it was a little bit easier for us to move around. But that's also when we were having these terrible street searches and house searches, where these Gestapo would be patrolling and -- at random, or based on some word that they got from somebody, would actually go and do a house search. You know, tear the place apart, and --

Q: Was your house ever searched, the house where you were staying?

A: Several times, actually, and when the worry about this became so great that we were afraid to be in the cellar -- again, I don't know whose idea it was, I don't know how the grown-ups planned this and talked about it, but it was decided that we should hide under this display window in this three foot wide stretch that was under -- that -- that was, you know, probably three feet off the ground and three feet wide, but maybe 10 or 18 feet long. I don't know how long, 18 feet maybe. And there was a little door in the store side to this, and the little door could open up and then they usu -- usually they kept cases of empty bottles there, or beer -- extra beer supplies, or whatever. So what they did is they took those bottles and crates out of there, we would go in there at night and they would put the empty crates back behind us and then close the door. So the three of us would be in there, and on the street side it was just a -- you saw brick up until the level of the display window, and there were two little grates where you could get some air in this part, and my recollection was always that we were either hunched over, or somehow in some, you know, very uncomfortable position, cause there were three of us in this tiny space. And that one of us was always sort of on the alert that no one else would make noise. I know my

guess is that my mother was always on the alert. Because the noises, the breathing, the sneezing, what have you, the snoring, could be heard through these vents outside. And you never knew if somebody was actually patrolling the streets, or was out on the street and being silent because they were waiting to catch you, or waiting to have -- to be able to observe one misstep, based on some, you know, intuition they might have had. So you never knew whom to trust, you never knew what was going on, you never had -- you always had this sense of watchfulness, of -- and -- and I'm sure that that was part of the anxiety, was probably watchfulness that I was feeling on the part of the adults. And -- and we spent a lot of time in there, and it was a good thing because some of those searches did, in fact, th -- the soldiers went into the basement. It was a logical thing, there was a door. I mean, you know, they would have been stupid not to open that door.

Q: I don't even know if you know the answer to this question, but how would they account for the fact that there is this bed there? These two beds?

A: I don't know, because I don't remember --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- if they did anything about those beds when we weren't in them. Whether they had some explanation, like you know, so -- if -- if Hans's friends stayed over --

Q: Friends come over, right.

A: -- I -- I have no idea.

Q: Right, right.

A: No, I can't answer that.

Q: Were you more frightened by having to go into this little crawl space than you were -- I mean, did you become more -- did you become more anxiety prone because of that, or was it all just sort of nerve-wracking in some way?

A: Ah. Mm-hm. I don't remember. I -- I don't really know how to remember it, because --

Q: But you remember going in there?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, and I remember having to duck down so that we wouldn't be seen, and of course we had to go into the store proper, and walk from the back of -- of --

Q: Oh.

A: -- of the store, which you could see when -- because you could look over this mirrored thing --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- and get to that little entryway which was right below the mirrors. So we basically had to kind of keep -- duck out of sight and get in there.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So I do remember that very distinctly. And I also remember that -- that several things then happen as the war got worse and worse. And I remember sitting in the dark and huddled around the -- the radio, and sitting by moonlight, and -- and I remember listening to the BBC, and I remember, you know, occasionally hearing something from the queen, and then hearing something from Churchill. And I also began to recognize, even as a child, that somehow I made the deduction that if you heard the words Churchill and Montgomery and Eisenhower and Roosevelt that things were going better, and the adults seemed somewhat less anxious. And if you heard Hitler and Himmler and Goebbels and -- I could always -- I knew that they were going to be tense and upset. And -- and we did hear, actually, a fair amount of bombing, although Amsterdam was not flattened the way Rotterdam was. There were certainly constantly air raids and sirens and planes flying overhead and some areas were bombed because the -- I know some part of the hospital was bombed, and I know the hospital had -- and the reason I know that,

because after the war I became very ill, and I had to go to that hospital. But -- but during this time, there is that well documented difference in the way the allied planes sounded from the way the axis planes sounded, that -- the Nazi planes. And I remember the first time going to some film that had that in it, that -- that sort of unnerved me because there it was, there were those sounds that I remembered.

Q: What was the difference, do you remember?

A: The -- the German planes were all sort of loud and sputtering and the motor sounds, probably without any mufflers and things like that. And also the nature of whatever the make was. And the Messerschmitts I think were some of those fighter planes that were always very noisy. And allied planes had a sort of low, humming sound. Now this may have had to do both with the motor design and also with the altitude at which they flew, I don't know. But boy, did we know it. But the end result often was the same in that you had to go into air -- air raid shelters, which we, of course, didn't. But the sirens would go off for that [indecipherable]

Q: Where -- when you were sitting and listening to the radio, you said you were sitting at -- and there was moonlight?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Were you sitting in the back of the house near the courtyard?

A: Not in the courtyard, and probably not within view of any of the windows. I remember sort of -- the one side of the room had this little stove, so it's not likely we were sitting there, and it was somewhere in the wall area, or near the wall area that separated the kitchen from the living area somehow -- it was not in full view of that courtyard, no.

Q: Could you use the bathroom during the day? Did you have to be careful of any sound so that nobody could think there were six people in the house?

A: Right. I don't remember about the bathroom. I really don't remember about the bathroom. I just don't remember.

Q: When you got older, did you ask your sister about getting her period when she was there?

A: I never asked her.

Q: You never asked her.

A: I never asked her. I didn't think about it, actually, until many, many years after that. But then somehow it's not come up in the several times that we've -- but yeah, there were those --

Q: Because I imagine it would be tho --

A: I thought about it. I thought about it --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- what it must have been like, yeah.

Q: Cause it must have been very uncomfortable, I would think. Unless because you had so little food, she didn't get her period very much.

A: Well, that might have been true, I -- I just -- again, I draw a total blank.

Q: A total -- right.

A: A total blank. Yeah, the -- and the hygiene involved in all that must have been exceedingly difficult, exceeding -- I -- I do have some vague recollection of my mother cooking big pots of water on the stove, as long as we had the gas going, and washing clothes in the -- and bringing that hot water downstairs and washing clothes.

Q: Huh. And she would bring it downstairs?

A: That's what I remember, but I don't know if I actually saw that, or if I just surmised that.

Q: Cause it would seem to be difficult --

A: Very difficult.

Q: -- to do it.

A: I mean, she wouldn't bring this whole big pot down, but she would bring some small basin down --

Q: I see.

A: -- of it. And -- and I'm sure we had the same routine for bathing. I mean, we basically --

Q: And where would you hang clothes?

A: In the basement --

Q: In the basement.

A: If anything was hung it was it was in the basement.

Q: Right.

A: And far away from those front windows --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- because you could look down there.

Q: Did you get along with Hans?

A: Yes, oh yes.

Q: You did? Was he nice to you?

A: Oh, he was very nice. He was -- y-you know, I was this little kid, and he always knew how to humor a little kid, and -- so I was probably a bit pest-y between those two and -- but -- but yeah, I did l -- I did like him. I did like him.

Q: It seems like he was very helpful sort of a young man.

A: He very much was, yeah, and I -- I guess one of the big, enormous differences of course in -- in these situations, you -- you sort of think of your -- you know, sort of average teenager in -- in America, in this land of -- of plenty and more than plenty, and you think about kids who, you

know, don't really seem to behave in a very mature way. And how is that these kids did? Well, I think one big difference is the fact that this was for real. This wasn't any fun and games. And I think that kids grow up very fast under demand of -- of survival. And I think that -- I -- I think that you, on the one hand, have to have some ability to be resilient, but at the same time, you have to have some judgment about what needs to be done in these situations, and being irresponsible just doesn't have a place here, although I have to say, I remember being -- having -- coming down with a cold or something like that, and -- and my sister bringing me a cup of tea, and I -- and a thermometer, and telling me to take my temperature, and I thought, oh this is hot tea, it might be fun to see what the temperature of the tea is. I stuck the thermometer in the tea and it promptly exploded, the mercury all over the place, and I was, you know, not in anybody's good graces, cause there were no stores where you could get a new one, so that was it, the thermometer was gone. Had I thought it would explode I'm sure I wouldn't have done it, but I didn't know. And I thought, I wonder how hot the tea is.

Q: And it was a little dangerous, although you wouldn't have known that, for the mercury to be rolling around. Not that there's that much, but it's dangerous.

A: Certainly didn't know that.

Q: Yeah.

A: I certainly didn't know that. You know, so that was a -- those were all very big issues, which somehow in the overall scheme of things have either been suppressed or lost in my mind because they didn't register, or -- somehow. And it's kind of interesting to ask yourself, why did this experience register versus some other experience. And it's been very interesting in talking about this too, is what suddenly triggers another bunch of memories, you know?

Q: Right, right, right. It's hard to know the answer to that question, isn't it?

A: Exactly.

Q: Yeah. Why don't we change the tape.

End of Tape Five

Beginning Tape Six

Q: Okay. Hedy, do you remember the letters coming from your father? Do you remember s-see -- j --

A: Seeing them?

Q: Seeing them? Does your mother read them to you, or read parts of them to you?

A: I don't remember exactly. I don't know whether she did initially and then stopped, or whether she kind of summarized the letter, or gave -- and I don't know if she read some to my sister, and some to me. I don't remember.

Q: Do you get closer to your mother during this period than you were bef -- before, since you seemed to be much closer to your father? Does this intimate setting and being thrown together this way create a different relationship?

A: I -- I'm sure it did. I- I don't remember being conscious of a shift in relationship, but -- but then again, you know, even under natural circumstances, as you get older and change your behavior and so forth, your relationship with your parent changes.

Q: Right, right.

A: I'm sure that the proximity added a good deal to it. And I didn't mean to paint some of the early years as necessarily negative, cause I have other r-recollections of, you know, of be -- being -- playing out in a field with her or something, or -- in fact, I have some little pictures of me as a toddler playing in the Vondelpark, you know, the big park in Amsterdam.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I -- I guess as a small child the negatives outweighed the positives because perhaps I took for granted all the positives and only remembered those things that she said no, I couldn't touch the horse, and you know, don't get close to the horse cause he might kick you and so forth. And so

that was where my will was being thwarted in a sense, and so maybe that's why I remember that. No, I remember -- and I remember -- I remember her death, unfortunately, very, very well, because I shared the bed with her, and she died in her sleep.

Q: She died in her sleep? So she wasn't sick?

A: She wasn't sick, and I remember that what I was told, or what maybe others were told or others talked about, they kept saying that she dri -- died of a broken heart, given what was happening to my father and so on. But what I'm surmising now is that she probably died of a stroke.

Q: So y -- you wake up, and she's dead? That must have been awful for you.

A: It was awful. It was awful.

Q: Did you scream? No.

A: I don't remember what I did. I -- I really don't remember what I did.

Q: Do you remember knowing that she -- that sh -- sh-she wa -- did you try to wake her, do you think?

A: I don't think so. I-I have no recollection of what I did immediately upon sensing -- upon waking and sensing that she was not in her natural state. I don't remember.

Q: But you knew that it was something extremely different. And she was maybe what, 50 something years old, or less?

A: I'm guessing that she was in her early 50's, only because I was eight by then, and I think she had me in her late 40's --

Q: I see.

A: -- but, like, you know, if she was -- well, mid-40's, so -- I -- I -- I don't know. I should actually figure that out because I -- I looked up her birthdate at some point, she was in August. I don't know how old she was.

Q: Do you now know --

A: She was ol -- she was -- must have been born in 1896 now that I think about it, because my uncle was born in 1900, and she was the oldest, and then I think he was the middle, and then there was another sister. And the other sister, in fact, I found all this material after -- after my aunt died. I found a trunk of material in the garage, which was all of the correspondence that they had had, and my uncle particularly had had over -- since he came to America, first of all, apparently trying to get his parents out of Vienna and appealing to the em -- embassy about getting his parents out of danger, and writing to them about the fact that he had come in 1930 whatever, and he was now able to take care of himself and his -- hi wa -- had brought his wife over and had a good job and so forth, and that he would vouch for them and take care of them, that they would not be a burden on the welfare system and so forth. And that letter that came back was a letter from some state department person saying -- it was almost -- it was almost a little sharp, maybe wasn't meant that way, but it was sort of like we're glad that you -- that you are a-able to take care of yourself, and -- and self-sufficient and so forth and so on, but that does not give you any special privileges. It does not push you ahead of the line of getting people into the country. And then there were letters from ha -- my other aunt, who had apparently hoped to get to -- I think to South America and ended up in -- in Cuba, I think in Havana for awhile, before she was able to get to America. And my aunt -- and letters that my uncle and aunt sent to each other when she was still in Vienna and she stayed behind because she was trying to get visas f -- to get her parents and her s -- older sister out to Australia, and all -- and also a meisje, a

young woman who worked for them and who had been like their governess and so on. And she succeeded in doing that, and some of the stories she told about how she did this, how she stood in line day after day after day to try to convince the authorities that they should give her these visa for her parents. How she -- she told the stories about some young guy who was really very sweet on her, but she didn't care about him, and he turned out to be one of the soldiers guarding the line of people standing in line for these visas, and how she kind of maneuvered her way towards the front of the line in terms of this guy, who was now a Nazi, and who made no bones about it. But still was kind of interested in her, and I guess allowed her a couple of notches up the line. And she described to me a couple of times, unfortunately I never got it down, as to what it was like when she went into this enormous room where this Nazi commandant was, and where she had to plead for these visa and exit permits and so forth. And immediately she was addressed as a Jewess, and -- and in German she quoted to me what he said to her, you know, what -- what does this Jewish -- Jewess want, kind of thing, and -- she was an amazing woman, just a gutsy lady with -- with, you know, just a sort of indomitable spirit that I hope all of us can have a piece of, but --

Q: And so th --

A: -- and she was -- then -- then she got them out. Her brother, who had been in medical school -- in fact, she had wanted to go to medical school, but her father, who had once been quite well-to-do, apparently had lost a lot of money and when she, who was older, started medical school, and then her brother came along, he said I'm sorry, I only have money for one person to go to medical school, and he yanked her out and he put him in. But she loved this brother, she -- she would do anything for this brother. In fact, she used to tell me how -- how she got him to play the -- the moonlights -- Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" by promising him a little money when

he was a student and he had no money. And then she went -- she became a clothes designer and seamstress, and she had this apparently lovely atelier in Vienna, where she designed clothing for the opera, and for the stage and so on. And anyway, her f -- her brother married a young Dutch woman who turned out to have been the daughter of the leading communist in Holland. So he emigrated to Russia. And when they got to Russia, he was promptly jailed because he was a Jew, and she was jailed because she was foreigner. So they were shipped off to Siberia, because they were both doctors, medical doctors and they needed them. So they were saved because of -- of being doctors, and they were paid in bags of potatoes, basically, for their services. And he was in -- h-he was imprisoned and everything, he was ter -- a terrible life. Terrible li -- I mean, those are all the side pieces of the main pieces that --

Q: Right.

A: -- that happened here. Was just incredible. And -- and I remember my aunt telling me the story of how she -- she had gotten her family out and then she had an elderly uncle that she was taking care of, and he was really in terminal illness at this point in time. I think in -- but he had been a single uncle who had gone to America, and had come back and brought them things and so forth, and she -- very much loved in the family and she didn't want to abandon him, so she took care of him until he died. And this was either a year and a half or two years later, so was much harder for her to get out. And she took the last -- she used to tell the story of going home to her apartment and boiling some potatoes and her girlfriend said to her, you know, if I had a husband waiting for me in the United States, I wouldn't wait for the potatoes to boil. And she grabbed her purse, and she said she walked out the door, and she got on the -- what turned out to be the last train going to the border between Germany and Holland. And they had to get off the train, and she said, and the soldiers were directly behind them. And she said she w-w-walked

very quickly to where the railroad fencing was, and she said and then the Dutch people were there, and they literally pulled her under the fence so the -- the soldiers couldn't get her. And she said then they were there with -- with hot coffee and -- and stuff, and helped people. And then she got to Amsterdam and so forth, and saw my folks and saw me, I guess, when I was two and a half or something, and -- maybe a little older. And then she went to America, and then my uncle, who was -- who was both a physicist and an electrical and mechanical engineer, had gone to -- to America, wasn't allowed to take any money out, was apparently, so the story goes, in Grand Central, and pulled a -- an old New York Times out of the wastebasket cause he didn't have any money, and saw that there were jobs for physicists and optical engineers and so on in Rochester, New York. So then apparently wrote, and so forth and so on, was interviewed and got a job and -- and that's how he move o -- that's how he came to Rochester.

Q: And that's your mother's brother?

A: That's my mother's brother.

Q: Right.

A: And he was -- I believe that he was the middle child, so -- and he was born in 1900, so that makes -- I think my mother was four years older than he. So --

Q: So your mother was -- was in her -- close to 50 when she passed.

A: Right.

Q: So w-what did they -- they can't do a burial, I mean what did they do?

A: Well, this is -- a-again, I -- a-a-actually it's the second time -- I'll have to tell you about the first time -- it's the second time that the -- that the adults -- and I don't know whether anybody in the family knew him, but they took this person, this other Dutch person into their confidence and told him what happened, and it was a doctor. And I don't know if it was the family doctor, or if it

was a doctor who was referred to them, or whether Tante Toos's brothers knew somebody who would do this. In any case, this doctor came sometime in the evening or in the middle of the night and took my mother's body out of the house and saw to it that she was buried. And in fact, at some point in time when I was back in Holland, I went to see him, he was still in practice at the time, and I -- I wanted to express to him our thanks for not only doing that, but for not turning us in. And he -- he acknowledged my thanks, but he seemed very uncomfortable and didn't -- seemed sort of aloof, and I don't know if he didn't want to remember this awful time, or whether he in fact suffered because of it. I -- I -- I don't know what the reason was, but he was -- he -- he kept very much apart from -- you know, it was the very, sort of professional demeanor that he showed. That was the second time, as I said. The first time we took somebody in our confidence was as the war wore on, and the Germans were beginning to realize it -- that their lot was going to likely be up, and they made their last ditch efforts. They were running short of soldiers, so they took all the soldiers who were doing the domestic duties in these occupied countries and put them in the front, i-i-in the war front, and they replaced them by drafting the Dutch boys. And now, our Hans is, of course, draft bait. So it became a matter of hiding him as well. And so four of us couldn't get into this little -- under the display window thing. And so now -- I don't know in my description if I made it clear, but we had, between the room where this alcove bed was, and the kitchen, was a little teeny hallway, and there was a hallway on one side and on the other side was the half-bath. And over this hallway and half bath was a low ceiling. But it f -- that low ceiling formed a kind of alcove in the kitchen area. And the kitchen ceiling was very high and kind of extended over that alcove. So what they did is they brought somebody in, a carpenter, who made a false wall for this whole upper alcove area. And he did it with -- with wooden battens, so that it looked like it was part of a -- an existing wall. And one

square with battens was left out, so that that provided the entrance, so we would get on a ladder at night and crawl in there, all of use including Hans, and we would leave this square off until somebody gave us the high sign that we better put it on. But here there were -- there was no air intake at all, th -- if we put that thing there, w-we were totally without any -- never mind air flow, but -- but would have -- would have died of suffocation had we had to spend any long time there. And -- and so we spent all the rest of our nights in the -- in the -- in the last parts -- years of the war, there.

Q: And that included your mother for -- for a time.

A: Initially, yeah.

Q: Initially it did.

A: Exactly.

Q: Did you ever find the -- where they buried your mother?

A: Yes, I went -- I went back to see the grave.

Q: So there's a real place?

A: There is a real grave.

Q: And she's identified?

A: Yes. Now, I don't know if my aunt and uncle took care of that part. I don't know if they had her reburied, I don't know if she was originally buried right there but not marked. I don't know. I know that they gave money for her care, for the care of the grave in perpetuity because they did tell me that at some point.

Q: Right. Di -- this is a question I don't think you can answer, cause I don't even know if there is an answer to the question, but when you're -- when -- do you have any idea when your mother received mail from your father when he was in Auschwitz? I'm just wondering, and maybe you

can investigate it at some point, is there some connection between getting that letter, and her f -- realizing what Auschwitz was, which you wouldn't have known, but maybe she did. And --

A: I can't believe that she didn't know what Auschwitz -- which -- what Auschwitz meant then.

Q: Right, no, I'm s -- I'm assuming she did.

A: She did, and I think what you're sort of implying is was this finally her real confrontation with the meaning and what this meant for her husband, which is very possible, and -- and -- and then the reason it may be possible is because the -- the -- when she died and -- and the adults, the remaining adults in the family said she died of a broken heart. Y-You may be onto something, that that's in fact -- did create some kind of emotional stress, physical reaction, I-I don't know.

Q: But you could not, a-as a kid, have detected for a moment. And it could have been --

A: I-I know that she was very, very distressed with the last -- I don't know if it was a letter or letters. But -- but it was very clear to me that there was a progression of news that got worse each time.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I don't know if it was actually what was in the letter, or whether it was the postmarks on the letter, because I don't think they let anything stay in the letter that was of any use.

Q: Yeah, right.

A: Or -- or any news. And the other thing that -- I -- I know that even papers, radio, whatever notwithstanding, I know that there was a lot information that we got by word of mouth that was being -- for example the fact that after we went into hiding and the round-ups continued, we -- I know that we got word of the fact that all my father's family was wiped out. He had five brothers, each of whom had families and children and wives, and we got word of the fact that they had all been deported, and everybody knew -- seemed to know what that meant. I didn't, but

I knew that they knew. They got word of the fact that my grandmother, her husband had died before we went into hiding, and I remember my grandmother at our house, sitting Shiva in a black -- black dress and -- and on a wooden bench and -- and so forth. So I knew what that meant long before I knew any connection to Judaism or anything. But I knew that she was in mourning. And I spoke a little German for those early years, I must have been three years old at the time. But then she was in a nursing home when we went into hiding. And the word came back to us that -- th-that there had been a round-up of that nursing home, that the trucks had just pulled up in front, that they threw people out the doors and out the verandas like so many chickens going to slaughter. I know we heard that, cause I heard that then.

Q: You heard it then?

A: And so I -- I n -- I-I don't think that there was -- that -- that's why it's so hard to listen to people saying that they didn't know what was going on in that time. I th -- I think you -- you couldn't help but know what was going on. And -- and some of the p -- some of the writers who have written about these experiences also -- partly you knew what was going on because there was -- there was the knowledge that happened in the east. You knew about the -- you know, they -- they pr -- they were first perhaps not extermination camps, but you knew that people were put to death. And th -- and this -- this came up in this film about Dachau for example, what people said, th-the residents said, well this was not -- this was not an extermination camp. Well the -- some of the first efforts of extermination were done in Dachau. And I -- I'd -- I know there wasn't television and so forth, but th -- but people knew, people knew. And -- and America knew. America knew. And -- and again, in David Wyman's book, that's all documented line by line, what they knew. That just wasn't expedient to get involved. Just wasn't where they wanted to go at that time. But it's -- it's -- I don't -- I-I -- I don't know -- I don't know what you do

about that, you know, I didn't -- I -- I mean here and now -- and this -- when you see these parallels of which is so horrible when you see the European nations apologizing to the Bosnians about the fact that they didn't act when they should have to stop that bloodshed. W-W-Why don't we do that? Why do we -- why don't we take action about values that are right and wrong instead of well, you know, you have to play the political game, and I -- I think I used to be a whole lot more optimistic than I am now, but I think when the whole Bosnian crisis broke, I just -- I -- I felt as if the bottom had g-gone out from under my stomach, and I just kind of felt -- w-w-we just aren't going anywhere. I mean, how these families that could -- that intermarried, these families that were neighbors and friends. You get the right manipulator out there doing the right PR stuff, and everybody loses everything that they supposedly claim is -- is what they believe. It's very hard. It's very hard to accept that. And -- and I think the -- I think when I first came here, of course, people asked me all kinds of questions. I was still a little kid when I came, I mean when ha -- when the war ended, of course, there was such a sense of -- a-again, what did I as a child know? It's very difficult to know. I knew that we were being liberated. I knew that freedom was once again back in Holland, and I knew what it meant for me. I knew that I could run in the street, I knew I could open the door, I knew I could talk in a regular voice. I knew that I could find friends to play with on the street, and I did. There was a child across the street who -- whose father was also a baker, but an only child who was a year older than I, and we -- we neither of us knew about each other for -- for nearly three and a half years here. And -- and I went to school, and she and I walked to school, and I had that life that had been on hold, that I had been waiting for as a small child. And then about December, I got very sick. I had bronchitis, I had pneumonia, I had whooping cough. I had -- I've forgotten, something else.

Q: All together?

A: All together at the same time. I was really very sick and they finally took me and put me in the hospital. And I was on a ward, a huge room that was just filled with cribs, mostly infants and toddlers, I was the oldest child by far on that floor, because most kids my age, I guess, wouldn't have gotten whooping cough. And it's kind of funny because I don't know whether I missed getting vaccinated or whether that's not a hundred percent foolproof. But I was so sick they weren't sure I was going to make it. And I certainly wasn't sure I was going to make it, although I don't know what that meant in my child's mind. But every night there would be children carried -- dead children carried out of these cribs and I would see this around me all day long and all night long. I mean, that was a huge ward just -- just lined up crib after crib after crib. And you would hear these babies convulsing and coughing, as I was also. And then not be able to breathe, and die. And I was in the hospital about three months, or at least I was sick for a very long time. And during this time there was some -- some effort made at -- at ca -- well, actually the effort made to contact us ha-happened be -- prior to the time I got sick. But during -- but backtracking a little bit to the -- to the freedom thing, I remember the feeling of freedom. I remember being able to throw open the door and running down the street to this street we were trying to find, the Hooftweg, which means basically, the headway. And running along with every citizen who could walk or crawl, to line those streets to welcome the allied troops.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And you know, the joy, it -- it's -- on one of the pages of that newspaper e -- edition that I gave you, everybody who was anybody, as I say, who could get there, was there on the street. And the -- and the soldiers, mostly actually Canadian and British, not too many U.S., threw candy in the crowds and stockings for the girls and the cheering went on and on and on, and I

don't know if I knew what I was doing and exactly what it meant to me at that time, except this incredible sense of freedom, just -- just physically feeling it.

Q: Well sure, because physically, whatever you knew about the politics, or didn't know, was irrelevant in a way, because you were stuck. And now you weren't stuck any more.

A: True, true, but that I could really feel that and participate in this -- it was incredible.

Q: Mm. We're going to have to change the tape.

End of Tape Six

Beginning Tape Seven

Q: Hedy, when your mother dies, are you and Betsy afraid that Tante Toos will not keep you there, or do you have no fear?

A: I don't remember fear as an emotion at all during this time, other than this constant anxiety kind of thing that something is going to happen and I don't know what that something is, which is why we have to be quiet and so forth, and that's why we can't be seen. I hadn't -- I don't -- don't think, at least I don't remember, personally thinking about what's going to happen to us now. I didn't -- I don't know if I was just so young it didn't occur to me that this might be an issue. Whether my sister thought something else, I don't know.

Q: Right.

A: And there was certainly some change and shift in the dynamic now, because now Tante Toos feels even more responsible for -- for us -- for both of us, and for me in particular, I think, and my sister felt that she needed to rise to the occasion, because she was the -- the -- the next, the closest relative.

Q: Right.

A: And therefore she felt she needed to act in this mature, responsible way and -- and set the limits for me and do all those kinds of things. And sometimes they clashed, and I was aware of that. And I think this was very hard for both. I'm sure it was difficult for this adult who had done all this for us and -- and so on, and -- and then therefore probably had occasional mixed feelings. And that was very hard for my sister, who must have had to walk a thin line between also being a child, but also being the one that felt dutifully responsible for me, and -- and how to behave in a way that was not ungrateful, and yet try to put her perspective out there.

Q: Right, right.

A: A-And I -- and this must have been extremely difficult. I-I certainly was aware of it, but I don't remember specifics.

Q: Do you remember any -- anything that would be like a mourning period? I mean, do you remember your sister being depressed because your mother is gone, or do you remember a change in the -- in the house because this happened? Or is it all a blur now?

A: I s -- it's pretty much a blur. I don't remember -- as I say, the -- when you're asking me about memory, I don't remember there being a mourning period. I don't remember there being a time that was different from another time except my mother wasn't present. I-I don't remember any markers, or any things that I can hitch any kind of response to.

Q: Right.

A: Just don't know.

Q: Do things get physically -- the winter of 1944 is -- or is it '45 that's particularly bad in Holland, I can't remember now. Is it -- do things get worse physically for you all?

A: Well, the things get worse in the sense that we now have, as they say, we've gone through all of the food, all of our supplies, there is nothing H-Hans can't really go out in the country any more, because th -- he runs the danger --

Q: Right.

A: -- of getting picked up, so yeah, I think I was a total of -- I've forgotten how many pounds, but I was one very skinny little kid at the end of the war, and I suppose probably when you ask me did the fish hook thing cause an infection, it's probably quite a miracle that it didn't. But I sort of made up for it by being so very sick at that time.

Q: Yeah.

A: And -- and my sister, who was trying to run around and -- and take care of the bureaucracy stuff while I was in the hospital, and getting passports, and papers signed, and so forth, broke out into the -- first of all, she had terrible, terrible stomach problems right after the war, and I'm sure that they had to do with -- well, I'm not sure, but I think they had to do with all this suppressed anxiety and fear, and trying to walk this delicate line between things. And she had -- I remember having terrible, she had terrible, terrible cramp attacks, and I remember being dispatched to go down to the Hooftweg, to this [indecipherable] and -- and trying to find the open -- the only one pharmacy that was still open, and get her Valerian, I remember Valerian drops. Valerian I guess is still occasionally used, but it's some kind of -- it has some sort of sedative reaction on the muscles of the stomach and so on. And I remember when I got so sick and sh -- and I was in the hospital -- in fact, I had my 10th birthday in the hospital, I remember this. And I remember this new little friend I had made from across the street, I remember her not being allowed into the ward, and there were some glass doors at one side at sort of roughly the same level where I was, except I was way into the center of the ward. And she was -- this is February now, she's looking at -- and her face pressed against the door, holding up a sign, happy birthday, and so forth, coming to see me. But my sister had these terrible, what probably were staph infections, just these running sores and one terrible one on her -- on the top of her foot and she couldn't get a shoe on, and she had to keep going and she had the shoemaker cut out some hunk of the shoe leather for her, so that she could continue to -- to go about her business and so on. Because by this time in that -- immediately after the war, the first thing that --that we got right after the war, after we had this incredible jubilation on the Hooftweg, was that everybody hauled out their clandestine radios and their record players and their hidden Dutch flags, and the orange streamers for the House of Orange, and o -- suddenly this stuff came out of nowhere, and we had

three day block parties, essentially, the whole city that I remember, everywhere there were loudspeakers running, music, and there was dancing in the street and there was just unbridled joy. And the only people who were not unbridled in their joy were those -- especially the woman who were known to have consorted with the Nazi soldiers. And they were rounded up and shorn in public and ended up having to wear scarves over their heads to hide their shame, and so on. That was pretty awful.

Q: Did you see that?

A: Yeah, I did see it. I did see that. But there was this just -- this incredible, you know, there's -- there's n -- there are no words to describe this sense of freedom and this jubilation that took place during this liberation time. And of course now we were seeing army uniforms and -- and -- and the allied soldiers who were headquartered wherever they were, and -- and the soldiers were -- were walking the streets and my girlfriend and I had a little tiny pad each, because there was still not stuff in the stores, they were still basically shuttered. And the two words of English -- actually, I knew three by the time I came to this country, but the first two words I learned were signature please. And it -- we invented this activity, we would go to a soldier and hand him this pad an-and little stubby pencil and ask for his signature. And I still have those too, someplace.

Q: You do?

A: Little pad of signatures, even some X's where they didn't -- couldn't obviously write. And again, mostly British and Canadians. And I remember that the other one was candy and please. So we would give them, we'd ask for their signature and then we would ask for candy, please. Because, of course, they had thrown the stuff from the --

Q: Right.

A: -- trucks as they came through, on the tanks and so on. And -- and there was this great loving, and -- and -- and rejoicing and -- and great love for the Americans and British and everyone. And then w-we had -- we had these block parties, but we had them -- we -- I seem to remember that we had three big ones in -- in fairly rapid succession, like with -- within two or three weeks there was another one, and then there was another one. And what I think was happening is that th -- that they were celebrating different things happening as the war was really, completely ending. And -- and then I -- I started school, there was a -- a neighborhood school, and I went -- walked with my girlfriend and she and I became great buddies and spent lots of time together. And after the war she asked if I might -- would like to come on vacation with her and her parents, they were going to a farm. And I was so excited, and I just loved going, and I was allowed to go, and it was a week. And I fell in love with the rooster's feathers, those sort of blue green feathers. And the whole chicken yard was covered with these feathers, and I collected them. And I came back -- this was my great, you know, souvenir from this trip, which I just adored. I loved being on the farm with the animals and everything, and I had this great bag of feathers which I took with me, which I also brought to America, which then got eaten by the moths somewheres along the way and had to get tossed.

Q: They allowed you to bring these in?

A: Yes, yes. How, I don't know, but they did. Well, I'll tell you how in a -- in -- in a minute, but the -- that -- the happy days of this thing were then also made happier by the fact that we got air lifts from the Swedish Red Cross, we got air lifts of bread, and -- primarily bread, and then powdered milk were among the first things that came. And that was the first time that I tasted this sort of soft, whitish bread. I don't know why they -- maybe it was because it kept well, so that that's why they -- cause it really wasn't bread I was familiar with.

Q: Right.

A: And then we'd began receiving parcels from both an -- my aunt, the other aunt, who was -- had meanwhile come to America, and my uncle and aunt. And they sent packages with clothing and food and peanut butter.

Q: How did they know where you were?

A: That I'm not sure of, but I know that they contacted -- initially they contacted the American, what's now I guess called the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. I think then it was called the American Joint Distribution Committee. And they conti -- tacted them because that organization was in -- was somehow infiltrated with the troops, in fact they traveled -- their workers traveled in American uniforms. And they apparently did a lot of -- of rounding up of refugees in all the countries, and were the -- the -- the agency that you got in touch with if you wanted to know if your relatives were still alive, and they -- they located us, and found us, and gave -- and to serve as the intermediary and so forth. And then they helped to arrange for us to go to America.

Q: Did you want to go?

A: No, no, I didn't want to go. I mean, if you can imagine how eager I had been before the war started, to go to school, to have a life and so forth and so on, and now I come through this period of intense confinement and containment and -- and life picks up again, and I can wave the flag and I can put the picture of Queen Wilhemina over my bed -- which I also brought to America and also had over my bed in Rochester, New York. And I could do the things that I had looked forward to doing, you know, and I loved school, and I did very we -- I did very well in everything in school except handwerken. And handwerken is embroidery and knitting and that kind of stuff, and I always either flunked it or was borderline. I could somehow never get my

hands to do what they were supposed to do. And I remember -- I remember my teacher, [indecipherable] and I remember having school trips to the Rembrandt house and to the museum and seeing the night watch for the first time, and all these things were very exciting to me. And now, all of a sudden we should stop again, and -- and go somewhere where -- all I knew about were the Apaches, and that was sort of a saving grace, but I didn't -- I-I didn't know this aunt and uncle or if -- if they had seen me as a baby, I didn't remember them.

Q: Right.

A: I was very happy with Tante Toos and living where I was, and I had this girlfriend and I played at her house and she had toys and I went on vacation with her family and I didn't want to go at all. And I was finally sort of convinced of the fact that maybe it might be worth going because I was told that in America people were so wealthy that if you had a hole in your socks, they just threw out the socks, whereas I had to learn how to darn socks, cause we hadn't had very many socks and you just had to make it last, so --

Q: And who told you this tale? Do you know? But wa --

A: I don't know.

Q: -- what was it like for Tante Toos, I mean here she was --

A: Very hard.

Q: -- taking you with her --

A: Very hard.

Q: -- for what? F -- three years?

A: Three and a half years, three and a half years.

Q: Three and a half years, and two years -- no -- almost two years, she's essentially your mother.

A: Really for two years, cause I was still living there after the war, so --

Q: Right, right.

A: It was terrible, and I was aware that it was terrible. And she was very unhappy. I don't think sh -- to my knowledge, she didn't try to stop this, but I am pretty sure that she offered to foster us.

Q: She did.

A: To have us become part of her family. And I don't know with whom she'd had any deliberations about this, but I am pretty sure that that took place. And she was very unhappy about the whole thing. I -- I don't know how my sister felt at that time, anyway. And -- and I think it fell to my sister to try to sort of ease that difficulty and -- and so on. And I don't -- I think she knew my aunt and uncle, but certainly not well, because they only passed through the -- you know, they never spent any -- I think he -- be -- spent a week there, in Amsterdam on his way through, but --

Q: But she wouldn't have known them.

A: Oh, yes, she knew --

Q: Oh, your sister?

A: Y -- my sister.

Q: Your sister.

A: Was my sister, not Tante Toos.

Q: As oppo -- not to too -- not to too -- yes.

A: And -- and it w -- I knew -- I was very well aware of the fact that sh -- that this was hard for her. I think at this point in time, I think certain things began to register on me.

Q: Yeah.

A: And that was one of them.

Q: And was it difficult for Hans, or you don't know?

A: I don't know, partly because for him also, liberation meant liberation, and he later on became a photojournalist. I don't know exactly what were the goings on between him and my sister. I know they were very close, and then there was a very close friend of his with whom the two of them were very close, so it was kind of a tre -- a threesome. I -- I -- I think it was very hard on my sister for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was leaving what now had become her -- her -- maybe more than just a very close relationship.

Q: Right, right.

A: And -- and that was very hard, and -- and then the -- the JDC, the Joint Distribution Committee also funneled food and clothing and so forth. And then they sent a representative in uniform whose name was Mrs. Roosevelt, if you can believe it. And I f-fell in love with her, I thought she was just a lovely, lovely person, you know. Rich, dark hair and -- and this wonderful American uniform. I mean, this American uniform was -- I-I -- I don't know how to say how hard it was for me during the anti-Vietnam times, when I took a strong anti-Vietnam stand. And I was a girl scout leader at the time, and we were invited to march in the Memorial Day parade, and I had such a difficult time. And I actually sat the -- the kids down and explained to them that they had been invited, and this is what Memorial Day was all about, and so forth and so on, and that I myself owed something to the American soldiers, but at -- at this particular time, this also meant something that I did not want to share, that I didn't believe in, and that I felt was wrong. And I wanted them to have two things out of that. One was, not a disrespect for Memorial Day, in fact, understanding that I owed my life to these men, and that I recognized that, and that I was very torn up about this dilemma. And I also wanted them to understand that if you believe that these values are important, then you have to do what this means for you, but you don't impose it

on someone else. So I made it clear to the 10 to 13 year old kids there that if it was important to show your respect, and you did not have a reason not to do that, that they should go ahead and do that. That just because I wasn't marching, I wasn't telling them that they shouldn't.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I think it was a lesson that went home to a number of them. But it was very upsetting to me. It was very upsetting to me, and I've often thought of Memorial Day times during these difficult times, and now here we are back again in a situation that is just so horrible to me, so horrible to me, and I don't know what to say because every day you see not only all these Americans -- all these young Americans and old Americans being killed, and thousands of Iraqis being killed, and each of these, like me, has a family, has a mother, a father, has children, some of them, brothers and sisters, and we just wipe them out, like so many ants, you know? And the farther away we can do our destruction, it seems, the easier it is. We don't have to look these people in the eye, we can just drop a bomb. And -- and I just can't over that. I just cannot get over that.

Q: So what was it like to see this M-Ms. Rosa - Roosevelt? I don't know if she's in --

A: Yeah, I think she was probably Miss, I'm not sure, but in any case, it was wonderful, I mean, it made an almost -- and she was that kind of person anyway, but it made an instant connection for us, and for me.

Q: And the uniform mattered?

A: And the uniform mattered. And apparently this is -- this uniform travel for these refugee workers was done on purpose so that they would have more freedom of movement and so on. So she gathered us up and made arrangements for us to go by train to Paris, and --

Q: Do you remember leaving Tante Toos?

A: Yes.

Q: Was that awful? That particular moment?

A: I don't remember it being awful, but I do remember the hugging and the kissing the tears and the goodbyes.

Q: There was crying, yes.

A: And then I remember us going to Paris on the train, and I was very excited to be on a train, and -- and she -- ar -- I don't know where this all came from, and how wonderful it was that it happened, but we were in Paris for a few days and she took us around Paris --

Q: Really?

A: And she took us to the amusement park outside of Paris, or wherever it was, and -- and it was wonderful. And I'm sure especially wonderful to my sister, who had studied French and studied about France and on -- so forth. And then she took us on the train from Paris to Marseille, and in Marseille we were put under the aegis of a French orphan group, whose name I can't quite remember, but was initials, OCS or something like that, I don't remember what it was. And they put all the children -- I mean, we were the only two, as far as I know, who didn't belong to that French group, but there were hundreds of -- hundreds of children of all ages, and they put them all in the hold of this ship on these layers of canvas and gave every child a dirty blanket and said that you're a number so and so on the thing. And I didn't speak French, but every other child did, and my sister did and so on. And all I remember is seeing this big opening on -- big s -- huge square opening and seeing the sky from the hold of this ship, which had been originally a Greek troop sh -- a Greek freighter, which had been ta -- taken over and converted into a troop ship, and was now converted into a passenger liner. So the passengers, the other passengers were really all adults, and the kids were all in the hold. A-And I don't know if there was any other cargo. And

we go across the waters of the Atlantic and sail, and the -- part -- partway into this trip I get sick again, and I get this pneumonia and the bronchitis and the stuff all over again.

Q: So it comes back?

A: Some sort of resmi -- respiratory stuff comes back, bronchitis, which I had fairly often after that. And my sister, in the best of efforts, took me to the ship's dispensary, which had a Greek doctor, who was kind of -- I -- I don't know where his training was from, but what they did to me there was cupping. And I don't know if you've ever heard of or read about cupping, but cupping is taking something the equivalent of maybe a shot glass -- no, a little bigger, whatever, cocktail glass or something, and you create a vacuum in the glass by lighting a match into it, and you use up the air and the oxygen, and before you have a chance to fill that back in again, you press it down on the back. And they put rows and rows of these glasses on my back. And then, of course, because there's a -- a vacuum in the glass, the glass pulls the skin and everything with the skin into the glass. And then you yank these glasses off. So this provides -- what I decided the -- the reason for this was, to make you focus on some other pain, of such intensity that you forgot about what you really came for. But it probably came from the medieval notion that if you get the blood moving, that you could get the ill humors out, or something. And I was in huge pain, terrible pain, and I sat on a -- some -- some chair or other, some corner of the deck, swathed in blankets and the tears streaming down my face, for days. And the sa -- the -- the sailors kind of took pity on me, and they would bring me an occasional piece of fruit or so -- the food on this boat was all spoiled. The only thing that was edible was some of the fruit. I -- I didn't eat anything except the fruit that they brought. And meanwhile I wasn't getting any better, so I had to report back to the dispensary and they would do it again and again. And I cried so bitterly and pleaded with them to stop doing it, that they finally stopped doing it, but then they did something

somewhat similar which is -- which is, if you can imagine plaster that is like an emery board on the other side, is like sandpaper. And they put this plaster on you with the sandpaper side towards the skin, and then they rip it off in rapid succession. So you have again, a similar thing going on, but it's just horrendously painful. At least it wasn't as bad as the cupping. So partway across the ocean, one of the engines dies, and then I became sort of aware of the fact there were all these adults on the boat, because then there was a lot of chaos, and a lot of crying, and a lot of people who were certain we were never going to make it, and I saw how upset these people were. And I don't think it registered on me what it meant that one of the motors died and you couldn't do anything. Well, we did make it over that ocean and we did get to New York, and when we arrived in New York there was a dock strike. So now we're on this boat, twirling around in the harbor day after day after day with this dock strike going on, and --

Q: Are you any better?

A: N -- I must have been because I didn't -- don't remember any more of these treatments, and I remember coming into the harbor and I remember seeing the -- that big neon sign, that horse with -- the winged red horse, I don't know if it was Texaco or Mobil or s --

Q: Texaco, I think.

A: Texaco?

Q: Yeah.

A: And I remember a huge, lit-up sign for Lorna Doone cookies, and all the city all lit up and these skyscrapers looming up the air and so on. Anyway, finally, apparently the health department stepped in and decided that this was a very bad situation, have all these children in the hold of the ship. So they took just the children off on -- on one of these sightseeing water boats, or several decker boat things. And ki -- when we came into Ellis Island and unloaded, and

my aunt and uncle had both come to New York, but my uncle had had to go back, because of the dock strike, he couldn't take off from work so long. So we came into this enormous processing hall of some sort or other, and walked in there, and I remember my sister had her arm around me, and she was carrying whatever little baggage we had. And as we came in at either side of the -- this enormous doorway, were women standing with a stack of presents, and each child was given this beautifully wrapped box. Now, what's in this box? A set of three handkerchiefs, and some white handkerchiefs for the -- for the boys. Well, not everybody -- ther--there wasn't the sort of universal prevalence of Kleenex, I mean yes they were on the market, but not the way they are now, and women -- proper women carried handkerchiefs. And although these were not elegantly embroidered, they were -- they were beautifully stamped with pretty flowers and so forth and so on. And I thought how wonderful that I'm coming to this new country, and they don't even know me, and they're here to say welcome with a gift? This made an indelible impression on me, that they would think enough to -- to -- to welcome me to the country. I don't know who the agency was, I don't know who inspired that idea because it was both useful as well as a kind of a luxury.

Q: Right.

A: And it was just a lovely, lovely thing, you know? And it's remained with me in my mind ever since.

Q: Obviously.

A: Ever since.

Q: We have to change the tape.

End of Tape Seven

Beginning Tape Eight

Q: Who got the china?

A: Tante Toos.

Q: Did you leave that with her?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And did you and Betsy discuss this, or did -- do you -- do you remember?

A: I-I certainly didn't have anything to do in the discussion that I remember. And I'm sure that it was -- I -- I -- I'm not sure how much my sister cared about the china, but I -- I think it was mi -- y-you know, it would have been improper somehow, to take something like that, which clearly would have been a lovely thing for Tante Toos, who couldn't have afforded to have had it -- to go out and buy it or whatever. And I -- and how do you ever thank someone for having done what she did? I-I -- I know my sister has entered her papers and story and background and everything in the Yad Vashem Righteous Gentile history and archives and so on. But you know, first of all, this is coming along after the fact, and -- and sh-she is now gone, although I was able to go back to Holland and meet with her and introduce her to my husband and --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- two small children. And I -- I -- oh, I had such trepidations about this meeting, but it went just flawlessly, even though she doesn't speak a -- didn't speak a word of English. But she's now gone also, and whatever honors and so forth, and so on -- which is not what she did this for in the first place, but -- but how do you rev -- repay someone for that kind of gift, for that kind of sacrifice? It's impossible. I c -- I couldn't even begin to brainstorm ideas about anything. And the older I get, the more I understand it, and the more I admire here. She was not a complicated woman, she was not well educated. She, as I say, worked for my father in the bakery as a

salesgirl, and they must have somehow kept in touch because even when she was -- m-my sister did indicate that there was -- that they had kept in touch and so forth. I don't know if there was any socializing back and forth. But that's -- y-you know, I -- I -- why did she do this, did she do it because there was money to be had? I'm sure that wasn't an issue. Did she do it -- there may have well passed money, but I'm sure this was not the reason. Did she do it for religious reasons? I don't think so. I don't remember them being very religious -- I mean, I remember -- I remember the neighbors after the war, I remember that the neighbors who ran the embroidery store next door were two -- two ladies who seemed -- who then seemed elderly to me, they probably weren't, and -- and they were very religious, and they asked if I would like to go to Catholic mass with them the following whatever, whatever, and -- and I was a child who really kept away from religion. Now why? It's not so easy to say. People make an easy assumption that it's because of my -- my experiences. I'm not sure. Somehow these experiences are in a separate category. Whereas I was never a child who had great notions of -- of God and -- and so forth, I had -- religion made me uncomfortable, and I just wasn't very keen on it. But -- but I don't think that that was the motivating factor w-w-wh-why would she respond so differently than the other siblings with whom she was raised? So I think some of that had to do, perhaps, with the personal relationship that she had with my father. He had been very good to her, I understand, and maybe -- m-maybe that's sort of what I always preach about, which is that when -- when people get to know each other, when people rub elbows together, when you see that -- that, you know, this person is not some stereotypic, stigmatized non -- untouchable kind of person -- I-I don't know, m-maybe she had a crush on my father when she was young. I -- I -- I have no idea why she did it. Did she do it as wi -- what you said earlier, that she perhaps wasn't wild about Jews, but this is a Jew she knew personally and she felt that she -- that he didn't deserve, and his family didn't

deserve this. I -- I don't know, and I'll never know. She never, to my knowledge, talked about, either then or later.

Q: And you never -- you didn't say, why did you do this? Maybe she doesn't even know.

A: That wa -- might well be the case. And I -- I -- whether it was a spontaneous action on her part, I think it might well have been, but she stayed with it, and she, you know, could easily have sort of changed her mind along the way, anywhere along the way, and -- and didn't.

Q: Right.

A: And then when her own son was in danger as well, I mean, it was th-the -- the dangers just intensified.

Q: Right.

A: It -- it was -- it was tough, and --

Q: What the -- when liberation came, and people realized that you and Betsy -- I don't know what they thought about your mother, whether they even had any idea that your mother had been there -- were there and you weren't related to Tante Toos, did they say, who are these people, where -- where'd they come from, were there questions? Do you know?

A: That would seem logical, but -- but I-I- think on the whole -- I'm sort of generalizing, but it certainly was true at that time; at that time, certainly, Europeans tended to be much more private and keep much more to themselves. So even if they felt this, I don't think they -- that they would go to her and say this. And there was little, if any, social interaction between the neighbors and this family. And I think that that was fairly typical, I don't think that people -- the other thing is that social life and friendships, at least at that time, and to some degree still, were among people who were much closer. There wasn't -- there isn't this level of sort of almost superficial friendship and socializing that you have in -- in America. In fact, one of the things I always try to

-- to talk to foreign students about when they come to America to study is the fact that people will say, how are you, but they don't really want to know how you are. That's -- it's a greeting, it's not an -- an inquiry. And -- and some of our students did wonderful little take-offs on this, you know. How -- how am I? Well, my knee hurts, and I wasn't able to get the laundry done yesterday, and so forth and so on, Meanwhile the other student's out the door. At this -- in -- in the same way, they sometimes end up very disappointed because they say -- the students will say, well, call me up some time, or we'll get together, but nobody ever follows it up with a distinct invitation. And those are the same kinds of cultural differences even more so, that operated there. People kept to themselves, they had their little yards, they had the fences. If they observed things, they didn't socialize about those things. So if some of that took place, I don't know about it.

Q: So w -- you weren't identified as Jewish after the war, and that was not an issue --

A: Oh, I'm sure I was.

Q: You were, uh-huh.

A: I'm sure I was.

Q: Yes.

A: But I didn't have to wear a star.

Q: Right.

A: And I was back to my n -- regular name.

Q: Right.

A: I mean, I was called Hedy in Dutch. I-I was called Hady by my family, Hady, or Hedy being the short form of Hedwig, but I didn't have to be Hedy Vermeulen --

Q: Right.

A: -- which was the equivalent of Jane Doe, or John Smith. I could -- I could be Hedy Cohen.

Q: What happened to your original house, do you know?

A: Well, that's a good question. Initially, it apparently was used by the Nazis as a some kind of -- I don't know if it was an office or headquarters or something, or -- or officer's quarters. I -- actually when I was back in Holland at one time, tried to find out what happened to this house. It's not clear to me that we actually owned it, it's possible that we rented it and I don't know that. But I tried to get hold of the -- of the documents that would indicate what the story was, and there is basically a large, blank space.

Q: Right.

A: And at some point or other, the city of Amsterdam took it over, and for a brief period of time they had orphans living there after the war. And then I think it was sold to a private party, and -- which may well have been the one that I stopped to ask if I could see the place.

Q: Uh-huh. So you never got anything back from your -- your old things as a kid, right?

A: Nothing from the house, nothing from all the stuff that we closed the door on.

Q: Right, right.

A: Paintings, and rugs, and -- and beautiful furniture and so forth. Nothing, nothing. Holland as a -- a country did finally make some blanket payment of a couple thousand dollars to everyone who was caught up in this war, with the understanding that you then didn't try to sue them, or get anything back. But there was no quid pro quo for specifics.

Q: Right, right.

A: Wh-Whether you had a house or not have a house. But it was very difficult to find out anything. And again, it was because of the exposé of some journalist that it came to light that the number of Dutch banks apparently had in their v-vaults and safe deposit box, all kinds of jewelry

and antiques and silver, and so forth and so on, that had been deposited there by Jews, which they claimed they didn't have. And apparently the -- these banks had hidden this stuff in the attics of some houses on the canals and so forth, in Amsterdam. And some bright-eyed journalist exposed this whole mess, which is how this payment came about, how this sort of blanket payment was made. But you know -- I mean, f-for some people it's too late, it's -- a payment was too late for my aunt. She died in '97, and I was in Vienna, and I learned when I was in Vienna that Austria, at some brief moment in time was shamed into making some kind of compensation, and that they -- it was so shamefully small, apparently, that there was a big -- I don't remember this, but a big hullabaloo about it. And they stopped this small payment, and then they started again, made it a little bit bigger. But they kept the time period within which you could apply for that so narrow, and that the announcing of this worldwide so closed, that nobody knew about it. I mean, here my aunt reads and talks German, and so forth, reads the papers. Her brother was -- came back from Russia to live in Vienna, they didn't know about it. I talked to my -- my aunt's sister-in-law, who is now in a home for the aged in Vienna, and I asked her if she knew anything about this and she said no. She doesn't know anything about this. And when I went to f -- inquire about this and so forth, they in -- practically didn't say anything, but immediately said to me, it's not for heirs, it's only for that person. Well -- or -- or persons. So they made it very clear that they weren't about to do anything. But the N^{th} degree of this is how do you repay anybody? How do you put a figure on what happened?

Q: You don't.

A: But there are many, many people, and I feel myself a very fortunate exception, but there are many, many people living in poverty, living with very little means, elderly, who should have that, and nobody should be asking them to have to go Vienna to rattle the cage there, and say --

you know, this is just so terrible. Or -- or what happened with the Swiss banks? My family apparently put some money in Swiss banks, which we have not been able to get out. We have not been able to locate it, we have not been able to provide them adequate proof of the fact that this was done. What am I supposed to do, get my parents back from the grave? It -- it's just very hard. And -- and the Swiss in their, you know, great neutrality, have profited enormously from this neutrality, financially.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And every other way.

Q: After you got the hankies on Ellis Island, did you have to stay in Ellis Island for a day or two, or would -- were you immediately able to see your aunt?

A: N-No, we were immediately through the -- we processed through, and my aunt was waiting for us in -- behind some whatever, whatever. And she used to tell me how she will never, ever -- w-would never get out of her memory, out of her visual mind's eye, the -- this 18 year old with her hand around her little sister -- her arm around her little sister, carrying this little satchel in these clothes that didn't exactly fit and so forth and so on. And by then I had pigtails again, and -- and i-i -- th-there is this school picture of me which shows how I -- I looked at the time. And my farewell present from my dear friend across the street was this big, big ribbon, and the proper pin to put those big ribbons in on top of your head, because that was the fashion of the kids at that time, and I didn't have those. And she gave me one of hers, and it was a farewell present. And so I wore that for my first day of school in Rochester, but it was not appreciated by my peers, and so I quickly put it in a drawer.

Q: Di -- had -- had your aunt and uncle sent you pictures of them so you could recognize them, or you didn't know what even they looked like? And she is the married wife of your mother's brother.

A: Correct.

Q: Right. So it isn't even the blood relative that you see at that moment.

A: Right.

Q: But she knew what you folks looked like? She had seen pictures?

A: Oh yes, she had seen us as little -- little -- and as -- as a lot younger

Q: But you were now so much older.

A: Right, right.

Q: But she recognized you, or so --

A: Apparently.

Q: Somehow.

A: Apparently. I think probably my sister didn't change that much. I suspect I did, quite a lot.

Q: Was that okay to see -- what was that like, seeing her?

A: It was sort of -- I'm not sure you can assign any -- any -- sort of anything to that, because I-I -- I guess for me it was, well this was the person who was my aunt. I mean, it was sort of like putting it out there, and saying, well this is -- because I didn't remember her coming through, I had no idea what she looked like. And I guess I say I was -- wasn't thrill -- actually, my sister may have sent them the passport pictures that we had taken.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And my passport ticsh -- picture was taken in the hospital when I was recovering, and I'm sitting on one of these Victorian settees type things --

Q: Right.

A: -- that was out in the -- the lawn area or something, and there is this little tiny face, with little, skinny pigtails, which is swathed in this enormous Navy surplus, U.S. Navy surplus sweater. And right here in the middle is U.S. on the sweater, and this is the picture of me on my passport. And she may well have sent --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- copies of these picture to them. Never thought about it, but she may have done that.

Q: Did they have kids? So you became their children.

A: Absolutely. So imagine suddenly having an 18 and a 10 year old -- or almost 11 year old. They -- I'm sure they were full of trepidation --

Q: I bet they were.

A: -- I'm sure they were. And I -- I -- well, you know, I just marvel at them when I think about it, and I think about the -- the difference in needs for an 18 years old and a 10 year old or an 11 year old, and -- and I remember coming into -- into New York and -- and going to -- to the hotel, where I had this incredible bath, which I hadn't had since God knows when. And I remember in whatever hotel we were, at the Hotel York or Hotel New York, or whatever, and my aunt is scrubbing my hair back, or whatever, whatever, and the -- on the other side of the window are some working men, who are either working on another building or washing windows or whatever, starting to whistle at the scene in this -- and there was no comment from her that I can remember, but I remember thinking something a little strange. And -- and then I remember she had one or two good friends who lived in New York who had also immigrated earlier, before things all shut down. And the next day they came to meet us, one of them came, then the other couple came, and so I quickly got to know these were their friends. And we went to have

breakfast at one of these automats, and I thought this was just wonderful, this thing where you could keep moving stuff around --

Q: Right.

A: -- and find -- and choose what you wanted, and I was very excited about that, and I remember being struck by the amount of food that was thrown out. Watching what people left on their trays, and it got tossed. Right from day one when I arrived, that made an indelible impression. And then I remember liking very much we -- in the display counter where -- where you paid the bill or whatever -- it was either there or at some other restaurant. Once place had a v -- a soft sort of stuffed toy that was a -- a kitty, and it was sort of almost real fur, maybe it was, and I fell in love with it, and one of my aunts friends bought that for me. And then in the other place I liked very much, it was a little red shoulder bag for -- for a young child, and I loved it, and the other one bought that for me. So immediately I was -- I ha -- I had these two very meaningful gifts, which I still have someplace. And then I remember being just so overwhelmed and excited about the fact that there were these fruit stands on the streets, and bananas, which I loved bananas and I had not had them since before the war. And oranges. And oranges used to be very special, and -- from Spain, and here were just this -- just enormous supply, and I still to this day will walk into these incredible supermarkets we have here, where you have these enormous amounts of everything, as much as you want. It -- if you only have the money to buy it, you can have it from all over the world. I -- it still blows my mind when I see it, and I -- it goes back to these carts on the street corner having all these things that I had not had. And I wanted bananas, bananas and bananas, and my aunt said, you're going to burst if you keep on eating like this.

Q: So you went from New York to Rochester.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Were they fairly comfortable financially?

A: Well, I th -- they lived very carefully, they lived very carefully and I -- and in retrospect when I think about it, I think they st -- they started literally with nothing, and they had very few things that they were able to bring, and very little money and they lived first in a apartment. Then I later on saw pictures of them buying, you know, their furniture bit by bit and so forth and so on. And my aunt took in some sewing, did work for some other seamster -- a --a person who had a clothing -- very fine clothing store in Rochester, and she would do hems and shorten things for them, I mean, it was sort of menial stuff for someone who had done designer --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- apparel and so on. In fact, I -- I learned to do hems, and I used to get 35 cents a hem if I helped her out, and -- to do that. And we immediately were sort of integrated into the household, and we each were given chores and responsibility in the house. And my sister and I always did the dishes after dinner. And we took turns doing bathroom cleaning and each of us had to learn to cook certain things and once a week I had to bake something for everyone. So there was a kind of sense of pulling together, and -- and stuff. But I remember immediately that it was a very warm and supportive environment. There was a lot of laughter, there was the -- and I had pictures -- I-I remember I used to love to sit on my uncle's knees, and he would sing little rhymes of -- of being a rider on a horse kind of thing. And then I would -- I saw pictures of me with a sprinkler in the backyard, and I think that they were -- they didn't have much money, and everything was budgeted. But they were -- they could take care of themselves, and they could put food on the table, and -- good food, and -- there weren't luxuries. They didn't have a car, they didn't have a television, they didn't have a radio, they didn't -- or a big radio, or a record player.

In fact, I remember when each of these things came into our lives, what a big occasion that was, and how special that was.

Q: Wow. Did your uncle remind you of your mother in some way?

A: Don't think so.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: If it was, it was at a level that I wasn't aware of.

Q: Aware of. Did they ask you about what happened in -- in -- in the situation you were in. I don't mean just about your mother, but --

A: My guess is that more of that was done with my sister, if it was done at all. Maybe they felt they should let us -- I-I don't know. I don't -- I don't remember being -- I do remember very much responding in a very negative way when their friends or other adults, or anybody for that matter, tended to ask me. Because I always had the sense that they were looking at me like something ri -- strange, some -- somebody that they couldn't relate to when I would start to tell things, so I'd stop telling them things. I just didn't -- I -- I would sort of politely -- literally work my way out of the situation. And -- and it was years like that, that I didn't talk about the war. Years, years.

Q: Is that because people responded as if you were some strange creature, or what --

A: That's at least what I remember feeling, and sort of -- I began to feel like I don't want to be this odd creature that they're going to be staring at for the next hour while we tal -- while they ask me more questions. So I didn't want to do this. And -- and that was one feeling, and the other feeling that I'm sure played into that, was that I wanted to get on with my life, I wanted to be like everybody else, and don't forget, this was not in the days of cultural diversity, multicultural education, or anything remotely resembling that. You were going to be an American as fast as

possible. You were going to lose your accents, and your strange ways, and you were going to conform to what was the way of the world in this country. And being at an age now getting ready to move into adolescent, that was sort of partly what I wanted to do, too. I wanted to be accepted, I didn't want to be looked at as odd, I -- I -- it was hard enough to be the little girl from Holland, I was one of maybe six Jewish kids in an entire elementary school of 600. And it was not a Jewish neighborhood, I did not want to explain why I didn't have blonde hair and blue eyes and why I didn't have wooden shoes. I didn't -- I wanted to desperately learn to hit a ball, for -- so that when we went out for recess and played baseball, I wasn't always the last kid left there alone because nobody wanted me on their team. So that to me was a great day when I, you know, hit that ball, and after that, boy, they vied for me on the teams.

Q: Right.

A: But it was -- it was hard, I was different on so many levels. So I just wanted, I guess, to -- to l-lose my accent, and learn to speak English, and participate in American life. I -- I mean, now I was here, it wasn't sort of like, well, do you want to go home again. I didn't want -- I mean, ad -- not that I had any choice in the matter, and I knew that, but I was now wanting to -- and I -- I -- I can only say I was made to feel -- I-I have no negative recollections of coming to my aunt and uncle's home.

Q: You don't.

A: I think it was much harder for my sister on the other hand, because here she had been an adult, she had acted as an adult, she had been responsible as an adult, she had taken care of us -- a young child. And now suddenly she was again a -- an older child in the home, and my folks had a lot of -- they -- they tried very hard, they -- they went to the high school guidance people, and they asked what should they do, after all my sister had this terrific education from the

gymnasium, and should she apply to college and so on. And basically they recommended that maybe she take her senior year, so that she'd have and -- a more even grounding from which to move into the college. And she did that, but it was hard, you know, the kids were not geared to taking in somebody like her, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- she was so much more serious, and --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- I mean, sh -- what she went through, they couldn't even fathom.

Q: Right, right.

A: So yeah, her way was much more difficult, much.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I mean, in spite of the fact that I didn't speak a word of English, and she did, because she had studied it. But it was heavily accented, and she was clearly older and more mature, and clearly a very good student, which doesn't always endear you to other high school peers.

Q: No, mm-mm.

A: It was tough.

Q: And what language did you speak with your aunt and uncle?

A: German.

Q: German?

A: German. They didn't speak Dutch.

Q: They didn't speak Dutch.

A: No.

Q: I didn't think so, yeah.

A: So my sister and I spoke Dutch with each other, German with them --

Q: German with them.

A: -- and English in school --

Q: Wow.

A: -- and on the outside.

Q: We need to change the tape. I think we'll do --

End of Tape Eight

Beginning Tape Nine

Q: What was your aunt and uncle's name?

A: Alfred and Anne.

Q: Alfred and Anne. Did they adopt you guys?

A: Yes.

Q: They did. Was that soon after you came, or later --

A: N-No, officially it actually came much later.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I -- I think that this may have been out of a certain respect of understanding that we needed to kind of grow and develop our relationship and -- and so forth, that I-I -- maybe they felt this was not a -- a good thing emotionally to do. I-I don't know exactly why.

Q: But they seem like very sensitive people.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm. They were, and -- and they also were very old world people in the sense that they had trouble sort of understanding high school life as it existed here. And so I think that created a lot of problems for my sister. And also what I pointed out earlier is that she was so much older, and had had so much freedoms, and now suddenly --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know, you have to be in by x hour and -- and whatever. And -- and there was some tension even later when she went through college at the University of Rochester and she would bring home, or some boy would come calling for her, and he happened to be German. And they apparently gave her the business about that. I don't re-remember too much about it except she was pretty unhappy about it. They basically sort of said to her, how can you -- how can you

consider going with this boy when, you know, you've lost your entire family. And -- I mean that -- that whole issue is a very tough one anyway.

Q: Right, right.

A: But I think at that time, it just was -- it -- I think it was extremely difficult -- it was extremely difficult for her.

Q: And less so for you.

A: And less so for me. And again, par-partly the age, and partly the type of person. I mean, if they were critical of her, and my -- my uncle was -- tended to be super-critical, he was a very demanding father figure, a -- he was very bright, he couldn't understand why you didn't understand your math. And when I would bring a report card home and it would have all excellents and one satisfactory, he would say, what happened here? Why didn't you get -- you know, it wa-was never isn't this a wonderful report card, but rather --

Q: What's wrong.

A: What's the pe -- he would always see the piece that was lacking. By the same token they both were very strongly committed to the importance of education, and that was not something you took lightly. And long decades afterwards, I understood from the story that he lived, that they lived, how important that was. They would have been in the poorhouse otherwise, if he hadn't been able to --

Q: Right, right.

A: An-And they always impressed on us the importance of education is something -- part of it is the fact that it's not something anyone can take away from you.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I -- it was long after, when I was doing my doctoral dissertation and I finally got to the point where I was writing the -- the dedication, that I acknowledged that early teaching, because it hadn't actually registered on me, but I realized I had sort of come slowly to a point where I understood that they were in part responsible for my continuing to -- to go there, go that route.

Q: Were they religious?

A: N -- I wouldn't say they were -- I think my aunt was less religious than my uncle. I think that they believed in the importance of maintaining certain traditions. They believed in the importance of supporting the Jewish people as a people. They became founding members of the synagogue in Westport, actually, and helped to -- to -- to set that up. They insisted that I go to Sunday school, and I guess when I was an absolute, miserable person -- child, when I was little, and -- and given to tantrums, I guess that's the biggest one I ever threw, was when they said I had to go to Sunday school. I instinctively didn't want Sunday school, I instinctively didn't want part of that, I instinctively rejected any notion of religiosity and religious stuff and all the rest of it, and I probably also rejected any other entrapment for being different again. I don't know how cognizant I was of that, but I think intuitively I was.

Q: So you're not a religious person at all, do you think? I -- I don't mean in a traditional way, even in some metaphysical way, believing that there is a higher power of some kind.

A: I'm not an agnostic -- I mean, I'm not an atheist, but I'm probably an agnostic, if -- if you have to pigeonhole me at all. But I --

Q: I don't want to if I don't have to.

A: I mean in -- in one sense, I have felt that the things that have been done in the name of religion are so reprehensible throughout history, with no religion left outside of that blanket

indictment, that I think it has not done good, it has done bad. And I -- it's only continuing that way.

Q: And when you went to Sunday school, was it terrible for you?

A: Well, it wasn't terrible, it was sort of ineffectual as far as I was concerned, it was, you know, I couldn't sleep late on Sunday and I had to go there, and blah, blah, blah, and I hated it, and I went. And I got -- I made some friends, and most of the Jewish kids didn't live in our neighborhood, so any friendships I made were difficult to follow up on because they were in other parts of Rochester. And they themselves were members of the Conservative Temple in -- in Rochester, but they felt okay with me going to the Reformed synagogue, which was interesting. But when it came to the high holidays, they walked, and they celebrated them, and they wanted me to do likewise, and I was supposed to go to services with them, and walk to Temple, and not being a great lover of walking from the days I went through the alley at the -- at the wax museum, I always sort of resented that, and I thought that the whole idea was crazy and foolish and you know, it just seemed to me sort of -- and then of course I was out of school on those days, and I didn't like that, and I had to go back and explain why wasn't I in school. And those were not the days when you were given to be excused because it was religious absence and stuff, so that was always a pain. On the other hand, by the time I got to about the eighth grade, I had a very good teacher, and we had some real history, and the history of the Jewish people. And I ended up actually valuing that because I did learn something here, and because I always found myself in the position of being the only Jewish kid in a large gathering of non-Jews. And so I was always the spokesperson, a not particularly willingl -- willingly, but people put me there. So I would have to answer questions about what do Jews believe and -- and why did they kill Christ, and all these kinds of things. And it made me rather unhappy, but I felt better having had the

class, so that I could in fact answer some questions. And so actually I stayed on, and stayed in the Confirmation year, which was yet another year, and then I learn even more about what Jews believe and why they do what they do. And then I was Confirmed and I went on and stayed in -- I-I was -- I sang in the choir in the synagogue and then I stayed on and did two more years of what was called post-Confirmation class. And we did comparative religion, and we did study of the Torah and so forth, wi-with Rabbi Philip Bernstein who'd been a -- a chapel -- chaplain at -- during the second war. And I think that there was a lot that I began to appreciate about what then became something more meaningful.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And as my life continued, it was always in this vein of being, for example, out of 1800 in the high school, there were probably 10 or fewer Jewish kids at that particular high school. S -- and then I was -- I was very active in the girl scouts, and I was selected to represent New York state at a national encampment, and I was back in the same pool of, you know, well tell us about Jews. Now they didn't ask me stuff about the war yet, and -- and -- or -- well, some people did, but I sort of kept that still pretty much closed. But I did appreciate that, and I -- but I had such a commitment to trying to improve the whole Sunday school experience for children that I volunteered to teach Sunday school. I -- I had this presumptuous sense that I could do it better than these other people.

Q: Were you right?

A: And I think I did.

Q: Yes. You did?

A: Yeah, well was a little bit -- little bit difficult. I mean, on the first year I was teaching, a -- one of the little kids of -- first or -- kindergarten, first grade or something, came up to me and said,

"You know, Mrs. Cohen, I saw God on television last night." And the -- things like that were a little difficult to cope with, but there was definitely a sense on my part that I felt a -- a -- a -- a reason to be a teacher, to -- to teach kids something, and to not disperse or dispel any notions of God, or the existence of God, which I would never do, but to bring in what is important about religions, and beliefs and values. Wh-What -- what is there that's really worth fighting for here? And I think that that really was the sort of connecting thread to most of what I did all my life. Going into education with a strong belief in -- in the value of education for teaching, and for opening up horizons and for having people learn to live with each other and so forth. I was a -- a one world candidate, and in high school I was, you know, preaching -- or not preaching, but I was s-supporting those kinds of organizations. I remember some very narrow-minded high school teachers with whom I challenged their viewpoints and so forth. I was never afraid to stand up or to speak out, and as turns out, neither are my kids. But I didn't need to be pigeonholed, and I didn't want to be pigeonholed, and -- a-and it was -- it was -- it was a very much longer time before I began talking about the war, and as I said earlier, I -- I never thought of myself as a survivor. I thought only those people who had survived the camps, the people -- th-th-the -- the displaced persons, the people who had the numbers carved on their arms. I didn't have that, and I was alive, and I was -- I was with a family, and I guess I was hidden, but -- so -- and -- and I remember the first time, the very first time that I saw any movie that related to anything having to do with the war. I-It was -- it -- it packed an enormous emotional wallop, and it was, "The Pawnbroker." And I don't know if you remember the film.

Q: I do, yeah.

A: But this -- and this whole struggle of this poor man, who himself had been a displaced person, and you get that message as you see his arm and so forth. And he suspects this young, black guy

of stealing from him. And then the struggle within himself about not wanting to stereotype and not wanting to make assumptions because this kid's black. And then his head running over with the re -- memories of the camps, and -- and then having this interspersed with the actual newsreels of that period of the -- of the camps. I went home, I was wiped out. I had se -- Peter had told me some months before, I don't think you want to see that, but I went to see it anyway. And by then I had one or two kids and we were at Smith, and I had a babysitter and wanted to go to the movies on the campus. And I came back and this babysitter opened the door, and she didn't see the fact that I was really still speechless. And she sort of bubbled over and said, "Oh hi, Mrs. Rose, how'd you enjoy the movie?" And I was just stunned by her use of the word enjoy, and I -- she didn't see my face, didn't notice anything, and I said, "Well, I don't think enjoy is the word you want to use with that film." And she said, "Well, y-you know, my roommate and I kind of th-thought about going to see it, but then we figured it was so much Hollywood make-believe." And this is in the early 60's and that's when I had one my early, sort of comeuppances about the fact that I have to speak, I can't remain silent if people are thinking that.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And another time the same thing happened with when I was driving between Syracuse and Rochester, or wherever, or Ithaca, and I was listening to a -- it mus -- must have been around Passover time, and I was looking for some station on the dial and twisting the dial and I heard this rabbi speaking, and I -- something either made me stop -- maybe I put my hand on the wheel, and the rabbi said something like, someday we're going to have the story of the Holocaust between the covers of a little book, and we will have a holiday to commemorate that it happened, and everyone re -- will read what it says in the book and they'll say, this couldn't possibly have

happened. And all of a sudden I made the connection between the Hagadah and the story of the plagues and the exodus of -- from Egypt, and my own reaction at the table at home where I thought, oh this could never have happened. I'm thinking, oh my God. Y-You know, he's absolutely right. And this was long before we had the holiday and long before we set aside this time, and -- and so forth, and I thought -- and that -- these two incidents, I think, sort of propelled me to get over my reluctance to speak, and when this girl -- this babysitter said to me -- she's finally re-registered something of my face --

Q: Right.

A: -- and she said, would I be willing to come and speak to them in the dorm? And I said of course, and that was sort of the beginning of it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And then I was asked in classes and assemblies and so on. So then many years followed of that. But --

Q: And was this before you got your degree?

A: Before I got my doctorate, yes --

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. It started before then.

Q: And you married Peter when you were a sophomore in college?

A: Right.

Q: So you were a young person.

A: A very young bride.

Q: Young person.

A: A very young bride. Yeah, I met him in between my junior and senior year in high school.

Q: And was he in high school also, or was he a little bit older?

A: No, he was between junior and senior year in college, so --

Q: Ah, wow.

A: -- he was all bi -- already about fed up with college and all its stuff --

Q: Right.

A: -- and then -- then here was this -- his girlfriend, and here I -- I was very active in school, and I had a lot of responsibilities and commitments and had a wonderful -- wonderful principal and so on. Then I -- I gave up some of those things once we started going together, but it was hard for him to get into this scene --

Q: Yes, I would imagine, right.

A: -- the high school scene, after the college scene.

Q: Did he find out very quickly about your war years, or did it take you a few years to be able to tell him as well?

A: I think it was more gradual with him. I think things came out piecemeal over time and discussion and as we grew to know each other more, and so forth. And it was a -- after all, it was three years before we were married, but yeah, it -- it -- well, it did not all come at once.

Q: Right.

A: And -- and it was not -- and it was not a public thing, either, it was very much more private.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. So it doesn't become public for you until the 60's, until these --

A: Exactly.

Q: [indecipherable] first time.

A: It does not become public.

Q: Right.

A: Right. And --

Q: Do you now consider yourself a survivor?

A: I do now, and I also realize that more and more of us are gone. And that er -- that the -- the littlest bit that I can do to bear testimony to this event is probably the only thing I can do to justify that I am among the living, and so many are among the dead. And if I'm not willing to do that, then I'm really doing a grave disservice, both to humankind and to those who died, because no one was there to speak for them if it's not coming from us. And the -- the dilemma about not only studying this whole human element to -- to realize -- well, I made mention for example of the -- of "The Eye of the Storm," or the -- the, "Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes," and all of those. Yes, we can isolate those particular behaviors and we can call them by names and we can study them. Stanley Milgrim, a social psychologist at Yale did these studies that are probably more telling about what happened and why people and how people were able to do these terrible things. If you know the -- I'm -- I'm sure you do, but he -- he basically put somebody in a white coat in a lab with a one way mirror, and he brought people in off the street, and said we're running this experiment. We're going to see how much pain these -- how much shock these subjects are willing to endure. And below the one way mirror was a group of actors in a studio. And there was a fake set of dials and people turned up the electricity. Up and up and up. And it didn't matter that the actors were writhing on the floor and screaming and calling and saying stop, stop. It apparently did not affect most of the people, not every single one. And now you couldn't do that kind of experiment any more because of the upset to the people who -- who came to recognize what they were capable of doing. But if we're capable of doing that, and we keep doing it, and we keep doing it, and we keep turning our backs to what's going on in areas where other people are doing it, we're not advancing at all.

Q: So what good is it to talk about, do you think?

A: Well, I think that if there are enough people who hear it, and if there are enough people who are struck by the fact that this kind of behavior can lead to this kind of event, the Holocaust, that maybe it behooves them to do something before we get there. Maybe. I -- I think th -- I only -- I have to continue to believe that, because otherwise I can't continue to go on. And this is also back to what I said earlier about the fact you never know what you're able to sustain, you never know what you are able to do, or what you'd be willing to do in a situation where your life depends on it, or the lifes of your loved ones. But the bottom line is that we should perhaps not be so adaptable. We should not be able to do what these Jews did for so long, throughout history, which is to adjust to the behavior that was imposed on them, and the restrictions imposed on them, and the tortures imposed on them. What can you do? You can't stand up and fight. I know that they -- they were helpless, they had no weapons, they had no allies, they had nothing. So the question about why didn't they stand up and fight becomes a -- a moot question, really. But when you find yourself in a situation where we really must stop, I don't know why we, as a nation, aren't in the streets, and I consider myself equally guilty, because I don't know what to do. But why are not in the street demanding that we stop killing? How far have we come if we can't sit around the table and try to work things out. Why can't we -- I took training in mediation. Much of my work has been in -- in law in education, and first amendment rights. And those liberties and freedoms that we have fought for in this country, since time immemorial as far as the history of this country, why are we suddenly making different rules for different people? I -- I don't know how to adjust to that, it -- it -- it's -- I think when people used to ask me, you know, do you wa -- well, how do you feel about this country and so forth, and I always had felt this is the country where people can talk, where people can argue, where you can have a

dialog, where we have an open press. And yet things keep coming out, and keep coming out and keep coming out. In the papers every day, in the -- the general news. I don't have access to any private news any more than anybody else. But finally it's getting to people in the streets that this president lied to us, and for whatever personal reasons went to war, killing not only Americans, but also Iraqis, or Afghanis, and the -- and the justification for af -- Afghanistan, I think, is certainly greater than Iraq. But there were no weapons of mass destruction. Why do we support a world organization? Why do we say other countries have to adhere to the decisions of the world organization, but we're outside the law. This doesn't make any sense. That doesn't move us forward. It doesn't put us in the situation of -- of making unacceptable certain ways of warfare and torture and behavior. We -- we ti -- we say Amnesty International is wrong. They come in -- the Red Cross is bamboozled, just as they were by the Nazis. The Nazis came into the camps, into some of those camps, and there is data that I have just seen this spring, actually, at Hoover, indicating what the men were told, what the soldiers were told, in order to dress up the camp so that the Red Cross could come in and be impressed. How they had casual music groups, how they had cafés set up, they shipped half of the camp population off to another camp because they -- the -- otherwise the Red Cross would say you have too many people per square bed, or whatever. Well, such as you might call it. It's unbelievable what these people did. And here, first person accounts that I am now finding in the original languages about what the Nazis did in order to bamboozle the Red Cross. But we are in similar situations, uncomfortably similar situations. And I can't live with this, I am finding this nightmarish. My daughter and I talk on the phone and we're either in tears, or we're so upset every phone call that I finally said to her, we've got to put this off limits, we can't do this. I c -- I can't -- I can't do this. But I am -- I am just as bad as everybody else. I haven't done anything except signing petitions and trying to get

people to listen and read. But I haven't gone off in the street and demonstrated. I ha -- I don't know what to do. And of course this -- this public relations campaign about making every difference of opinion seem like an unpatriotic act has a very familiar ring to me. I heard this before. And there -- here we are celebrating 60 years til the end of the war. Where are we now? That was the war to end all wars. So it tastes very bad.

Q: The taste for you after the war, is a very bad one.

A: Well, it's only bad because as I say, this -- this was -- this was our hope for the future. We were not going to as a world, let this kind of thing happen again.

Q: But that's not true.

A: And I don't see it as true, and I s-see such -- so many similar means. Yes, not all. You know, there -- there aren't extermination camps, but we're doing many of the things in very similar ways, that have to me a ring of danger. And I never thought that I would feel this way in this country, because -- and this is why I'm such a strong believer in an absolutely free and independent press. Because the press is the -- is the -- the only guide we have through darkness. And we depend on the press to lead us there so that we can ask the question and say to the administration, how can you explain this? How can you explain that? And as long as there is light on the subject, then you can stop it. But if you force people underground, you don't know what in God's name they're doing underground. You don't know what the Ku Klux Klan is doing, what the neo-Nazis are doing, what the terrorists are doing if you force them underground. And if you -- if you contain the press and -- and sever its freedom, and -- or make it shut up and make it become an arm of the government PR, then you can no longer trust the press to do that for you.

Q: Wow.

A: I'm not sure if you were particularly interested in this last, but this is why I'm feeling so -- I -- I don't know what to do with my feelings about this. And -- and yet my commitment all through my professional life has been to support Constitutional liberties, the Bill of Rights, to teach my students, both elementary teachers and high school students, the importance of listening and respecting the opinions of the children in their classes, whether they abide by them or not. But that the essence of a free society is to listen and respect.

Q: Right.

A: And you stop your respect at a certain point of course, if that other side is preaching your death, or somebody else's death, then you say, that's it. I don't have any compunction about saying at a certain point that you have to restrain that freedom if that person or group is preaching that doctrine that certain people should be killed. But ne-nearly up to that point, I'm saying you -- this -- this is the only guide we have to remain a -- a country with the ideals that presumably we have led the world in and -- and have tried to teach others. I mean, what good is it to talk about democracy and then go in and behave the way we're doing and besides which there's another piece of this teaching democracy, which right now I don't think this administration has -- has reckoned with, and that is that if you really preach democracy, you may end up getting an election someplace with people that you don't really want. But if you believe in democracy, if that's what those people want, that's -- you have to respect that.

Q: Right.

A: But we -- we're not ready for that. Can't deal with that.

Q: We have to stop the tape.

End of Tape Nine

Beginning Tape 10

Q: I have a couple of questions, one is a small one, one is a -- a somewhat larger one. You have two children?

A: Yes.

Q: Two girls, boy and a girl?

A: Boy and a girl. Girl and a boy, actually, in that order. Elizabeth Anne, and Daniel Eric. And -- terrific kids.

Q: Are they?

A: Mm.

Q: I imagine.

A: Absolutely.

Q: I'm going to ask you given what you -- what you've just been talking about and talk about at various points in the interview, about what's going on, what -- how you see the world now, you talk particularly a-about this administration, but of course in your lifetime, there was Cambodia, there was Rwanda --

A: Absolutely.

Q: -- there was Bosnia and Kosovo, and ti -- East Timor, and now Darfore, I mean it goes on and on. When you think about it, do you think more about Tante Toos and what she did? That she took a very particular kind of action. She didn't save the world, but she engaged in such a way that she risked her life, and her family's life to try to save three people.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: I mean does -- does -- do you think more about how d -- how difficult it must have been?

A: No --

Q: Nobody knocked on your door yet --

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: -- to say take me in.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm. No, there's -- there's no question about that, I -- I do think about that enormously. I -- I think all the ti -- and -- and also actually all the years that I was getting older and so forth, I kept thinking about what it must have been like for my mother -- when I was 45 or something. You know, I would think, oh my God, my mother was such and such and age, and this is what was happening, and what would I do, and so forth. And I was also -- and I think I had very strong, not only values, but ideas, and also at the same time, I think, wanted very much for my children to have as normal -- whatever that really means, but as normal a childhood as possible. And so I -- I know I'm veering off your question a little bit, but I felt on the one hand that they needed to learn what I could express about this from a learning point of view. So we did very little by way of Jewish tradition in the home, partly because I didn't like the pulling apart of some members of the Jewish community and I didn't like the sort of exclusiveness that one particular rabbi had -- had communicated. So we didn't really want our kids exposed to that, so ours was by contrast a much more inclusive home, and there was -- it wa -- it's really interesting because l-Leas, my daughter has often said, you know, this community, or that community, or this group of people is -- is really the example of the kind of values that you and Dad taught us. And so clearly there was a -- a -- a very clear understanding of what those values were. And so we neither the kids likes this exclusiveness that some communities will -- will -- will send out, will radiate. And at the same time, I didn't want them to have the burden that so many children of survivors seem to carry. And I got to know about that, because as I was speaking around, so many of the people came to me and said, oh now I understand what my parents didn't want to

tell me, or now I understand why it's so difficult to talk about the second World War, or whatever, whatever, whatever. And likewise in Europe, where I've spoken in a number of places, including Austria, to high school teachers, who said, we cannot speak to our parents, they will not answer questions, they will not tell us where they were, and so on, or what they did. And at the same time I see that this presents a special kind of burden, and I didn't want to have our kids have that. Now this commitment to normalcy, is that sort of -- that's probably not that unusual, I imagine any parent wants only the happiest and the best f-for their kids, and it's not always the happy situations that build character, necessarily, but at the same time I made sure that the kids had a sense of -- of inclusiveness, of one world ideas about respect for other people. So much so that the kids were actually quite -- took on an activist role in school on behalf of other kids. Not Jewish kids, necessarily, but I -- you know, speaking up on behalf of someone that the teacher was picking on. The teacher probably didn't even know he was doing it, and so on. And then also, I think, reflecting on the present role of Israel, vis-à-vis the Palestinians, taking classes in Israeli-Arab dispute. Trying to be informed and to not be afraid to express an opinion in opposition to the Israeli government. Sometimes putting themselves at -- on the outs with other Jews, perhaps. But I felt that that was terribly, terribly important. Now the same goes for putting yourself out for some of these people. And so far, I have not been able to do that in a personal sense -- back to your original question, other than in the monetary sense. And w-we have as a family, and as -- and my husband and I personally, have made big commitments to IRC, the International Rescue Committee, which seems in a major way to be helping refugees without any respect to what their country or their nationa -- their nationality or their religion is, but going to those places in the world where people are desperate, where people are suffering because of what's going on, whether it's internal or external strife, and so on. So we have done as much as

we could, maybe not as much as we can do, but still hope to be able to continue to do, in those terms, which -- which are important. And my husband, especially, I think in a professional way, has brought the plight of the refugees to students, involved students in the work that's necessary to save these people around the world. To do even small things, like volunteer to teach English as a second language in the local church or school, wherever the classes are being held. To -- one of -- one of -- wo -- actually she wasn't a student of mine at Hampshire, but a -- a na -- a student, who became a student of Peter's, and worked in the refugee camps and extended herself to the point of taking a small inheritance that she had from her grandmother, and bringing three Cambodian women back, who had been raped and tortured and so forth. And adopting them, bringing them back, getting them settled, getting them set up. Yeah, we're not saving the world, but we are trying, and -- and I think sometimes when I have this great urgent sense of why am I sitting here in a classroom, I think, well, somebody has to sit in the classroom and try to keep part of the mission going that -- that we have got to change, and how do we do that. And that not everybody can run in the field, and do the medical stuff, or do the actual whatever. And somehow I've often felt that in my small way, given the values that I think I've been able to communicate, even at the level of simply teaching teachers to have respect for the child, which sounds as if it should be nothing anyone would argue about. But if you watch clearly, you see that not every adult, and not every person who's teaching, has that respect for that child. Even if they are church-going and religion loving, and anti-abortion and so forth. Respect for that other life, and the fact that that life has a will and some sense and justification for some freedom is not there a -- often, in spite of the espousal of these other, so-called values. So I feel sometimes that maybe this is a rationalization, but it is something I do believe I could do, and I could do it quite well. And so I felt that to throw in the towel was not the right thing for me to do, at least at tho --

in those years of my life. I would like very much to be out in the field now, and -- and now is probably not a good time, having since had cancer and so forth. And I have to say that when I was first diagnosed with the cancer, a friend of mine said, oh Hedy, you're a survivor, you're going to make it. And I have to say, although I understood perfectly where she was coming from, I quietly said to myself, why do I have to keep proving it all the time? But I -- I feel now somewhat medically compromised about going out in the field, but it is something that I thought about. I thought seriously about joining the Peace Corps after my kids were grown. And -- and I still remember the horrible, horrible feeling I had during the Kosovo time, and when there was talk about the draft and my son was draft age, and I thought to myself -- and I didn't say it out loud, but I just was devastated with the thought that I lost the family behind me, and now I was going to lose the family in front of me. It was something I could barely confront myself. And now I'm looking at my grandson. And if this continues, he will be draft age. Jordy and Robert are the two sons of my son. And I-I just -- I can't face that. I just can't face that. I just can't face that.

Q: I hope you don't have to.

A: So do I.

Q: So don't throw in the towel, cause the towel is made up of many different things, there's not one towel. And I just want to thank you very much. It's been a long wait, 10 years, but it's been more than worth it. And I thank you very much for spending the time with us.

A: You're welcome.

Q: Hedy, what is this picture here?

A: Well that is my very proud, as you can see, school picture, of that one year that I spent in elementary school after the war. And I'm growing my hair again, and so I've got the beginnings

of some skinny pigtails, and I'm wearing a dress that came over in a package mailed from m-my aunt and uncle from the States, in the classroom, at a desk. And behind me is probably a map of the world, and on my head is one of those great big ribbons --

Q: Oh yeah.

A: -- that I was describing to you, with a special pin that allowed it to -- you didn't actually tie the ribbon around the hair, you just created the bow effect, and then put this very special pin around it, you see, and then you clipped it to your hair. So that was my -- my -- my dressing up for this -- this school picture.

Q: Huh.

A: And -- and tha -- it was a happy time, and you can see there was --

Q: I can see it. Okay. Then --

A: And that picture is one of the first probably informal snapshots of my husband-to-be and myself, when I was working as a counselor in th -- in the camp that his parents owned at the time, and which we then ran later on, and -- and directed for many years. At the time I think he was a senior -- going into his senior year in high school and I was going -- no, I'm sorry, he was the senior in college, and I was a senior in high school. Or it could have been the following summer, which would have had us -- would have had him in graduate school, beginning graduate school, and have me beginning college. I don't remember which of the two summers that might have been, but we were together -- now almost 50 years. I mean, 50 years we've been together, but next year is our 50th anniv -- wedding anniversary. And that is a picture -- and I don't know who took these, by the way, either of these two, but they -- we were given copies of the snapshots and the lower one was in my husband's wallet for many, many years, and my daughter now has put in a special request for a copy. The one above is probably the same year or well,

probably not actually, cause I see that I had long hair, sort of pigtail like in the bottom picture, so it was probably still that first summer. The upper one my hair is short, and I'm thinking this is probably around 1960, and we now have been married a couple of years. I'm running the camp along with Peter, and I think I have one child at that time. Tho -- this is just a casual snapshot, sitting on the lawn at the camp in one of those Adirondack chairs. And that picture is struggling with the bags, it looks like to me. I think we were coming from an extended stay in Italy at the Bellagio Study Center, hence all those bags, because we usually don't have that many bags.

Q: It says Norway.

A: I think that's not correct --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- but we were also in Norway for some period of time. Peter was teaching the American studies program up in Norway, and that would have been sort of 90 s -- 1971, but I don't think this is from Norway, I think this was coming from Bellagio in -- in Italy.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And it was hot and humid, and I was -- it's one of many, many, many travels that we've done together, and also that we've done with the kids, both of whom have an enormous appreciation of o-other people and other lands, and other ways of living and behaving and so on.

Q: And how -- wh-what year do you think this is?

A: I think this is more like early 80's, but I -- I could be wrong, it could b -- it could be late 70's.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: The reason I think it's early 80's is because I think my daughter had already graduated and was living in Italy at this time, but I'm not positive. But I do think that was mislabeled. And I hope it wasn't in a book, therefore. But yeah, no, thi -- I'm sorry about the passport picture,

because had I been able to -- to bring that, I would have loved to have had you see that. And it's not enormously different from this happy face here in the school picture. This picture by the way, is also at the Springfield Holocaust Museum. But -- but it is a wan little, skinny little face --

Q: Right.

A: -- and the smile is not quite as full. And there is this little tiny face, as I say, just swathed in this enormous U.S. Navy surplus sweater, and -- I mean, there was th -- there was nothing in Amsterdam when the war ended, you know, th-there was nothing for those stores, there was no clothing, there was -- I don't even know how the hospitals operated. And here, clearly there are th-the U.S. armed services had come to the hospital's aid because I got the sweater in the hospital.

Q: Uh-huh, right, right.

A: So I must have been given the sweater -- and not for keeps, but because I was allowed outside, and -- and Holland is generally --

Q: Chilly.

A: -- chilly.

Q: Yeah.

A: And of course, having just been so sick, they weren't a-about to take chances, but I was allowed to get in the air, and I was so weak that I was on this -- this settee thing. And I don't even know who it was who came to the hospital to take that passport picture.

Q: Right.

A: But -- but they did, and I -- I'm so happy that I have that picture, because again, that -- that meant to me this enormous sense of gratefulness to this U.S. surplus stuff, this wonderful, warm,

wooly sweater that I could have. And it was cold during the war, we had no heat, and I -- all those memories were very close to that time that passport picture was taken.

Q: Right, right.

A: And -- and this picture as well. I don't know what the book is that I have opened on the desk, but it's -- it's kind of fun to look at myself with that expression on my face, and it sort of like all's well with the world again, you know, it's sort of like, now here I am where I've been wanting to be all this time.

Q: You've got a sparkle in your eyes.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, they do sparkle.

A: Yeah. And that's -- and that -- the -- and the picture that -- a-again, I don't have it, but I have a picture of my sister and me together at this time as well, and there is not a sparkle in her eye, but there is a kind of gentle being at peace kind of thing. It is not a distressing face, but it's not a sparkle, necessarily. But there is a sense of -- I -- I -- I -- to me again, there's a sense of some -- something having come to rest in a way, in her probably more than me, looking forward to the -- to going to the United States.

Q: Right.

End of Tape 10

Conclusion of Interview