# United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

## Interview with Ernest Culman
## February 24, 2006
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# PREFACE

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# ERNEST CULMAN
# February 24, 2006

Question: Good morning.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: It's nice to see you, Ernest.

A: Thank you, same here.

Q: What was your name at birth?

A: Ernst.

Q: Ernst.

A: E-r-n-s-t, Ernst, pronounce in German it's Ernst.

Q: And now it's Ernest, is that right.

A: Ernest.

Q: And your last name?

A: Culman, and it used to be spo -- spelled with two n's, but I dropped one n.

Q: I see.

A: To be less Germanic.

Q: So it used to be C-u-l-m-a-n-n?

A: That's correct.

Q: And now it's with one n.

A: One n.

Q: Okay. And when were you born?

A: December second, 1929.

Q: And where?

A: In a town called Liegnitz, which was Germany at the time. It became part of Poland after World War II. It's now referred to as Legnica in Poland.

Q: So it was the eastern part of Germany?

A: Eastern part of Germany in the area called Silesia.

Q: Right. Let's talk a little bit about your home life. What wa -- what was your dad's name?

A: My Dad's name was August. He was a physician, a general practitioner. And he actually started his practice in 1910. So he was a physician in Liegnitz for 30 years.

Q: Wow.

A: And he married later in life, he was 40 years old by the time he got married. He was 45 by the time I was born. And --

Q: So he was -- he was married when, 1924?

A: 1924, yes.

Q: Because your brother is born --

A: 1925.

Q: Five. And then you're born in 1929.

A: '29.

Q: Right. And was your mother older also, or she was considerably younger than your father?

A: Well, my mother was 10 years younger than my father --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- but was still -- you know, and she was 35 when I was born.

Q: Right, right. And your mother's name?

A: My mother's name was Betty, her maiden name was Lewy, L-e-w-y.

Q: Right.

A: And in German it was pronounced Levy. But it's Lewy in --

Q: Over here.

A: [indecipherable] would like it s -- being spelled.

Q: Right.

A: Most time Levy is with a -- a v, this was with a w.

Q: So, let's talk about what your earliest memories of home life in -- in Germany, what -- do you remember what it was like? Do you remember your apartment, or your hou -- did you live in a house or apartment?

A: No, we had a big apartment, actually it were two apartments that were opened up together. Half of them was my father's offices and practice, and the other half is where we lived. I can still see it in my eyes, it was a long, drawn out apartment, there was a big living room, and dining room that were connected together. Then there was a long hall that was long enough for me to ride my tricycle on. At the other end were the bedrooms, and big bathroom, and all that. And then there were about three rooms that were my father's offices. One thing I remember in that big hallway, we had an icebox, I mean, not a refrigerator, but an icebox. It was pink.

Q: Pink?

A: Pink icebox. And you know, in summer the iceman came by in his horse and buggy and brought up those big pieces of ice to put in there.

Q: When you say icebox, it means that there's ice that's make -- making the area cold so you can have food in there, or is it just for ice?

A: No, ice for -- like a refrigerator, but not electric.

Q: Right, right.

A: It was a -- I mean, we had electricity, and we had running water, and regular toilets and all that, but many of the modern electrical stuff we didn't have as yet.

Q: Right. And how often did this guy come with the ice, do you remember?

A: No, I couldn't tell you that honestly. My guess would be about once a week.

Q: Uh-huh. But they were these huge, big pieces of ice, right?

A: Those huge, big pieces of ice, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- the melting of the ice truck down, ran behind it as little kids to get some of that cold water on your face --

Q: Right.

A: -- on a hot, sunny day.

Q: Did you have your own bedroom?

A: No, my -- I shared it with my brother. And we got along fine.

Q: You did?

A: Most of the -- most of the time.

Q: Five years is a big.

A: No, it's actually four years.

Q: Four year -- four years, rather. It's a pretty big difference.

A: Yes, it is a big difference, and we did have our fights, of course he was bigger and stronger than I, sometimes very aggravating. He would just hold out his hand and I couldn't get anywhere near him. But we did fine. I wasn't very aware of us being different from other kids in the neighborhood and the building. The building was owned by a man who has the carpentry shop in the back. There was a little alley where we played in, and then there was this big factory, where

you heard the machinery going almost day and night. Well, not night of course, but I do remember that very well.

Q: Right. So was this a -- a mixed neighborhood, or were you the only Jews in the neighborhood that you remember?

A: Um.

Q: When you said that you didn't feel different --

A: We were little bit on the outskirts, not a suburb like you see here, but in a working class area. Not in the downtown area of our little town. And most of the Jewish family lived more in the downtown area. So there were not too many Jewish people living there, but we -- the town wasn't that big to begin with --

Q: Right.

A: -- so we had good contact with them. The streetcar ran right in front of our house, and streetcar was a single track. And in the front of our house there was a bike path. So when one came from one side, the other one had to wait --

Q: I see.

A: -- for it to come from the other side. And -- but we walked most places. We walked to school, and walked to the synagogue and all that.

Q: Were you religious, was the family religious [indecipherable]

A: No, not religious at all. My mother's family was religious, but we were not at all, my father was not at all. However, we did belong to the synagogue with -- my parents had the respective seats there. On high holidays that men sat downstairs, the women upstairs.

Q: So it was -- was it Orthodox?

A: It was Conservative --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- it wasn't Orthodox.

Q: It's a very -- rather Conservative.

A: A little.

Q: Yes.

A: Leaning on the Conservative --

Q: Right.

A: -- side, but --

Q: So you didn't go on a regular basis every week, you went on holidays?

A: We did go frequently on Friday night.

Q: You did?

A: In fact, we also attended what we would call Sunday school here, but actually Hebrew school.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And three boys and three girls always got called up for Kiddush onto the beamer, and the joke was that my brother didn't care for the wine but he had to drink it, but I enjoyed it every time that I got up there.

Q: Enjoy --

A: My mother was more religious than my father, but we didn't keep kosher or anything like that.

Q: You didn't?

A: No.

Q: Did -- did your mother light candles on Friday night?

A: Most of the time.

Q: Most of the time, uh-huh.

A: And quite often we had friends over for Friday night dinner.

Q: I see.

A: But, you know, candle lighting was about as far as we went. My mother did fast on yi -- Yom Kippur.

Q: Did you?

A: Not until I was Bar Mitzvah and then I fasted and most of the time still do.

Q: Really? That's interesting.

A: But that's about the only thing I'm sort of keeping.

Q: It is. Right. So what was home life like? Did you all eat lunch together since your father was working there? Did he take off lunchtime and have lunch with you?

A: Not necessarily, he --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- but we had lunch -- we had servants, we had the -- my father had a nurse for his office. We had a live in maid.

Q: Oh, you did?

A: And she took care of the house, but she didn't take care of the kids, my mother took care of my brother and I.

Q: That's interesting.

A: We took many walks. The little town was quite picturesque. Had nice parks that we went through. And my father, having lived there for such a long time, was well known in the city. Old type physician, he got called out at night quite frequently.

Q: So he was well known as a physician as well.

A: As a physician as well --

Q: Yes.

A: -- especially in the neighborhood that we were in.

Q: Uh-huh. Was he a general practitioner?

A: Yes, he was.

Q: So he did all sorts of things, but he didn't do surgery, I gather?

A: He did not do surgery. There were other people who were there who did surgery.

Q: Right.

A: And took trips to the little farms outside, and I often went with him. I remember going with him on a -- to a farm and get s -- got scared when all these big dogs and what have you came snooping around the car while he was in there with his patient. And as I got a little older, learned to ride a bike, many of the calls he made were by bicycle, and I went with him on a bicycle. It was on one of those trips where I was riding in front of him, and we talked back and forth, all of a sudden I don't -- didn't get an answer. I look around and I see him off the bike, he had had a heart attack.

Q: Oh my.

A: A very severe heart attack. It was a friend of ours, not living too far from where we were, we went to her house and called a taxi to take us home. And this was his first, and very severe heart attack.

Q: Huh. And do you remember what year that was? Was that befor -- must have been before Kristallnacht.

A: Yes, this was before Kristallnacht. It was maybe one or two years before that.

Q: So you were quite young?

A: I was six years old or so.

Q: Yes.

A: And --

Q: So your brother was not traveling with your dad on bicycle, just --

A: No, my brother went through the elementary school in our town, and then when it came for him to go to high school he was transferred to Breslau.

Q: Oh.

A: Now called Wroclaw, where my mother's family lived. And he lived with one of my uncle and aunt's and attended school there. So he wasn't home at the time.

Q: I see, I see. So did your dad go to the hospital, or did he stay home?

A: He stayed home.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He got taken care of at home.

Q: Was he then able to go back to his medical practice after the heart attack, or did that --

A: Yes, but it took quite a few months.

Q: It did?

A: Quite a few months, and he was all right then. It was probably -- probably in early 1938, because after he got well, we decided to move to a smaller apartment. And it was in that smaller apartment where we then experienced the Kristallnacht.

Q: I see. So Hitler and the Nazis take over in 1933, so you're -- there -- something is going on. Do you notice a change --

A: Oh yes.

Q: -- as you're growing up?

A: I -- I didn't notice a change, really, because all I knew was --

Q: Was that.

A: -- Hitler.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, all I knew was the Nazi government.

Q: Right.

A: You know, at three years you have no knowledge of what is going on.

Q: Right, right.

A: The street we lived on, there were often parades moving along the street, and as a little child you love -- you love a parade --

Q: Sure.

A: -- you like to be out there and cheering them on with the other kids. And somehow I knew I'm not supposed to cheer these people on. But it was very difficult for me to fully understand what there was.

Q: Right. Did your parents talk to you about this --

A: Yes.

Q: -- at all, and say, you know, don't go out there, be careful, or --

A: Th -- be careful, don't go out there, and tha -- but they left it fairly open. [indecipherable] other words, they didn't make too much of a deal out of it. But I always knew certain things we can't do. Just certain rules we as Jews couldn't do. Because my parents had a live in maid, they celebrated Christmas in a way, in fact we had a Christmas tree. The maid wanted it of course, and so we celebrated Christmas. And one year my parents called my brother and I together and

said, we're not going to celebrate Christmas any more, we're going to celebrate Chanukah from now on. And our main question was, will we still get gifts.

Q: Right.

A: And long as that was the case, we didn't care.

Q: Didn't care, right. Now, did your maid have to leave at -- I -- I'm assuming that she was not Jewish, the maid?

A: She was not Jewish.

Q: Did she have to leave your household at a certain point?

A: Yes. A certain point, the law came about that she had to be, I think fo -- 35 or 45 --

Q: I think it's 45 [indecipherable]

A: 45 old, and this was a very young person, and she had to leave the house at midnight, December 31st, whatever year it was. And she stayed til the very last minute, and then left. And my parents actually found somebody else, 40 f -- was just 45, to take over. This person had been a cook in a sanitarium, she knew how to cook very well, and she taught my mother how to cook.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: The second -- they were both called Marthe, the second Marthe. And when we moved into the smaller apartment and she didn't come wi -- come with us.

Q: She didn't come. So when you had the maid, the maid was cleaning and cooking, and --

A: Cleaning and cooking.

Q: -- your mother was taking care of the two of you.

A: Right. Of course, the maid was there as a babysitter --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- when my parents wanted to go out.

Q: So you spent a lot of time with both of your parents, I gather.

A: Lot of time with my mother, because my father was --

Q: Was working, right.

A: Working quite hard. But we frequently took vacations. In fact, we were fairly close to the Czech border.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And over a weekend we would go into Czechoslovakia, just to get out of there.

Q: Right. And how would you travel, by train?

A: By car.

Q: By car? You had a car?

A: My father had a car. The car was not parked at the house because you couldn't, you know, it was in a garage maybe a mile away.

Q: Right.

A: And you had to get it from there. But we traveled by car all over the place, quite often. Then when we went into Breslau to live with my mother's family, we often went by train.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And my grandmother, when she came to visit us, came by train. And where my brother was going to school in Breslau, on the weekend he came home and frequently I used to pick him up at the train station and we would walk home, just the two of us.

Q: Right, right. Did you miss him when he was away? When -- or was it actually nice for you to be able to be alone in the house?

A: I honestly can't answer that. I don't -- I don't know.

Q: Okay, right.

A: I don't know. I -- I guess it was a little bit of both.

Q: Right.

A: He was always my big brother, he was always there to help me out, all my life. And I don't know whether I felt it's nice to be alone.

Q: Right, right.

A: I-I don't think I did. Because I went to school by this time also.

Q: You started school when, when you were six or five?

A: Six.

Q: When you were six.

A: But when I was five years old I went to a nursery school, a kindergarten, I mean --

Q: Right.

A: -- here we -- it's part of the school system, there it was separate. The same lady was in charge of that kindergarten that was in charge when my brother went there. And by this time it was 1935 or so.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And, you know -- you know, it's 1935, and I remember very clearly the door ringing at our house, and I opened the door. There is Miss Schroeder with a big bouquet of flowers, and tears in her eyes, coming to see my mother. Well, it turned out that one of the other kids, five year old kid, his parents objected to t-to being -- to having a Jew in his kindergarten class. So this was my first experience of anti-Semitism. So obviously I had to leave, and Miss Schroeder couldn't do anything, and this guy was also a physician, the father of this other kid. So I had to leave. But this was shortly before I had to enter regular school. And when my mother took me to school my first day of school, it turned out that that same kid would be in the same class as me. So she went

to the principal, explained the situation, and he put me into a parallel class. Turned out that I was the only Jewish kid in the whole school, but at least I wasn't in with this one.

Q: And no one else complained, it was this -- it was this --

A: I-In the kindergarten it was this particular person. And I made friends in school, like any kid. Got real friendly with two other boys, they were separate, boys and girls were separate in that school. And one kid had a birthday party, he invited me, the other one was fine, and of course my time to have a birthday party, I invited both of them, they both said they'd come. The next day one of them said, "I'm sorry, but my parents won't let me come."

Q: Oh.

A: And I remembered his name, his name was Webber, his last name was Webber. Many years later, I was in the amer -- I was this G.I. in the American army, stationed back in Europe, and I tried to make contact with my former teacher. And somebody wrote me, my name is Webber, you must remember, you went to school with my brother, and basically they wanted some help. So I wrote him back, yes I remember him very well. You didn't want to have any contact with a Jew, now you do? But the nice thing at that point was that I made contact with my grade school teacher. He was a wonderful person. When Crystal Night came about, I went to school. The synagogue was far enough away from us that I didn't see what was going on, we were not in the downtown area where all this Jewish retail stores got ruined. And I found out in school what had occurred. And when I came home, my mother received me at the door in tears. My father had been called out to somebody who had been beaten by the Gestapo. And while he was in that person's house, they came to our house to -- for my father. He was then picked up at his patient's home and taken to prison. And after that, every day, this teacher, his name was Thiel, came and sat on -- next to me on my chair, is your dad home yet? Every day. After five days my da -- dad

did come home. The chief of police in our little town took it upon himself not to send anybody to the concentration camp that had been an officer in the German army. And as a physician, my father was a lieutenant during World War I, so after five days he came home. Right after he came home the word came out that Jews are not allowed to go to public school any more. So they kept me home, my parents kept me home. Mr. Thiel, when he saw me on the street afterwards, would stop his -- jump off his bike, he used to travel around bike, and see how I was doing. And when my birthday came around, he came to our house to bring all the papers, and all the books that I had. And he told my mother he was so glad that I didn't show up that day because the principal sent somebody in, you've got the only Jew in the whole school, send him home. And he hadn't -- didn't have to do that in front of the other kids. So I got in contact with him in 1951 - '52. We have corresponded for awhile, he was in a little town too far off the beaten track --

Q: Right.

A: -- for me to visit him.

Q: But he must -- he was quite different, right, he just --

A: He -- he -- he wasn't --

Q: -- he must have been taking a chance to do what he was doing.

A: He took a big chance --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- with what he was doing.

Q: How did this affect you [indecipherable] as a little boy? Do you re -- do you remember?

A: I don't know how to answer that, how it affected me, it's -- in a way I took it in stride. It became normal. The discrimination against you became a normal thing. Sounds ridiculous if I say it now, but that's the feeling I have.

Q: Right.

A: And --

Q: No, but it makes sense. It becomes part of the pattern of your life.

A: It becomes the pattern of life -- excuse me -- as I said, my brother was in Breslau, and he was in Breslau at Crystal Night.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He came home somehow or another, just be with us. But shortly after that was his birthday, his 13th birthday, his Bar Mitzvah. There was no Torah left in Liegnitz because the synagogue got burned. So he brought his Torah home from Breslau. Some of the little shuls were in areas that they couldn't burn, and there was a few Torahs left. He carried one on the train from Breslau back to Liegnitz. And we had the Bar Mitzvah in our house. And where we lived, that smaller apartment, the second and third floor was a Jewish old age home, and we shared a larger apartment with another family. And that's where we had his Bar Mitzvah. Many people had come home from concentration camp. This is 1938. We have -- the family showed that they have intentions of leaving, they got out of the concentration camp.

Q: Right.

A: I remember these people coming home with shaven heads.

Q: You do?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Were you told where they had come from?

A: Oh yes.

Q: You had.

A: Yeah. I mean, concentration camp was an everyday word. An uncle of mine, the one that my brother lived with, in the family, he was taken into concentration camp earlier than Kristallnacht. There was some activity, I forgot what they called it, where if you had any -- done anything illegal years before, you end up -- you got taken into prison again. My uncle did some cheating, I guess, on the income tax, I don't know, at one point it got punitive action, he paid his penalty, but that wasn't enough. They used that excuse to take him. And he couldn't take it, he went up against the electric fence, got killed right then and there. My mother had a picture of him in Shanghai, and had it on one of the tables, a man came in one time, he said, I know this man. I saw him getting shot against the ca -- against the fence.

Q: Wow.

A: And --

Q: This is your mother -- one of your mother's brothers?

A: My mother's sister's husband.

Q: Sister's husband, I see.

A: And, so all these things were told to me, I heard about them.

Q: Right.

A: Was all part of our life.

Q: Right.

A: They had sent their son to England to go to school, Cambridge. That's why they had the room free for my brother to live in.

Q: Right. Do -- and your brother came back after Kristallnacht?

A: He came back -- I'm not even sure at this point whether he continued his schooling in Breslau or not.

Q: Or not, uh-huh.

A: But I didn't go back to a regular school.

Q: Right.

A: I had the young woman come in to sta -- give me tutoring, private lessons.

Q: And the Bar Mitzvah, was that in your house, or was that in the -- the home for the aged?

A: In the home for the aged.

Q: I see. So were there a number of people there?

A: There's quite a few people there.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, and a little anecdote, my mother had a big dinner for everybody and turned out that it were -- we were 13 people. She was superstitious, so she quickly called a good friend who was a bachelor to come join us.

Q: That's great. We're going to have to change the tapes.

A: Okay.

End of Tape One

Beginning Tape Two

Q: Okay. I think we forgot to get the name of your brother.

A: Oh, my brother's name is o -- as he was born was Hans.

Q: Right.

A: H-a-n-s. But he changed it to Henry when we became Americanized.

Q: American. And did he take the n off? The double --

A: Yes.

Q: So it -- he's Culman too, with one n?

A: With one n. The only one who wouldn't take it off was my mother. She said, "I married your father with two n's and I'm going to keep the two n's."

Q: Keep it that way.

A: And my father had already passed away by that time.

Q: I see. Before we get to what happens after Kristallnacht, let me just ask you w-w -- ho-how you remember being in the house? Was it a -- a very cheerful kind of home to be in, was it serious, or it was a combination --

A: No, it was a ch -- it was a cheerful home. We had no, you know, I have no bad memories of that at all. Played out in the backyard with the other kids, and played cowboys and Indians and we got dressed up, and these were all non-Jewish kids that lived in that area.

Q: Right.

A: The river was not -- was two or three blocks away. And in winter that's where we dragged our sled and sled -- sled down the side of the riverbank. In the spring and summer it was a beautiful area to walk. I remember walking there with my mother and at the end of the trail, bu -- there was some farmyard which usually had some piglets there, and so -- it's all very pleasant

memories. The unpleasant parts were like I mentioned, the fact that I got kicked out of nursery school, had the problems in school, then couldn't go there. But most of the unpleasant memories are actually things I heard about. You know, my parents talked about this person got taken to jail for whatever reason, that person disappeared. And most of it didn't really get bad for me until Kristallnacht.

Q: Uh-huh. Did your -- did your parents take you to the f -- was there a theater, were there children's theater, do you have any recollection?

A: No, th --

Q: Was there movies?

A: There was movies.

Q: [indecipherable] movies.

A: There were movies.

Q: And did you like the movies?

A: Yes.

Q: You did?

A: Saw Laurel and Hardy, and things like that.

Q: You did?

A: But there was a theater that my parents attended, I mean adult theater, but I don't remember going to the theater at all. [indecipherable] And movies you didn't go that often.

Q: Right.

A: In summer there was ice cream stands, it wasn't like here where you could eat ice cream all year long, you just ate it in summer.

Q: Summertime, right.

A: And then once in a ye -- once a year a circus came to town, I remember going to that. But I had no unpleasant mem -- personal memories.

Q: Yeah.

A: Personally, they didn't get bad. Eventually, after I've said this I realize that that wasn't quite true. There used to be kids that used to attack me and start hitting on me, called me a Jew, and all kinds of names. But didn't happen that often. When I came home from Hebrew school, I remember once being attacked by three or four kids. It was --

Q: Did they hurt you?

A: Well, not seriously, you know.

Q: Did you fight back?

A: No, I ran.

Q: You ran. Probably smarter with three or four kids against you, right?

A: Yeah. The other thing that I remember is in school there were religious classes, and that religion was taught in school. My initial teacher, Mr. Thiel used to tell me, well, just sit in class and don't participate. And then one year I got another teacher and he had me leave the classroom for the religious class. And some of the other kids had s -- said, I didn't know you were Jewish. They didn't realize I was. And that was tough because I went outside, I was the only one in the whole school, for an hour. It wasn't long enough to go home, so I just wandered around the area and then got back into class. So the fact that I was set aside was hard to take.

Q: Now your f -- your father had his heart attack, it was 1936, am I right?

A: No, I-I think it was either '37 or '38.

Q: So a -- a --

A: Just --

Q: -- so maybe a year before Kristallnacht?

A: Yes.

Q: Did he lose his job at this point as a doctor?

A: Oh he -- no, he --

Q: Was he not allowed to practice, or he was?

A: He was still allowed to practice, and at one point he was not allowed to practice any more except for Jews.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: In our town -- I don't know how many Jewish doctors there were, but he was the one that was assigned to practice for Jews.

Q: And do you remember a significant difference in -- in -- in him, once that happened?

A: Yes. He became much more serious to me, much more ver -- worried about everything. Seriously starting to talk about emigrating, getting out of Germany. Started to check into going to Palestine. And this was before Crystal Night. Then, after Crystal Night we made contact with far enough relatives in the United States. Our papers at the office, the Palestine office got burned, so everything there got -- had to be started from scratch again.

Q: This was burned during Kristallnacht?

A: Crystal Night.

Q: Uh-huh, right.

A: And, you know, in my mind as a child, I was looking forward to this big trip we're going to take someplace, somewhere. And some people started talking about going to Shanghai. Shanghai, being an international city, it -- you didn't need any papers, any visas, or anything like that. All you needed was to get on a ship and get there. But it had a bad reputation, and people

didn't want to go there, including my parents. So one time after Crystal Night, we had friends over the house for a dinner -- I don't know if it was a Friday night dinner or not, but one person said, you know what? I'm not sticking around her any more. I'm going to Shanghai. Second person said I'll join you, my father said, I'll join you. If that wouldn't have happened, we probably would have been stuck in Germany. By this time we had an affidavit from the United States and in my parent's mind we'll go to Shanghai for a year or two until our number gets called up and then we go to the States.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And that's how we eventually ended up in Shanghai.

Q: Did they tell you anything about Shanghai when they si -- made this decision? Or had you heard that this was --

A: I just heard --

Q: -- that this was a strange place.

A: It's a strange place, you know, I looked it up on an atlas where it is. In the meantime, my -- a couple of my uncles her -- moo -- moved to Panama, and I followed on the atlas where they went, you know, we all -- all the trips of course were by ship, it wasn't by plane. So he stopped at many different places. And I was looking forward to this adventure. So we decided to go on a Dutch liner instead of a German or Italian like most people did. The advantage on a Dutch liner is that the so-called board money, you could take right out. The Germans allowed you x number of dollars, or marks, of course, to take on board the ship, to spend on the ship, but not to take off the ship. So when you went on a German liner, they strictly adhere to that. On the Dutch liner that we went to, the purser said to my father, well didn't you lose x number of dollars gambling

last night? Didn't you buy a box of cigars? And all that was written down and two days after we left Europe, he had all his money in his pocket.

Q: Right.

A: Whatever amount that was.

Q: Do you remember packing for Shanghai?

A: Oh yes, very well.

Q: Yeah?

A: To get all your heavy stuff on, you got from the freight company something they called a lift, which was like a big box, size of a room, and everything gets put in there. And when you were packing that, somebody from the Gestapo was there watching what you were packing. Well, when they came to do this packing, my mother sent me outside to play. And I had some play money, which was back from the German inflation in the 20's, had absolutely no value. And she was getting ready to pack that, and the guy from the Gestapo was -- put up a fuss, you can't take that. And she was arguing, that's my kid's play money, it has no value. I don't know for sure any more whether we left -- let him keep it or not, but I told my mother, "Let him have it, I don't care." You know, it's just play money.

Q: So did you come in and out when --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- when these guys were there?

A: Yes, yes, I walked in and --

Q: Were they nasty? What were they like?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: They were actually a little nasty at the beginning and then my mother gave them a drink, and they calmed down a bit. And some of the little knickknacks that we had, she gave one person this and one person that. It wasn't really bribery in any sense, but it softens them up in a way.

Q: Right, right.

A: And my parents also had the idea that maybe we can get off the ship somewhere before we get to Shanghai. I mean, India was still part of Britain, the Philippines was part of the United States, Singapore was part of Britain. We thought we could maybe get off there.

Q: Right, right.

A: So they decided that this lift with all our belongings should be kept by the freight company until they got the word from us.

Q: Uh-huh. Instead of going on the shi --

A: Instead -- instead of being shipped at the same time as we were.

Q: Right, right.

A: I mean, the ship we were on was a passenger ship, it wasn't a freighter, and the lift would have to go on a freighter. The -- obviously we didn't get off anyplace. Ended up in Shanghai and then contacted the freight company, she -- send it to us, this is our address. But in the meantime it's July of 1939. By the time this lift gets onto a freighter it's September, and the war breaks out. And all German ships get the signal, go into a neutral port. The Dutch is -- East Indies, which are now Indonesia, were still neutral, so the ship ran into a neutral port in Dutch East Indies, and we had to pay a fair amount of money to get it from there to Shanghai.

Q: Get it to Shanghai.

A: But eventually we got it all.

Q: When -- when your mother was packing the lift, did you have to pack a little suitcase, or did she pack it for you?

A: She packed it.

Q: She packed it.

A: She packed it all. I mean, I didn't do any packing per se.

Q: You didn't? Were you able -- did she take any toys for you?

A: Oh yeah, we took some toys.

Q: Or games?

A: Games, yeah.

Q: Did you -- so you had that on the ship with you?

A: We had some of it on the ship, and some of it was on the freight -- in the -- in the lift. So I had a few toys, to [indecipherable]

Q: This is a long trip. You go to Genoa, right, so you have to take a train to Genoa.

A: We took a train to Genoa. We took a train through Germany to say good-bye to relatives.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: My father's brother was in Upper Silesia. We had tried to talk him to join us in shan -- to Shanghai and he refused. So we went there, we went to Berlin to say good-bye to some former friends and relatives and to the western -- I mean, we really did a whole tour around Germany by train and eventually came to Genoa.

Q: And what happened to your car? Did your father sell the car?

A: I guess he sold it, I mean --

Q: Okay.

A: I never thought about that.

Q: Right.

A: But he must have sold it. When we came to the border, they had everybody get off -- not everybody, all the Jews get off the train to be searched, body searched. And this was middle of the night, I was fast asleep. So my mother said to the Gestapo, SS guy, whoever he was, "Can I leave my kid here?" He says, "You can if you want to, but I'm not guaranteeing that the train won't take off without you." So she woke me up. I did not have to strip, but my parents did. And the amount of money that my father was allowed to take out, he had more on him than he was allowed to, he telegraphed that to his brother. [indecipherable]

Q: Oh, he was able to --

A: Send --

Q: -- to do that.

A: -- to do that.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So we took out only what was legal. At this point my father didn't want to mess anything up for a few dollars. And then we went on the train to Genoa, and my mother's sister, whose husband had been killed in the concentration camp earlier, was living in Milan. And she came to say good-bye to us. And her train and our train came together. I was walking through the train and all of a sudden there's Tante Trude. I ran into her arms. And she came to Genoa with us and saw off -- saw us off from the pier. I can still see her waving to us as we were leaving.

Q: And she felt okay staying in Italy?

A: Well, her s -- husband had been killed.

Q: Killed, right.

A: Her only child, her son, was in England, so she eventually got to England.

Q: I see.

A: By the time te -- she got to England --

Q: Right.

A: -- he had managed to go to Palestine and join the British Brigade at Palestine. And eventually she joined him in Palestine.

Q: [indecipherable] each place that she went.

A: She was always -- she would -- she was telling us later on the ship was blacked out that she took from England to go to Palestine. She went to Palestine legally.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: This was before the illegal --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- immigrations. But it was in middle of the war. But she was there to see us off, and eventually we got to meet her -- meet up with her again.

Q: Right, right. So how do you remember this ship trip, which was really long?

A: It was -- took about six weeks.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, I have a tendency to get seasick very easily.

Q: But you didn't know that.

A: I didn't know that beforehand. But the Dutch liner was a luxury liner and they had special -- in the dining room the children were not allowed to eat with the parents and I hated that idea. So I was in a separate room with the little kids, you know, the two and three years old --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- and o -- me at nine years old, I felt I was big enough to do that, you know, to be with my parents.

Q: Sure.

A: I didn't like that at all.

Q: Yeah.

A: And you would still see land when I got seasick the first time. I don't know whether that has to do with seasickness or just anxiety about being left alone. But eventually it got alright, had ping pong tables, I learned to count to 21 in -- in Dutch.

Q: Did you? Had you played ping pong before?

A: Yes, we --

Q: You had?

A: We had, so --

Q: So that was fun.

A: That was a lot of fun.

Q: Were there -- were there a lot of kids? Were there kids your age on this trip?

A: Yes.

Q: There were.

A: Yeah, well, mainly Dutch kids and my brother s -- kids, there was a big swimming pool and I didn't know how to swim yet, but my brother did, and he enjoyed that a great deal. And I had a good time on the ship.

Q: Now, there were two other couples, right? Mr. and Mrs. Ritter?

A: Mr. and Mrs. Ritter, and Mr. and Mrs. Braun, Braun, and a Mr. Salinger. We were nine people altogether. Mr. and Mrs. Braun were the people that we shared this apartment with in Germany -- in Liegnitz.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: They had three children, they had left Germany before that. One went to Argentina, one went to Holland, and one went to England.

Q: So they were older kids?

A: They were older kids. Little older, not that much older.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Teena -- late teenagers --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- I believe, or maybe early 20's, or -- I have no idea. And they -- it was very tragic what happened to them, the -- we were in Shanghai for about a year when they got a telegram from Argentina that their son had committed suicide down there. Reason, of course I don't know. Their other son who went to Holland was caught up by the Nazis --

Q: Right.

A: -- and disappeared. And their daughter survived in England, that's who they went to after the war. The Ritters had two sons, the younger of which was my brother's age, the other one was a little bit older.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And they had gone to Palestine before that, and they were in Palestine. The Ritters went -- went to them when the war was over. When we all left Shanghai they went to Palestine. Mr. Ritter had a heart attack on the ship the day it landed in Palestine. And whether he got to

recognize his son or not, I don't know, but his sons were able to see him before he died. Mr. Salinger is another interesting story. He was married to a non-Jewish woman, they had a son. She would not go with him to Shanghai, so they divorced. The son was eventually drafted into the German army. When the war was over, he went back to her.

Q: Really?

A: And lived in what became East Germany. His son survived also.

Q: Right. That's quite a story.

A: But the f -- this group of nine people, once we got to Shanghai, we rented a house -- actually were some more people, I mean -- it was the equivalent of a townhouse, and we all lived in there. Henry and I -- Hans became Henry ba -- were the only children, so my family had two rooms, all the others had one room. They had a joint kitchen, everybody cooked together.

Q: Right.

A: And eventually made that into a luncheon area for other people. But especially the Ritters saw their sons in my brother and I.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: As I started school in Shanghai they were always interested in how I did, and so on.

Q: So they were sort of like another set of parents or at least some kind of relative in some way?

A: Yeah, well we were close to them --

Q: Close.

A: -- I didn't consider them relatives, I think they considered us more their children --

Q: Yes, yes.

A: -- than we considered them our parents.

Q: So not so close with the Brauns?

A: Oh, just as close with the Brauns.

Q: Just as close.

A: Yes. And sal --

Q: And Salinger?

A: -- sal -- also --

Q: Also, so it --

A: -- wi -- wi -- also, was very cl -- very closely --

Q: Right.

A: -- knit group.

Q: When you first arrived and saw Shanghai and saw this strange port with all these small boats, big boats, whatever, what -- what did you think? Was it exciting to you?

A: Exciting and scary both.

Q: And scary, yeah.

A: Everything was so strange. First of all, Shanghai, the waterfront is called the Bund, which prior to World War II had these giant, beautiful buildings, high rise buildings right around, they look very impressive. But then you saw these coolies, these are the workman. When they took the heavy stuff and carried it on bamboo sticks, walking one man in front, one man behind on bamboo sticks, in a singsong voice so they kept their tread going so they moved smoothly. This was weird to see. Then you saw the rickshaws, where a man actually pulling a little wagon all along the street. And then the poverty, the beggars on the street, crippled to some degree, trying to beg stuff. And Mrs. Ritter had a sister who was in Shanghai already, they actually were there to welcome us. They said, well most of the refugees are moving into the Hongkew area. Hongkew was a part of Shanghai that had been devastated during the war between the Japanese

and the Chinese. Many refugees, most refugees ended up there and started to rebuild the area. People were put into what was referred to as homes. One room per family, large rooms where people were living together. And everybody warned us against that, so this is where we didn't want to go. So the first thing we did was go into a hotel on Bubbling Well Road and stayed there for awhile, well I stayed there while the adults went out shopping for a place to live.

Q: Now is this where you played "Troubles" with the staff?

A: This -- this is where --

Q: And what is that game?

A: Well, it's -- the German name for it is Mensch Ärgere dich Nicht. I'm not quite sure what it is called in England, but it's a board game.

Q: Right.

A: And while they were going around, I sat down there in the hotel lobby, whoever wanted to play with me, played with me. I won every game, I don't know if it was purposely or not, but it kept me busy, it kept me from running around. But looking at it back now, my parents left me as a nine year old kid in a strange hotel.

Q: Right.

A: But nothing happened, I've ha -- I had fun, people enjoyed having a little kid there. And these were not necessarily Chinese, these were Americans, British, French, all kinds of people.

Q: So is this in the in -- what they call the International Settlement?

Q: In the International Settlement, and the house that we -- they eventually found, belonging to another person, I don't know if he was leasing it, or what, but we subleased the house, was in the French concession.

Q: Right.

A: Rue Ratard. In French, everything was [indecipherable]. And that's where we eventually ended up.

Q: Now yo -- did you stay in that hotel before they found the house, or were you able to run around the streets some? Did you go walk with your brother?

A: I walked with my parents a little bit.

Q: A little bit. Was --

A: I don't remember too much of that.

Q: You don't?

A: No. But it's -- when I, 50 years later went back to revisit Shanghai, we stayed at a very fancy hotel in approximately the same area. So I rec --

Q: As the ho -- as the house, the townhouse?

A: As -- no, as the other -- as the other hotel.

Q: I see.

A: It was on the same street. That hotel wer -- I couldn't find any more.

Q: Right.

A: The Burlington Hotel was the name of it, but I couldn't find that. But there was this very fancy, modern hotel, which I believe was built up in approximately the same area.

Q: Same place. Did you recognize the area when you went? Did it look sim -- similar --

A: Well, part of it, I did.

Q: Yeah.

A: My wife and I were -- went walking, I said, "You know, down this street, I believe is where my school used to be." She said, "Well let's go." So we walked down there, I said, "If I

remember correctly there was a big wall, a cement wall around it, and behind the wall was a synagogue and this Jewish school."

Q: Really?

A: And bingo, there it was.

Q: It was.

A: The school was now a government building. We couldn't go into it, but I recognized it.

Q: My goodness.

A: And the synagogue was there, it became sort of a museum, and we were able to go into it. And those things I recognized.

Q: Wow. Okay, we have to change the tape.

End of Tape Two

Beginning Tape Three

Q: Okay, just let me go back a second, do you remember when you got off the ship to go into Shanghai, did you get into trucks?

A: Lot of people did, and they were transported by trucks to the homes or other places in Hongkew.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I'm trying to remember, I don't know whether we went by -- h-how we got to that hotel. I imagine we went by cab, but I couldn't tell --

Q: Not by rickshaw?

A: No, we used rickshaws later on, but I don't believe we took rickshaws to the hotel, however I -- my memory fails me on that one.

Q: Do you remember what the mood of everybody was? Were people very anxious? Could you --

A: No, I don't think as a nine year old child I could --

Q: That you would -- yes.

A: -- detect that. I know that we -- the ship docked on the other side of the river, you know, Shanghai is along a river, and we took like a little ferry boat --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- to the Custom House area where we came in, and on that ferry boat, there was somebody from the Jewish community, from Jewish committee in Shanghai who sort of clued us in a little bit. But what he clued us in is, he showed us the Garden bridge, the bridge going over the Suzhou creek on one side of which was the International Settlement under British control and the other side was already under Japanese control. And he told us that you have to walk across this

bridge, you can't drive across it, that you have to show your papers to the Japanese guard, and the Chinese people that are crossing there always had to take off their hat and bow down to the Japanese. And somebody made s-some remark, well, what are we coming to here? It sounds as bad as what we've left behind. And that of course, is where the homes were, that's where the most refugees began to live. But we, somehow or another didn't go there. We ended up at this Burlington Hotel.

Q: Right.

A: And as I say, I don't recall how we got there.

Q: Do you remember being registered anywhere?

A: No.

Q: No, you just walked in?

A: We just walked in. I bi -- I mean -- obviously we had to register at the hotel, but --

Q: Right.

A: -- not registered as --

Q: But not at any formal --

A: Formal [indecipherable]. I imagine we did, but I don't remember any [indecipherable]

Q: So you don't remember -- you didn't have to carry papers or anything?

A: I didn't. My parents had to --

Q: Right.

A: -- they had their German passports still, with the big J in it. And we as children were listed in that passport --

Q: Right.

A: -- we didn't have our separate passport.

Q: You didn't have your own. Ha -- do you remember how long you stayed in that hotel? Was it a couple of weeks, was it --

A: It wasn't too long.

Q: A few da -- it wasn't too --

A: Be -- maybe a week or two.

Q: Uh-huh. And then you moved to the French Concession, which was more south, closer to the harbor, I guess. Or not?

A: No, actually not, no --

Q: No?

A: -- it's -- the French Concession stretched along, you know, mi-might say it's parallel to the International Settlement. The French Concession had the nicer living quarters. Even today it still has --

Q: Yes.

A: -- the nicer living quarters. And what I do remember is like, the streetcars that could only go up to one point and then you had to take another streetcar on the other side. And there were trolley cars that were driven by electricity, but no tracks. So the electricity was different in the French area that it was in the in -- in the International Settlement.

Q: Really?

A: When they got there, one guy jumped off the car, they took a running start, pulled the wires down, ran across the street and then hooked the wires back up on the other side. And that's how you got from one end to the other. It wasn't too far away because from there I was able to walk to school.

Q: Right.

A: And school was in the International Settlement.

Q: It was in the International Settlement?

A: It was a Jewish school.

Q: Just called the Shanghai Jewish school, is that where you went?

A: The Shanghai Jewish school.

Q: And did you go there fairly quickly from when you ca -- you came in July --

A: No, we came in July of -- and they were overcrowded there, and I had a hard time -- my parents had a hard time getting us registered. Eventually we did, but by this time it was September, or October. I think it was after the Jewish holidays.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: The principal, he was called Reverend Brown. Course, was all British schooling, and my first day in school they had a dictation. I ac -- should go back a little bit to -- when I was being tutored in Liegnitz, I was also tutored in English.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So for about half the year I had some English lessons. And that was my whole experience in English. Now I come into this class, it's being taught in English, we have a dictation, where you write down everything. The teacher knows I -- where I came from, so she corrected every word I misspelled, which was practically every word. You've never seen so much red ink on one piece of paper. But it didn't take long. They put me in a class a year younger than I was --

Q: They put you in second grade?

A: I guess it was second grade, I had not -- I don't even remember for sure what grade, they called it form, the British school.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Form. But I was -- I mean, the kids in class were a year younger than I.

Q: I see.

A: And after a year I caught up enough to be put into my regular class.

Q: And was everything taught in English?

A: Everything was taught in English. But as a child, you pick this up very quickly. The other children were help -- the teachers were helpful. Some of the other kids were refugee kids that were there a little longer than I, they helped. I joined the Cub Scouts, right -- you know, about a year later.

Q: And your brother was in the Boy Scouts?

A: Boy Scouts, and --

Q: So your brother was in fifth grade, or sixth grade, something like -- whatever -- whatever the equivalent --

A: What -- I do -- I don't remember what number --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- it was, but he was obviously four years ahead of me, however, he only went to school for about a year and a half.

Q: And then he went to work.

A: And then he was sent to work.

Q: Right. So, are your parents learning English at all?

A: Very little, very --

Q: Very little. So you're speaking German at home?

A: At ho -- home we spoke German, in school we spoke English.

Q: Spoke English. And is there a common language in Shanghai or is just -- English just one of them because there's so many languages?

A: English was the main language that you were able to [indecipherable] get along with. Obviously it's Chinese, but even Chinese wasn't [indecipherable] I mean, the Shanghai dialect is quite different from Mandarin, which is the main language of China today. My brother picked up Chinese --

Q: Really?

A: -- where he worked. I never did, other than a few words here and there, some which you -- curse words you learn very easily in every language. But my parents lived within this Jewish -- German Jewish community.

Q: In the French Concession.

A: In the French Concession, we had [indecipherable] contact with other people. My father tried to open a practice, he actually took an office for about a year or so in the International Settlement. But the refugees as a rule did not come to him because they didn't have any money, the Chinese didn't come to him. He had recommendation to two -- to two physicians, and they were very nice to us, they helped my father out, taught him something about [indecipherable] diseases. But all in all my father was not able to make a living from his practice. He tried all kinds of things. One time somebody offered him a job in the leprosy colony, my mother put her foot down on that. She said, that we don't need.

Q: She thought he would catch it?

A: Leprosy is -- you know, has a bad name to it.

Q: Bad reputation.

A: Very bad reputation. And -- but one time somebody was looking for my father and I said, well he's in that hospital over there. And I said well come on, I'll -- I'll take you there. And I took off with these two complete strangers to show them where my father was. My mother was horrified. You know, you hear about kidnapping and all that kind of stuff. But I was perfectly at ease to do that. And we walked to school every day and I caught up fairly quickly with my class.

Q: So what was your father doing?

A: Sat around.

Q: Sat around.

A: Doing nothing. Became very depressed. Eventually these nine people decided to open up a little lunch room, you know? Noon time was the main meal that you ate in Europe. There were a lot of people there who didn't know how to cook, pi -- single bachelors, what have you. They loved the lunch room, but inflation went -- was so rampant, that we didn't make any money. We basically paid for our own food. And my father acted like a maitre d', you know, welcoming people, seating them, etcetera. In between he still practiced a little bit. My mother did most of the cooking. The other men did the shopping, they used to go out and come back on the rickshaw with all the food. There wasn't much refrigeration there, so you had to buy the food the same day that you were cooking it.

Q: Right, right.

A: And I don't know for how many years that lasted, but it lasted for a little while. My mother also baked cakes for people. And what we loved is when one of the cakes didn't come out right. Then --

Q: So you could have it.

A: -- that was not good enough to sell, but --

Q: Right.

A: -- good enough for us to eat.

Q: So she learned well enough from Marthe how to cook?

A: She -- she learned -- she became an excellent cook.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But cooked everything in the German style. I mean --

Q: Right.

A: -- no Chinese food, per se. She took the Chinese vegetables, and somehow or another --

Q: Made them into German.

A: -- made it into German food, which is, of course, what everybody loved.

Q: Right.

A: She also adj -- when -- once we got our furniture, she got her sewing machine, and she started sewing for people. So she did -- whatever money we made, was made by her.

Q: Right. So your father must have been really demoralized by this.

A: Terribly demoralized.

Q: Right.

A: And the end result of that was that my brother took on the job of being the head of the household.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He began to speak English, he began to speak some Chinese. He was able to maneuver throughout the city, and one of these doctors that my father was referred to knew a machinist from Switzerland, and he suggested the Henry might get a job with him, which he did. But this

place was at the other end of town. It was -- I don't know how long it took him, but it took him about an hour by bicycle to get there. And then he worked under the worst conditions.

Q: Was this Allensbach?

A: Alle -- yes.

Q: He wasn't very nice to him either.

A: He was not very nice to Henry --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and Henry has never forgiven my parents for what they -- that they send him out like that. But they were desperate, my father especially was desperate. He didn't see how things are going to go on, you know. How long is this war going to take?

Q: Right.

A: So at 14, he worked -- he started to work full time.

Q: Right. Can I ask you, was this -- was this sort of typical of the problems that the refugees had, that the male in the family, the -- the adult male was not able to earn a living and the kids had to go out, or wa -- do you --

A: It was not -- it was typical in some instances.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Doctors, lawyers -- lawyers had no way of --

Q: The professionals had nothing to do.

A: -- pro -- professionals.

Q: Yeah.

A: If you were a shoemaker --

Q: You ha --

A: -- you did fine.

Q: Right.

A: If you did -- a watchmaker, you did fine.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Talking about watchmaker, there was a watchmaker who we became friendly with later on, Flautto, he actually made watches and clocks from scratch. And when Roosevelt got re-elected in 1940, he send Roosevelt wa -- a little clock that he had made as a present, and got a sec -- thank you note. I became friendly with his son years later.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So these are the people did very well, some people opened up little shops.

Q: Right.

A: And also we must remember my father was in this -- by this time 50 some years old.

Q: Right, right, he wasn't a young person.

A: He was not a young person any more. He tried to learn other trades, but that didn't come easy to him. He was often taken advantage of, and we didn't trust the banks. Some of the money we had was kept in either British pounds or American dollars, and then every time you needed some, you changed it into China's currency.

Q: Right.

A: You didn't do that too much because the inflation was so tremendous. So my father one time went and got some money in Chinese currency, on the Central Reserve Bank of China. He came home with that and Henry said, "Doctor, you got taken. Central Reserve Bank, that's the bank of the Chinese puppet government under the Japanese [indecipherable] government. It's not going to be worth much." But shortly afterwards the Japanese took over China --

Q: And then it was worth more.

A: And then it became the currency to have. So where he thought he was taken he actually got ahead of everybody.

Q: Now when you first came, the Japanese controlled part of Hongkew, right?

A: They controlled all of Hongkew, actually.

Q: All of Hongkew.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And -- and the International Settlement went up to a certain point, but that was not taken over by the Japanese, nor was the fre -- the rest of Shanghai --

A: Was taken over on December eighth.

Q: Yes, right.

A: At that --

Q: In 1941.

A: [indecipherable] in 1941.

Q: Right. But so --

A: But up until that point it was still separate.

Q: Right.

A: Had this separate government, they had the French government on one area which was like a French colony and --

Q: And then the British.

A: -- then the British were primarily in charge of the International Settlement.

Q: Was there an American [indecipherable]

A: There was an amer -- American presence there, too. There were American Marines at the -- they were actually stationed right across the street from our school. There were American Marine barracks.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And then December seventh, which of course, because of the International Dateline, December eighth in Shanghai, the Japanese took over the rest of the town, the -- both the French and the British --

Q: Right.

A: -- at the International Settlement. Even prior to that, the allies knew that they can't stay there forever, so many of the people living in Shanghai had already left back to the States, or France, wherever. Not France, because France was at war already. And there were two British -- two gunboats left in the harbor, a British and an American. And the Japanese started bombarding them. And the story goes that one surrendered and one went down, ship and all.

Q: Huh. Right.

A: But these were -- these are stories, I --

Q: You don't know.

A: -- I don't know these to be facts.

Q: Yeah, right.

A: What I do know is that December eighth was a Monday and I walked to school like always. We had by this time moved out of this building that we were sharing with our friends, to someplace else, further away from the waterfront. We didn't hear the firing, we didn't hear the bombardment. And we rode to work, which was in the Japanese area. I went to school, and the kids, did you hear the bombardment, the Japanese are taking over. We got called into the

auditorium, the principal told us about Pearl Harbor and that the Japanese at this moment are taking over the rest of the city. As he is speaking, we hear troops marching by the school, Japanese troops were marching by, occupying the Marine barracks across the street from us. And I still recall seeing the ja -- the American flag go down and the Japanese flag go up over the Marine barracks. And then they send us all home. By the time I ca -- came home, a kid a year or two younger than I had gotten home a few minutes before me, he told my parents and his parents all kinds of stories, they couldn't make heads or tails out of him, he was so nervous. I was the first one to tell them about Pearl Harbor and the Japanese taking over. In this time they worried sick about my brother.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And he pedaled all the way through all this military takeover back home from where he was working. And after this my parents decided it's time to move into Hongkew, into the area where all the refugees are living.

Q: Right. But let's go back a little bit. In the -- when you're living in the French Concession with these two couples and a single guy --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- then all of those people decide they're going to go to Hongkew. Wa --

A: They all decided to go to Hongkew and my mother still didn't want to go to Hongkew.

Q: Right.

A: So they -- they --

Q: So you -- they left.

A: -- moved to Hongkew and we moved in with another family into a small apartment.

Q: Was that in kena -- ke --

A: Yes, it started with a K.

Q: Ki -- ki -- K-i-n-e-a-r, Kinear. I don't know how to pronounce it.

A: Kinear Road.

Q: Kinear Road.

A: I think yes, Kinear Road.

Q: Now, that was not in the French Concession.

A: No, that was --

Q: That was --

A: -- in the International Settlement.

Q: International Settlement.

A: But further, I guess, to the west, away from the harbor.

Q: Ha -- yes, and further away from Hongkew, it wasn't [indecipherable] Hongkew.

A: Further away from Hongkew. A good ways away from Hongkew.

Q: Now, during this period, are you walking around Shanghai by yourself?

A: Yes.

Q: You are, and it's -- it's -- it -- are your parents worried about you, given there's supposed to be a lot of thievery and opium dens and God knows what there.

A: They must have been --

Q: But you went anyway.

A: -- but I di -- I'm -- I'm not aware of it. I mean, they had no choice. I mean, I walked to school by myself, and sometimes with friends.

Q: Right.

A: But we always -- it was always daytime, I didn't walk around at night.

Q: At night. Did you see terrible things?

A: Yes. The Chinese were very poor and very dirty at that time. They had a child, an infant might die, they didn't bury it. They wrapped it in newspaper and put it out on the sidewalk. So I see this on the sidewalk, I cross over on the other side of the street, not to be close to it. I see that. I see sometimes dogs na -- around these infant corpses.

Q: And could you see it was a corpse? A baby corpse? Because it wasn't completely --

A: You could see that it was something covered.

Q: Something, uh-huh.

A: I hob -- I wasn't curious enough to go close to it.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I knew what it was.

Q: Right.

A: You saw people who were crippled on the street, begging, pushing a tin plate in front of them. You saw kids crying while the parents were poking them so they cry more, trying to beg. You hear and heard and saw thievery going on. There was the so-called hat-snatcher. You were sitting in the streetcar -- course, they were not air conditioned, was opened and the man had his hat on and just as the streetcar took off, somebody snatched the hat off.

Q: There was money in hats?

A: There was money in everything.

Q: I guess everything.

A: There was a law in the International Settlement, if somebody steals a loaf of bread and takes a bite out of it, he cannot be punished, cause it shows that he was hungry.

Q: Really? That's interesting.

A: And we just try to be careful, but the worst part was the diseases. You couldn't -- everything had to be boiled.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Water had to be boiled, you could not eat any raw food. Salads were basically out of the question. Sometimes my mother took some salad and put -- poured boiling water over it, well, if you put boiling water over a salad, it doesn't taste too good any more.

Q: Right.

A: The Chinese had little shops where they boiled water and sold boiling water. And we would go there with a thermos, with tea leaves and a thermos, so get the boiling water, by the time we got home we had tea.

Q: Tea, yeah.

A: But they said, be sure you see the water boiling. It has to be bubbling. And that's a -- these were big drums of water, so it took a long time for them to --

Q: Right.

A: -- really boil.

Q: Right.

A: The Chinese guy would like to sell it to you before he -- it was really boiling. We were told to be careful about that. You couldn't walk barefoot. When the rains came, Shanghai flooded. Shanghai was basically at or below sea level, so you had no basements, no house had basements like we're used to over here. When it flooded, h-how did we get around? Took a rickshaw, and we talked to the rickshaw pullee what you're going to pay him to go to wherever you want to go, and then in the middle of the street he'd say no, I want more. He would just stop there, so you had to pay more to go on.

Q: But when it rained, it could be a foot of -- or more of water.

A: Yes, it could -- i-it was fairly deep, I -- let's say a foot or so at times.

Q: Did you have boots?

A: Yes, but they were not big enough, so you just had to watch what you're doing, and -- this water was, of course, terribly filthy --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and you could get all kinds of diseases. And we went through all sorts of illnesses. Typhoid, cholera. We got inoculated every six months against all these different illnesses.

Q: And where would you get inoculated? Would the -- would the Jewish Joint have a --

A: Well -- well, my father gave us the inoculation, I guess --

Q: He did?

A: -- I don't know where he got the stuff from. But everybody got inoculated, the health department inoculated people on the street, but we were told not to get that, because you don't know how clean those needles are.

Q: Oh boy, yeah.

A: So you -- when you got inoculated, you got a certificate to show that you have been inoculated. But with all that going on, people still got ill.

Q: Did you get ill during this early period?

A: Yes -- not the early period, I got ill --

Q: Later.

A: -- later on.

Q: Yeah.

A: The early period we did fairly well.

Q: Did you like being in shang -- I'm not -- talk -- bef -- before December eighth, se-seb -- before Pearl Harbor, did you like being there? Was it exciting, interesting?

A: It was exciting, it was interesting, it was an adventure. Sometimes they had gangs that would gang up on you. Of course [indecipherable] like anyplace.

Q: But this wasn't because you were Jewish?

A: No, this was because I was white.

Q: I see. Were these Chinese or Japanese gangs?

A: Chi -- chi -- Chinese.

Q: Chinese gangs.

A: Chinese. And then the Russians, the Russian kids used to attack us, even in Hongkew later on. There was a lot of Russian people living there, and one time my father had a Russian person come up with one of his kids to -- something was wrong with him and he took care of him. And he was in part -- h-he was in some of these gangs. So if he was in the gang they told them -- he told the gang to leave me alone. I had my in with that.

Q: I see.

A: That's -- that was always scary. You know, we didn't have that much money on us, so if they want it, but --

Q: So they beat you up to try and get whatever money.

A: Whatever money you had. You gave them some money then you ran away.

Q: These were a lot of White Russians from Russia --

A: White Russians.

Q: -- who came after the revol -- revolution, right?

A: Yes. White Russians.

Q: Now, there are some Jews in that population that came, but the majority who had came over --

A: Yeah, there was a large Jewish Russian population.

Q: Uh-huh, yeah.

A: Very large. And some of them went to school with us, in the Shanghai Jewish school. But --

Q: We have --

A: -- we have to get --

Q: -- we have to change the tape [indecipherable]

A: Okay.

End of Tape Three

Beginning Tape Four

Q: Hi.

A: Hello.

Q: Tell me something. When -- when your brother Hans, or now Henry, was going to do work, was there a discussion or was he simply told by your father, you're going to go out and -- to Allensbach factory and you're gonna -- do -- do you know?

A: I don't know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Basically speaking, I believe he was just told you have to go out there. I don't think my father realized where he sent Henry to, and how bad it would be. I think my father should have checked it out instead of just taking somebody's word for it.

Q: Right.

A: And sending this little kid, 14 years old, out to nowhere. And he didn't do that, he didn't check it out. You know, today if you send your son, or daughter, your child someplace, you check it out, whether it's a college, whether it's a work situation. That, he didn't do. They -- he was -- my father was so panicked. He didn't know how he would feed his family. Here he comes from a upper middle class background as a physician. He had his dreams of sending his sons to same university he went to. Maybe they would go into his profession or something similar. All these dreams got shattered, and now he cannot even take care of them on a day to day basis. He was worried how to feed us the next day. What will happen to us. So when this opportunity came around, he grabbed it and it'll at least take care of us to some degree. Most of our quote unquote income consisted of selling what we had. We brought a lot of stuff along on this -- in this lift, and that's what we lived on. It wasn't until substantially later that we actually got charity.

Q: So when your brother is working, it doesn't contribute that much, because he's not -- he's not earning so much money?

A: It doesn't contribute -- i-it couldn't have contributed that much. You know, I wasn't in on how much he's actually paying in.

Q: Right.

A: But, you know, primarily selling our products, my mother's work --

Q: Right.

A: -- was the main income.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I still went to school.

Q: Did Hans complain to you about the work at that -- at that time? Do you remember private conversations?

A: Yes, I -- I think more later on than at that time. I think I was too young to be privy to si -- this.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Henry -- I'll call him Henry --

Q: All right, sure.

A: -- because that's the way I'm used to it now, is a very private person, doesn't open up very much. And four years at that age is a long --

Q: Right.

A: -- is a big age difference. But while I made friends and had fun, in and out of school, he didn't. He worked many hours, he came home dead tired, slept, back to work, and I wasn't aware of what he was going through at the time.

Q: And he worked six days a week?

A: Six days a week.

Q: So he had -- he did have one day off.

A: Yes.

Q: But -- mm-hm. Did you -- even though he didn't say anything, did you realize it was hard on him in some -- do you recall a thi -- or are you just --

A: No, I don't --

Q: You were too young.

A: -- I was too young.

Q: Yeah, yeah. When di -- when did you join the Cub Scouts and he joined the Boy Scouts, was it --

A: Right -- almost within the first year that we were there.

Q: Uh-huh. So did he stop when he was working? He wasn't part of it?

A: He was -- he stopped.

Q: He had to stop.

A: He stopped. Yeah, he stopped and his education stopped, to a --

Q: Right.

A: -- great extent.

Q: Right.

A: I went to school for many more years and lot of things that I was learning in school he never was taught, obviously he's self taught since then.

Q: Right.

A: But I had a better education at that point. And -- but I wasn't -- to answer your question honestly, I wasn't aware [inaudible]

Q: How was the relationship with your parents at that time? You're living in very close quarters, so you may not have even seen anything, cause at that age we often don't see anything. But it must have --

A: You mean the relationship between my parents?

Q: Yes, was it diffit -- was it difficult?

A: It must have been very difficult.

Q: Yeah.

A: But again, a nine year old doesn't see that.

Q: Right.

A: I know my parents loved to play cards, especially my father, loved to play German card game called Skat, and I would set up my cot and go to sleep while they were playing cards. I mean, I could sleep thr -- I slept through all of that.

Q: Right.

A: And my parents, you know, played with us, we played cards and car -- board games and things like that. So we do -- did play together in that respect.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I th -- think I saw more of what my mother went through, cooking and sewing, baking. And again my father was devastated that his wife had to support the family. And Henry was the man of the house, anything that came up to be discussed with the landlord, with this, with that.

Q: He did it.

A: He was involved in all these things.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That went on all the time that we were in Shanghai.

Q: Were you afraid your father would commit suicide?

A: Yes.

Q: You were?

A: Yes, there was a time when we were living out there on -- not Combare, what was the name of the street?

Q: Kinear?

A: Kinear Road.

Q: Kinear.

A: On Kinear Road, where I thought my father went up on the roof to kill himself. My father used to sit in a chair and fall asleep in middle of the day. Typical sign of depression.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And that was one of the worst time for us, when we were on Kinear Road, very far away from all our friends. And that is of course where we lived when the Japanese took over, and shortly after that we moved to Hongkew. Whenever we moved, our apartment or room -- rooms, became smaller and smaller. My mother and I used make a chart and figure out how we would set up the furniture in the new place, and sometimes it was within an inch --

Q: Really?

A: -- that we could squeeze something in, and what we couldn't squeeze in, we sold. The move from Kinear Road into Hongkew was done on a push wagon, I mean it wasn't a truck, a motorized truck , was hand pushed wagon all through the whole city of Shanghai.

Q: Cause it's a big trip from Kinear Road into Hongkew.

A: It's a very large trip. Th -- and then --

Q: Were these human beings that are pushing the --

A: Yes.

Q: -- pulling the --

A: Pulling this cart.

Q: This isn't a rickshaw, it's bigger than a rickshaw.

A: No, it's -- it's bigger than a rickshaw, it's two guys pushing it. And I guess one of us must have walked along with them. Yeah, Henry walked along with them. Of course it's always Henry who had to do the dirty work. My mother and I went ahead. We might have taken the rickshaw, I don't remember these things for f -- facts. So that when they came there, we were able to put everything --

Q: Right.

A: -- into the house.

Q: And they would move -- these guys would move the stuff into the apartment?

A: Into the apartment and we put them where they are. What I do remember is that I was also transferred to another school, from the Shanghai Jewish school, to the SJYA school, Shanghai Jewish Youth Association school, normally referred to as the Kadoorie School --

Q: Right.

A: -- because Sir Alec Kadoorie gave the money for that school. And you know, I was cutting up the last day in the other school. This one teacher didn't believe that I would be moving, so he put me on detention, and the next day when we were actually moving into the other apartment, he happened to walk by and said, "Oh, you really were moving." And yeah, we were friendly after that.

Q: Did you like the Kadoorie School better than this -- the British system in the --

A: Well, they were both the British system.

Q: They were both the British system.

A: The Kadoorie School was on the British system as well. It took me a little while to get used to the Kadoorie School, certain things were different, but not long and I was very familiar with everything there.

Q: Were there a lot of Jewish kids? In the Kadoorie School is all Jewish?

A: All Jewish.

Q: [indecipherable] this a Jewish school?

A: Well, this is Jewish refugee school.

Q: Uh-huh. As well as -- so was the other one.

A: The other one was not just refugees, it's a Jewish school, th-the Russian Jewish kids there, the British Jewish kids, these are the people from India, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- that settled sh -- in Shanghai initially. I mean, they were both Jewish schools, and in the Kadoorie School, the allied citizens had to wear ya -- armbands because the Japanese had already taken over. So you had the British or American armbands and eventually these people were taken into POW camps, and only the refugee teachers remained.

Q: And the refugee kids.

A: And the refugee kids.

Q: I see.

A: There were basically none, other than refugee kids in that school. Mrs. Hartwich was the principal. Mr. Gassenheimer was my teacher, and he wer -- these teachers were excellent. They had no textbooks to give us, so -- there were no textbooks so they had to teach out of one book,

we had to write everything down. But we learned so much. I mean, I was not even 14 yet, this was 1941, I was 11 - 12. [indecipherable]

Q: So this is before your Bar Mitzvah.

A: Before my Bar Mitzvah. And we learned geometry, algebra, everything.

Q: Mm.

A: When many years later I decided to take some night courses in Montgomery College here, I took math and it was all a repeat, it was all what I had learned as a 12 year old kid. Gassenheimer was ex -- a fantastic teacher. They were trying to teach us so many things all at one time. I mean, everything was taught in English, even though they were refugee teachers, they were all taught in English. We -- being a Jewish school, we had Hebrew classes. Being in China, we had some Chinese classes. Being under Japanese control, Japanese classes.

Q: Japanese classes.

A: And Mrs. Hartwich thought that we should also learn French. Now this wasn't one year of this and one year of that, these were all --

Q: All together.

A: -- taught simultaneously. The end result is that we didn't learn anything to hold onto, a word here and a word there is all that I remember. English and German is what remained because we still spoke German at home. When we kids played, it was a mixture, we spoke both English and German interchangeably, but we had a good time as kids. There were no air raids --

Q: No?

A: -- going on, none at all. We didn't have --

Q: That's not until very late.

A: That's -- that much later. That doesn't come about until Okinawa fell. You hav -- year or so later I was Bar Mitzvah and you had to pay tuition at that school, and when my Bar Mitzvah came about, Mrs. Hartwich came up to my parents, we usually don't give Bar Mitzvah presents, but we like Ernest -- I don't know what they called me, er -- they didn't call me Ernie at that time. Anyhow, you don't have to pay any more tuition.

Q: So they had to pay before?

A: Be -- we -- everybody had to pay, and this was my Bar Mitzvah present from --

Q: That's lovely.

A: It was very lovely.

Q: So you made a big impression.

A: I obviously did very well. I --

Q: And you liked it. You liked it a lot.

A: I -- I liked it. I was -- I mean, math was my forte. I was considered the best math student in the school, not in the class, in the school.

Q: In the school.

A: We were -- eventually kids dropped out as they went to work, so the last year there we were 12 students in my class, six boys and six girls. We sat at a long table, the girls on one side, the guys on the other, teacher at the head. And I was the best math, it was a fellow by the name of Hans Eberstark who was the best all around student. He -- he was -- is a genius. He eventually -- his hobby was to go to the library and learn the dictionary by heart. But he was also a lot of fun. He went along with everybody with their jokes. He eventually started working for the United Nations in Switzerland, and although I don't know these for facts, as things I've heard, he helped

write the Constitution for some of the new African nations, and as an interpreter for United Nations. We also had theater that we put up in school.

Q: Were you involved in that theater?

A: I was involved in it.

Q: Yeah.

A: I was in -- we did the part of Shakespeare, "Midsummer Night's Dream." I was Puck --

Q: Really?

A: -- in "Midsummer Night's Dream." We also presented something in Japanese, where the Japanese paper came by and took a picture of us --

Q: Right.

A: -- sitting on the stage there. Course we learned it by heart, I have no idea what I was actually saying. The --

Q: But you were saying it in English?

A: No, on --

Q: Shakespeare --

A: The Shakespeare in English.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, but the Japanese play was in Japanese.

Q: Ah-ha, right. So they never told you what you were saying?

A: Well, they did, but --

Q: It didn't --

A: -- it didn't really matter that much. But we had -- the class had a great time, the 12 of us putting up these plays. We were 13 - 14 years old. No, not quite 14. But we really had a

wonderful time there. And eventually my parents decided that I sh -- finished that school as much -- far as I could go, that I should go to work. In the meantime my brother had -- was able to convince my parents at that place where he was working was not right, and through some acquaintances he found another place, working for a Korean company that made lathe, and drilling machines and so on, where he was able to get a job for me. So I became an apprentice in this machine factory under my brother, in a way. The factory had a small department where the -- we made all the little parts, little screws, pins, what have you. And we were about half a dozen refugees working in there, including a Mr. Lawrence who was a foreman. And I worked there, and between my brother and I, we finally made a little bit more money than we were spending each day.

Q: So how old are you then? You --

A: 14.

Q: F -- so this -- this is what, s-six or eight months after your Bar Mitzvah? No, yo -- it's longer, it's a year afterwards.

A: A year afterwards.

Q: This is 1943, before the announcement for the ghetto.

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: [indecipherable] the announcement of the ghetto was in 1943.

Q: Right.

A: The announcement of the ghetto came while I was still in school.

Q: I see.

A: And I remember at that point, I mean we read the announcement, we read the borders that there were, and we thought -- I thought we were okay. We were on the Seward Road, that's where the line was.

Q: Right.

A: But the line went down the middle of the street, and we were on the wrong side --

Q: I see.

A: -- of the street, and we had to move. Well, one of the girls that I was talking to about that, she thought they would have to move and she was on the correct side of the street.

Q: On the correct side.

A: So we had to move, and now to find a place to live was very difficult. See, in the ghetto, nobody had to move out. The Chinese people didn't have to move out. You had to be in there within 90 days. Couldn't -- it was very hard to find anything until the Jewish organization bought a part of a school and converted that school into small rooms and a few large halls. And you had to pay -- I forgot what they call it, key money or something like that, to be able to have one of these rooms. And my father had to sell his microscope so that he could have the money for us to move in there. So four of us moved into a room in the school. And it was very short distance to the school for me to walk there. The school was actually outside the district.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: However, the Japanese basically like kids and let us go to school. We have --

Q: Did you have to get a pass to go?

A: Yes.

Q: And did you have to get it from this guy, Ghoya?

A: Yes.

Q: Was that terrible?

A: Well, it wasn't so terrible as a kid because I -- I don't think we ne -- actually needed it then, but when I went to work, where I worked was outside.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And we had to get it from Ghoya, and that was terrible because it had to be renewed every month, and sometimes you stood in line for a month to get the renewal. So you stood outside there in every kind of weather, waiting for him to show up, then he showed up and gave a few renewals, gave a lot of rejections. Yeah, in summer it was hot with the sun beating down on you, then you went inside and scare -- you were scared, trying to get in front of this man who had such power over you. Initially some of the people decided not to follow -- not to move into the district, so they were thrown into jail for a week. Didn't think a week's imprisonment was so bad, but these cells were infected. They came out and died like flies once they came out. And that went on for the rest of the time.

Q: Was Ghoya the main person that you had to get -- wasn't there somebody else called Okura?

A: Okura was actually Ghoya's superior.

Q: I see.

A: But Okura wasn't personally involved that much with us.

Q: But Ghoya was.

A: Ghoya was, he had a refugee man being his secretary, doing all the paperwork, but I don't recall his name. But when Ghoya eventually got -- was out of it, this man just did every [indecipherable] just took care of everyone. He was very fine person. But Ghoya was terrible, it's a -- Ghoya considered himself king of the Jews.

Q: It -- this was his own attribution for himself?

A: Yes. He thought he was doing us all a favor.

Q: I see.

A: Our sports activities were mainly playing soccer and he used to come out to the soccer field, where we had to parade past him, just like you parade past a king, and view him. And everything was fine and then the next morning for whatever reason, something he didn't like, he threw the people in charge of the game into jail for a few days.

Q: Really?

A: They never knew how he would a -- react on anything. He used to hit people for no reason whatsoever. And again, the kids he mainly left alone. I'm talking about the adults.

Q: Uh-huh. Did you ever see that? Did you ever see him hitting somebody [indecipherable]

A: No, but my father got -- he said he got hit on the hand, just like this, and he said, "I felt that for hours." It was just [indecipherable]. And you know, the thing -- you were in such small quarters, everybody was on top of each other, slightest thing and people got into fights and arguments. The refugee communit -- community started their own -- what did they call it? Like a court system, so it didn't have to go to the Japanese authorities. So you try to settle things outside of them. In the meantime, things got a little better for us because my father got a job with the -- with the hip -- not the hospital, but the -- well, with the hospital, yeah, yeah.

Q: Was it the free clinic?

A: The free clinic --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- actually he got the job with the free clinic.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And with him getting a job in the free clinic, my brother and I working, we finally were able to make ends meet. In the meantime we had gotten onto charity. And before you could accept charity, they community send a committee up to your house, you know, places where you live, to make sure you had nothing left to sell, which was very demoralizing. But we got one hot meal a day, which was sort of a stew. My parents used to dig out the small pieces of meat there was, and gave it to Henry and I. My father lost over 50 pounds.

Q: Really?

A: Was -- basically both of them were skin and bones, trying to keep us going.

Q: And did you guys lose weight? Did you lose a lot weight [indecipherable]

A: No, us kids, we didn't, but you know --

Q: Were you hungry?

A: No.

Q: You don't remember being hungry?

A: I -- I -- I was not hungry, my -- but my parents saw to it that I was not hungry.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Henry was not hungry.

Q: And when the three of you were working, did your mother stop doing all this baking that she was doing, and sewing?

A: Yeah, she actually stopped that when we moved into the --

Q: She did?

A: -- into Hongkew, because she had no facilities there to do all that.

Q: I see.

A: So, I --

Q: But she still had her sewing machine? Or not?

A: She still had her sewing machine.

Q: Yes.

A: Oh -- to the very end. When we finally -- the war is over and we made contact with her brother in Baltimore, things happened very rapidly and she said, should I bring my sewing machine or not, and we -- it never got to [indecipherable] anyhow, we sold it in Shanghai.

Q: I see.

A: And then she was sorry she didn't bring it with her. But -- was going to say something else.

Q: We were talking about [indecipherable] meals and stuff.

A: Oh, no I was going to ta -- at this time is when I had my Bar Mitzvah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Which was basically a low point in our life, as financial is concerned. And my parents tried to make the Bar Mitzvah pretty nice. The cantor that we had used to be an opera singer in Europe. I can still see him, he looked like Pavarotti standing there in front of me, singing to me. It was done very beautifully. Our neighbors had a little haberdashery store and he came up to my mother a month or so ahead of time to loan him one of my shirts, he wants to make one for somebody, well he made a nice shirt for me. But what my mother had not realized, she gave him one that I'd -- I'd slightly outgrown. So the sleeves came up to here, and he had to attach something. That was my big present, was my shirt.

Q: Your new shirt.

A: And my Bar Mitzvah party consisted of coffee and cake. The rabbi came, my teacher came. And Gassenheimer was my teacher, the Hebrew teacher in our school --

Q: Was Gassenheimer?

A: No, was not Gassenheimer.

Q: No. Right.

A: Was a Mr. we -- Webber, I believe. He was teaching everybody but he was going into a lot of details.

Q: Uh-huh, right.

A: Gassenheimer was not so Orthodox. It was easier with him, and I took lessons from him and that went very well.

Q: I think we have to change the tapes.

A: Okay.

End of Tape Four

Beginning of Tape Five

Q: How long did it take you to learn your Haftorah and learn the ceremony for your Bar Mitzvah?

A: Very short period of time.

Q: Like what, a month?

A: Two months maybe.

Q: Really?

A: Two th -- two, three months, something like that. But --

Q: So you were quick?

A: Well, it wasn't that so much, my birthday is December second.

Q: Right.

A: So when I approached Mr. Gassenheimer back in August sometime, he said, "Oh, December, we got plenty of time." And first day back at school in sep -- early September, he calls me, he says, "I just looked it up, your Bar Mitzvah by the Jewish calendar is actually November 14th. We're talking a lot sooner, we really have to get onto it." So we got onto it fairly rapidly. I don't have a voice to sing, so I was just reading everything, and did fine. Everything went off pretty well, I did okay.

Q: Ha -- you had learned Hebrew before, so --

A: Oh yes.

Q: -- you knew --

A: I mean, I had ler -- started to learn Hebrew back in Germany.

Q: Right, in Germany, right.

A: I could read Hebrew, couldn't speak it as a language --

Q: Right.

A: -- but, you know, I could read the Hebrew prayer books, and knew some of the translations, but basically just reading it was no problem for me.

Q: Did you have to give some sort of a speech, which is what they do in this country, I don't know whether they do --

A: No, I didn't --

Q: No?

A: -- I didn't do any speech.

Q: [indecipherable] speeches.

A: No.

Q: So where did it occur?

A: In the school.

Q: In the school.

A: The school is where we also had services.

Q: Right.

A: In the main school auditorium, that's where we had services, we had youth services there to, where the kids from school did all the parts and I one time was the quote unquote rabbi --

Q: Oh yes?

A: -- had a little talk on the subject, the Torah subject of the day. So that's where it was held.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You know, it was very nice, and --

Q: And where was the coffee and the --

A: At -- at our home.

Q: At the ho -- at the si -- in this little room?

A: That's -- in that little apartment. This was before we moved into the SACRA --

Q: Uh-huh, I see.

A: -- this was when we were on East Seward Road.

Q: Right.

A: -- so we actually had two rooms.

Q: Uh-huh, so it was bigger.

A: Bigger, and you know, we didn't have that many people, maybe half a dozen people that came over.

Q: And did you drink coffee, or was there something else for kids?

A: Oh it -- I did drink coffee, but it probably was milk, or something like that.

Q: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

A: Don't remember that much.

Q: Besides the communal lunches you were getting for nothing.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And you were going to the --

A: The communal lunches really came about later, when we were in the SACRA building.

Q: Right, but when you were in East Seward, you were not.

A: We were not.

Q: So what -- all of this time, what -- what are you eating? Are you eating three meals a day, or would you not even call it three meals a day?

A: Yes, we were eating three meals a day --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- and usually the noon meal was the main meal.

Q: Right.

A: I mean, we didn't have cereal, per se, that I recall.

Q: So what was breakfast like?

A: It was a light breakfast, some bread and butter and jelly, what have you. And I --

Q: And did your mother have to -- she had to buy food every day.

A: She went to buy food daily --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- because of there was no refrigeration.

Q: Right.

A: And she managed very well to do that.

Q: And at night it was also very small.

A: Very small, like a little supper. But I can't honestly tell you what we were eating. I'm -- the only thing I remember is that my mother made -- you know --

Q: She baked.

A: -- she did -- changed everything into German cooking. You know, people hear that I was living in Shanghai, they think of me eating Chinese food. No, we didn't do that, we ate German food. Many of the things we never heard of before. Some of it came through the Russians, there's kasha.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I remember that, and I hated it. But that --

Q: You hated it?

A: I hated it, I won't touch it now. But kasha was our cereal, and that was served to us. And other things, for example, Passover came about, the rabbi announced this particular cereal type of food is good for Passover, for those people who were Orthodox.

Q: Right.

A: Made up our own rules. Kasha, there was -- we drank a lot of tea, ate a dra -- ate a lot of rice, and for a long time after I came to the United States, I hardly touched tea or rice. Since then I've been accustomed to it more.

Q: Did you ever eat Chinese food in Shanghai?

A: Yes, when -- when we had got our visa to come to the States, we went out to a quote unquote Chinese restaurant.

Q: Really? That was the first time?

A: A nice Chinese place. Not the first time, it -- but I remember that time because we -- we ri --

Q: Was it good? Did you like it?

A: Yeah, we liked it. One time earlier, one of these doctors that my father had been referred to, took us to a really fancy Chinese restaurant with several courses came in -- coming in. But I was very little at that time, I didn't appreciate all of it, but it rel -- it can be nice.

Q: Right.

A: But most of the time it was make do with what was available.

Q: Right. It wasn't an easy time, was it?

A: No, it was not. I -- I mean, again, as a child you don't know these things, but for my parents it must have been terrible, not knowing how they're going to feed us the next day.

Q: Right.

A: How are they going to pay for the food? And tha -- you know, once we moved into the SACRA, it's there that we applied and eventually got charity. And I remember the people coming in, looking over to see --

Q: To make sure that you had nothing to sell.

A: To make sure there was nothing to sell. And then we got this one hot meal a day, which was big pot of stew.

Q: And did they bring that to your apartment, or did you have to go --

A: Well, they brought it in a cart, and then they --

Q: And they'd ladled it.

A: Ladled it out. And we had a pot they ladled it in --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- and then my parents tried to give us as much meat as possible.

Q: And the other two meals they had to be responsible for getting them to you?

A: Yes. And one was some sort of kasha or whatever that was.

Q: So what did you drink in the course of the day, because it had to be extremely hot at certain times of the year, right? I mean, you would need to drink a lot, right?

A: We need to drink a lot, we drank hot water.

Q: You drank hot water.

A: Because when we went to work, my brother and I went to work, and our mother took -- made some sandwich for us, but we couldn't take anything to drink with us, and whatever we drank had to be boiled. So we had to see that it is boiled, and then we drank hot water. Hot water and sort of dry bread was our lunch.

Q: But what happens with the communal meal, if the communal meal is the middle of the day, and the two of you were working, what happens?

A: My parents kept it for the evening, and then reheat it.

Q: So you -- you would have it in the evening. And did your father work all day long once you got into --

A: No, it was a while before he --

Q: Awhile before --

A: -- got that.

Q: So you were working with your brother before your father got to --

A: Oh yes, and my father was still practice once in awhile, and then everybody had to leave that one room that we lived in when he had a patient in there.

Q: I see.

A: Other times when it wasn't such a personal examination, I assisted him in some things. We had like a little balc -- not a balcony, like a walk around the room outside where we fired up the, what we called the Chinese oven, which was a hibach -- hibachi. Over here when we do the hibachi it's a lot of fun, over there, that was the way to go. Had to buy charcoal to do it, and when charcoal became too expensive, we bought powdered coal, which we mixed with water, and made into little coal balls to heat up. Our hands were black as --

Q: Black.

A: -- oh, it was terrible. And there was one woman in -- w-we were quite a few people in this building, couldn't tell you the quantity. The one woman worked in a restaurant. She used to come home and bring the coffee grounds from the restaurant. Anybody has a fire going, you can -- they can share with me a cup of coffee. So my mother had -- loved coffee, she missed coffee

more than anything else. So she had the fire going and drank the coffee when it was going through the grounds a second time. And it's -- and there also were -- we got bombed out. In 19 --

Q: But that's later --

A: That's later, okay --

Q: -- let -- let -- let me just ask you a couple of things. Now, did I just forget my question.

A: We're talking about food, and -- we're talking about the communal kitchen stuff that came in.

Q: Ah, this is what I wanted to know. Does your -- does your father's mood, as you see it now, get better when he starts to work and the three of you are working? Do you see a difference?

A: When my father got the job in the clinic, his mood began to change.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: His mood began to change, and made all the difference in the world then. And I remember, you know, you couldn't deal in American currency on -- on open market, but Chinese currency had no value. So when we finally were able to come to a point where we could buy some American dollars, it was a big point because that was a turning point. This month we actually made more than we spent.

Q: I see, because it was worth more.

A: It was [indecipherable] we were able to buy some dollars on the black market, and that's what we put aside.

Q: Now, before you meet -- they don't actually call it a ghetto, they say the designated area for stateless refugees, right?

A: Exactly.

Q: So it's actually for all of you who would come after '37, am I correct?

A: Correct.

Q: So it's mainly Austrian and German refugees.

A: Correct.

Q: Oh -- as well -- and y --

A: Some Polish also.

Q: Right.

A: I don't know ho -- the Polish -- w-we -- they were in there, but it's primarily the German and Austrian refugees.

Q: Right. Before you go in there, there's a lot going on in Europe.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: A lot of murdering of Jews.

A: We didn't know that.

Q: Di -- you didn't know, you hear nothing.

A: We know that they are being put into concentration camps.

Q: Right.

A: My grandmother, my mother's mother was still in Breslau. She was up in age when we were getting ready to leave, and my aunt, who was quite wealthy, had paid in an old age home for the rest of her life, so she didn't have to worry about money. My mother asked her to come with us to Shanghai, she said, "Look, you guys going to have a hard time in Shanghai, why should I be along? Who would do anything to a -- an old woman like me. I'm taken care of over here." So we corresponded with my grandmother all the time we were there, and one time a letter comes back, moved, address unknown. And we knew that meant concentration camp. And I recall seeing my mother in tears when she got that.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: When we got that notification. Now, what concentration camp meant, that it was death camps, we were unaware of. As it turned out, my grandmother was taken to Theresienstadt, and from what we understand, she died there.

Q: Do you think that your parents knew more than you and Hans knew?

A: No, I don't.

Q: You don't?

A: I don't think.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I don't think anybody knew this.

Q: Right. So people didn't have radios, they didn't have a way of --

A: Well we had radios.

Q: You did. But you couldn't get -- you -- you couldn't go far enough to get --

A: But the radios didn't announce it.

Q: Yes.

A: The Russian radio had a German program on it. See, Russia was not at war with Japan.

Q: Right.

A: So the Russians were free, and the Russians reported very accurately what went on on the European frontier. Now, we heard, you know, about the landing in Normandy and all that, almost at the same time as you would have heard over here. But we didn't hear anything about the Japanese war.

Q: I see.

A: And one time we -- it came through about Okinawa and we looked on a map and we saw where Okinawa was, and we said to ourselves, God, that isn't so far away from us any more.

And then shortly after that, that bombing off Shanghai began. So once a island like Okinawa, comparatively close to the Chinese mainland, was captured, planes flew from there, and did their missions from there.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But most of the bombing of Shanghai occurred in the outskirts.

Q: Right. Do you think any -- do you think that the majority of refugees, the stateless refugees in Hongkew knew nothing?

A: Of the death camps? I don't believe they did.

Q: Until after the war.

A: Until after the war.

Q: Right. W-When you saw the notice, or all of you saw the notice to go into the designated area, which was February '43, and you have to be in there by May.

A: May.

Q: Am I correct?

A: February 18th -- May 18th.

Q: February 18 -- yes. Were you worried about having to go in there, or did you think that the Japanese wouldn't do anyth -- I mean what -- what -- what was the sensation about the Japanese?

A: Well, we were worried. I mean, the Japanese were in control there, and Germans were their buddy buddies.

Q: Right.

A: We had no idea what was going on in Germany, but we realized this is an imprisonment of sorts.

Q: Yes.

A: And only of sorts, because usually when you are a prisoner, they feed you.

Q: Yes.

A: Here we had to feed ourselves.

Q: Selves, right.

A: And, you know, primarily, the first thing is trying to find the place to live.

Q: Right.

A: I mean, just imagine yourself at -- you decide to move and you have 90 days to do it. So it -- it's not easy to find a place under the best of circumstances, and here, all of a sudden, all these people trying to move in. Many people switched homes with the Chinese. They took their fancy house, something like as nice as this one and traded it for a hovel.

Q: So there were some people who did very well in Shanghai, as far as you can tell?

A: You mean among the refugees?

Q: Yeah.

A: Very well is exaggerating it a bit.

Q: Uh-huh, okay.

A: They did well. They made more money than they spent. That's considered doing well. There were some -- there was one family from Liegnitz, one -- a couple actually, they didn't have any children. They came with their parents. And his father was not Jewish, so he didn't have to move into the ghetto. The younger couple got a little place in the ghetto, but they were all watchmakers. His father employed him, and he was able to work with his father and live outside the ghetto.

Q: Right.

A: They did work quite well. This Mr. Schwartz who lived next door to us, he the one that made the shirt for me, he had a store across the street, and he seemed to do all right. And a lot of the people who were handymen, plumbers, electricians, what have you, they did fairly well.

Q: But they're working with the Jewish refugees, right, who don't seem to have a lot of money. So how are these other people, even though they have the skills, how were they making money? Do you understand it?

A: Well, we all had a little bit of money s -- coming from somewhere.

Q: Uh-huh. Somewhere.

A: I mean, you had to have a plumber, you needed a plumber.

Q: Right, right.

A: I am not sure how these things --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- all came together again. You couldn't see that.

Q: And who did you rent from? When you rented this little room.

A: Well the room in the SACRA was of course, the SACRA organization.

Q: Right.

A: It stood for something.

Q: Right.

A: Shanghai soma -- something or another. Prior to that, a Chinese ow-owned the house.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And the --

Q: In Seward, when you were in east --

A: On East Seward Road.

Q: Yes.

A: And he had a sh-shop downstairs and rented out the upstairs. And once the war was over, and we moved back a block away on East Seward Road, the same thing occurred. Somebody had a s-store downstairs and rented out the upstairs.

Q: All right, let me ask you about hygiene.

A: Yes?

Q: You probably didn't have a toilet inside.

A: Yeah, we did.

Q: You did?

A: We did have --

Q: Throughout?

A: Throughout, that's one thing we insisted on, WC in the --

Q: Really?

A: -- meaning water closet, yes.

Q: So that's unusual?

A: Well, it wasn't too unusual, but it wasn't unusual not to have it. But we had it, we did not have to have an outhouse.

Q: So you didn't have to have one of these what they called the honey buckets?

A: Nope, we didn't have to have a honey bucket.

Q: I see.

A: Thank God.

Q: Wa-Was that the main given by the refugees, a honey bucket?

A: I would imagine so.

Q: You imagine so. Because that, I'm sure, was very uncomfortable.

A: Well, but, you know, when we walked to work, or walked to school --

Q: Yes.

A: -- we would see these Chinese people cleaning out their honey buckets --

Q: Buckets.

A: -- in the middle of the street.

Q: And there would be people who would come, and you would dump the --

A: They du -- come in one of these carts, they would dump it in, and then they would take it out in the field and use it as fertilizer.

Q: As fertilizer.

A: That's another reason why you had such --

Q: So did Shanghai stink?

A: Yes.

Q: Was it a lot of s -- awful smells?

A: Awful smells, especially -- yeah. Not in the French Concession, yeah, the fancy residential area, but in the Hongkew area, it stank. I mean literally, it was terrible. And the people on the boats, they threw their waste into the water.

Q: Right.

A: Now that's the same water that then came out of your faucet.

Q: So that's why you had to boil it.

A: Yeah, boil it.

Q: And even boiling, I would imagine, didn't clean everything.

A: Well, they well -- that did go through some cleansing pro --

Q: I see.

A: -- process before it got there, but the bacteria of course, all came straight through.

Q: Right.

A: And sometimes people thought that certain filters would help it or -- they tried it and they --

Q: It didn't.

A: It didn't. And we got all kinds of illnesses. Typhoid, typhus.

Q: Did your parents ever get sick?

A: Oh yeah. My parents got sick, I got very sick.

Q: You got very sick at the end.

A: I had [indecipherable]

Q: And so did your brother --

A: -- war was actually over.

Q: -- right?

A: My brother got sick --

Q: Something --

A: -- he had got sick --

Q: Bacterial dysentery or something like that?

A: Bacterial dysentery in there at one point. But wa -- I -- I had either typhus or typhoid, I never can keep it straight, whatever comes from lice.

Q: And your parents?

A: My father had some bacterial disease, my mother had something else. Everybody got sick all the time.

Q: And so they got sick, and then they got over it and then they got sick.

A: Sick, and over it. Some things were not so serious as others.

Q: Let me ask you this, when you look back -- I'm sure at this age you wouldn't have seen it, but when you look back and think about when you move into the designated area, wh-where people are now calling the ghetto.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Maybe you ca -- did you call it the ghetto then?

A: Yeah.

Q: You did.

A: But -- yeah, I -- yeah.

Q: So your mother stops doing cer -- the things that she was doing because all the boys in the family, the men are working, right?

A: Well, the -- yeah, bo -- my father didn't start working until --

Q: Right.

A: -- some time after that.

Q: But at a certain point he does.

A: Yes.

Q: And she stops. Now do you --

A: She di -- she did -- she continued doing --

Q: Oh, she did?

A: -- something. I mean, we didn -- we didn't have the lunchroom any more.

Q: Right.

A: That stopped when we moved away from rue Ratard. I think she still did some of the sewing.

Q: Okay, then my question is not -- I'll tell you what I was going to ask you. I thought that possibly she pulled back from all these things so that your father could feel even s -- even stronger, but maybe --

A: No, you know, that was not the case.

Q: No.

A: I'm not sure at this point how the money that we needed to have came about.

Q: Uh-huh, right.

A: Mostly it came about from selling things. My father's microscope, my mother's fur coat, and this, that, the other.

Q: Right, right.

A: [indecipherable] more and more.

Q: Did you hate going to work?

A: No.

Q: You didn't resent it?

A: No. I looked forward to it, you know.

Q: Really?

A: You get out of school, you get to work, I can do someth -- accomplish something.

Q: But you loved school.

A: I loved school, and I --

Q: And you loved the work?

A: -- I basically loved work, but I was an apprentice, I didn't like it when they had me cleaning up.

Q: I see.

A: I wanted to get onto the machinery, learn how to use the machinery.

Q: Right.

A: The Korean who owned the company, he didn't want to see me on the machinery, he wanted me to clean here, clean there.

Q: Clean --

A: This department where we made all the small parts was sort of a showplace for him.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And he often brought his customers in to see --

Q: Right.

A: -- what we were doing. And I loved making money. There -- after awhile -- I mean, first we got paid a salary, but then we got on piecework, where for every screw you got so and so many cents, or whatever it was.

Q: Right.

A: And I loved that, I loved being able to contribute, and making the money. An --

Q: W-Would yo --

A: A -- but you know, I was still 14 - 15 years of age, of --

Q: Your brother by then is 19.

A: 19 -- 18 - 19 years old --

Q: 19 years old.

A: -- and trying to protect me from everything, I mean, when they told some stories that he thought I was too young to hear, I -- you know, go fetch a glass of water kind of thing, which I resented, I th-thought I was big enough to hear -- hear all this.

Q: Right.

A: But we also had shelters, bomb shelters in the back of the -- of the factory. However, when the bombing started we went on the roof of this factory and watched the American bombs -- bombers bomb the outskirts of the city. I remember the first time we saw the B29's flying over our head. They were flying so high that the Japanese anti-aircraft couldn't reach them. So we were there just looking up at them.

Q: Just looking up. As I understand it, the Japanese had sort of munition du -- places in Hongkew --

A: Well --

Q: -- or around, nearby.

A: Where they had it all, I don't know. But the school that we -- the SACRA built into this building, the other half was a radio station.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: A Japanese radio station that gave some ja -- radio signals to the military. And there was a -- a gasoline place, storage place not far away. And there were other things, there was an admiral of some sort not living too far.

Q: Mm.

A: So when on July 17th, 1945, a blanket of bombs was placed over that whole area. They were obviously not very large bombs, not like these big bombs that they used to destroy a lot of things, but there were about three or four bombs that fell into our building. And quite a few people got killed right then and there. I was home, I didn't go to work because I had a cold, flu or whatever, nothing serious, but I was in bed. As I said before, we didn't have any basement, there was no place to go anyhow when the bombs fell and they were usually [indecipherable] on the outside. All of a sudden I heard this big noise and I see the ceiling falling down on me like that. And I

went like this. There was a bookcase over my book, and one foot fell above my head, and one below my feet, and the whole ceiling and everything fell on top of that, so I hardly had a scratch. But I came very close.

Q: Let m -- there were bookcases on it --

A: It was bookcase, you know, a bookshelf with two legs.

Q: Right.

A: Or a leg on each side.

Q: On either side of the bed.

A: On either side of the bookshelf, that was over the bed.

Q: Uh-huh. Right.

A: And one part of that shelf fell above my head --

Q: Right.

A: -- one below my feet. And it protected me from the ceiling and everything else that came down.

Q: Right.

A: My parents were just outside the door where I guess there was a stronger part of the building --

Q: And they were okay.

A: -- and they were not hurt, they were okay. But my mother was scared for me, couldn't open the door because of the air pressure. And then when they finally opened the door and called for me, and they said I didn't answer right away, because all they saw was the ceiling stuff all over.

Q: Right, right.

A: And my brother was at work, and -- I guess we have to stop.

Q: We'll s -- we'll stop and then continue the story.

End of Tape Five

Beginning Tape Six

Q: Ernie, you were talking about the bombing and your parents --

A: My parents were outside --

Q: Outside.

A: -- and the building there, it was a brick building and a fairly sturdy building, so where they stood wer -- did not come down, the ceiling did not come down. And my mother at first thought that there's somebody lying in front of our door that she couldn't open it, because the air pressure was so strong from the bombs falling. But finally she was able to open it, and after a few seconds, actually, I guess, I was able to yell I'm here, and push stuff away from me and jumped out into their arms. No sooner was that done than a call came from my father to help here and help there because there were -- a lot of people were wounded, and quite few had died. But my brother was at work, and somebody was telling him at the wor -- and he decided to come home when he realized where the bombing had occurred. So he started running home, it was a good 45 minute walk. And on the way he met people, he said -- he asked, what about the SACRA building, and people just, oh, everybody got killed in the SACRA building. It was not til he was about a block or two away that he met somebody who knew us, and he said, don't worry, your -- your family is fine. Now, I still had a temperature from the flu or whatever I had, so I was lying outside on a rug, trying to stay calm. And my mother was with me when he came. We couldn't find my father, he was being called from one end to the other. And then they said, well we all have to move into this school. And my mother said, I don't want to move into the school with all these people. So we cleaned up our room a little bit --

Q: And stayed there?

A: -- and stayed there for the first night. You could see the stars coming through the ceiling. And during the night a fire broke up somewhere in this complex, was actually two buildings. Well, the next morning we all decided we better move into the school. So we grabbed -- each one grabbed a mattress and walked those three blocks to the school. The classrooms were made empty, and you put one mattress next to the other, man, woman, child. And that's where we stayed. But neither Henry nor I decided to go back to work. We refused to go back to work.

Q: You refused?

A: We were too scared. And this was July 17th. Shortly afterwards the war was over. The way we found out the war was over, on August 10th is my mother's birthday. We woke up in the morning, we heard bombs falling. My father said, here's some -- they're saluting you to your birthday. And then at night, wi -- what was always black out, all of a sudden the lights went on. There's Mrs. Hartwich, the principal in her nightgown. I just heard over the shortwave that the Japanese have asked for surrender. The war is over. And everybody got out, went into the auditorium, somebody jumped at the piano, and started playing music. And my father led the conga line.

Q: Really?

A: Dancing through there. Next morning people started tearing down the signs of the ghetto [indecipherable] district, and the Japanese arrested them. Oh, everybody said the whole thing was just a rumor, nothing true. But two or three days later, I think it was on the 14th, a plane, American plane flew real low, dropping leaflets that the war is over, but the Japanese will have control, police control over the city until the Americans can come in. And then the emperor held his speech telling Japan and the whole world that the war is over.

Q: Did you hear that on the radio?

A: Yes.

Q: You did.

A: Obviously I couldn't understand what he is saying, you know.

Q: Yeah, I was going to say --

A: But we heard this, and then somebody was translating it. And then, just a few days after that, the first Americans came in, they came into the school. It was nice to see them, and after that, all right, we now have to go back to work someplace, so --

Q: Let me ask you something. Did you folks hear about the -- the two atom bombs that had been dropped?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Did you hear about that later, or in this period?

A: In this same period. I mean, it came over the newspapers.

Q: It did, and --

A: Not what we fully understood what an atom bomb was.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But we heard about the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Q: Right.

A: And na -- to begin with, we were worried if -- what would happen if they start dropping a bomb on Shanghai.

Q: Yes.

A: But this happened so rapidly from one day to the next.

Q: Right.

A: But it was nice. It was a good -- good time.

Q: It was a good time [indecipherable]

A: It was a good time that -- then I don't know where my brother first went to work, but he -- as soon as the American troops came in, he got a job at the airport, and I got a job at another machine shop, which was quite filthy.

Q: Filthy.

A: Filthy place. And I didn't like working there, but then I got sick, and this is where I got -- I got sick and said to my mom, look at my bites, I had some bites on me, turned out to be typhoid or typhus. I think it's typhoid.

Q: And you were sent to the hospital, yes?

A: And I'd -- sent to the hospital, and I was in the hospital for about three weeks. We --

Q: Now, what hospital is this? Is this an American run hospital?

A: No, the refugee hospital.

Q: Refugee hospital. Is your father working at this hospital, or --

A: No --

Q: -- no.

A: -- he was working at the clinic.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But this was a hospital that they had going all along --

Q: Right.

A: -- it was in one of the homes.

Q: Which they called Heime --

A: Heime --

Q: -- yeah.

A: Heime. [indecipherable] the Heime, I think it was a [indecipherable] time, but then again, I can't be a hundred percent sure. And you know, I was in the room with about a dozen other people. I had had my shots for typhus, typhoid, cholera, all along, so I didn't get this illness as bad as it could be. There was another kid about my age in the room, he didn't have as many shots, and he was delirious for days. He eventually had recovered, and I eventually recovered. But there were people in this room who died while I was in there. People used to say, Ernie, turn around. And I could hear people actually passing on. In the meantime, Mr. Lorenz, who was my foreman in the other factory, he had a been a student at the Zeiss factory in Germany. He decided to open up a camera repair place. He met my parents on the street, he said, "Do you think Ernie would like to continue his apprenticeship with me?" Well, when I heard that -- course, he didn't call me Ernie, everybody called me Ernst at the time. When I heard that, it helped my recovery more than anything else. And soon as I was well enough, I started working with him.

Q: Did you know him?

A: Yes, he was my foreman --

Q: Ah, that's right --

A: -- in the --

Q: -- and you liked him.

A: -- in the Korean factory. Oh yes, he was very nice person.

Q: And were you attracted to doing work on cameras, was there something attractive for you in that? Or you weren't sure?

A: Well, cameras or not, it's the small pieces, the small --

Q: Uh-huh. Which you [indecipherable]

A: -- mechanical --

Q: Right.

A: -- which they used to call fein Mechaniker in German, fine mechanic. And just recently my son, who is into genealogy, found a listing of the people coming over to the United States on a ship from Shanghai including our name, and next to my name -- profession, it said mechanic. He said, "I didn't know you were a mechanic." I said, "Well, that was fine mechanic," --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- that it referred to. But I continued my apprenticeship with him by getting into cameras.

Q: Right.

A: And here, 60 years later --

Q: And here you are [indecipherable] later --

A: -- I'm still at it.

Q: Now, did your brother get sick at the same time as you, or a little bit afterwards?

A: No, that was before that, I believe.

Q: Before, uh-huh.

A: And -- sometime before that that he had this serious illness.

Q: And you're working now in different places?

A: In different places. He worked for -- he worked for the American military, which I also wanted to do because it sounded neat.

Q: Yeah.

A: But then I got sick and started working for Mr. Lorenz.

Q: Right. And where do you folks live now? Where di -- where did you go -- oops -- where did you go right after the war, when the American occupation [indecipherable]

A: Well, once the American occupation came in, of course we could go move wherever we wanted to.

Q: Right.

A: And we found an apartment on East Seward Road again --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- but a block away from where we were before, basically the same area. And that's where we moved into, and stayed until the --

Q: Bigger? Two rooms instead of one?

A: Two rooms instead of one.

Q: Two rooms instead of one.

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Still with a WC?

A: Still with a WC, definitely a WC.

Q: And -- and what happens to running water at this point? Do you still have to boil everything, this is --

A: Oh yes.

Q: -- this is just what it -- what it was like then for everybody.

A: Oh yeah, everybody had to boil their water, definitely.

Q: And do you know what the occupation was like for the Japanese who were there, for the Chinese who were there, was it harder for them then --

A: I couldn't answer that --

Q: You don't know.

A: -- you know, because we had no social contact with them at all.

Q: Right, right. Was there any suspicion because you were Germans and Austrians?

A: From the Japanese, or --

Q: From the American -- no, from the Americans.

A: Oh no.

Q: No.

A: No, no. I mean the -- no, I mean the people in charge knew who we were.

Q: Right.

A: You know, the plain G.I.s, and sailors, they could care less.

Q: [indecipherable] And is there more help coming in once the war is over, from Jewish organizations?

A: Tremendous amount of help. First of all, packages were sent to us of clothing and food, and some of the food we didn't quite know what to do with, what it is.

Q: Like what?

A: Farina. We didn't --

Q: You didn't [indecipherable]

A: -- we didn't know what Farina was, my mother finally figured it out.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But we loved the hard salami.

Q: Really?

A: You know, that was easy to ship, but didn't spoil.

Q: Right.

A: That was just great. We loved the canned fruits, you know, canned cherries and so on. The cherries we split evenly, one for you, one for me. Chocolate and everything else, I mean, we just loved everything coming in. My parents quickly began to get their weight back.

Q: Because they could have more food now --

A: Then -- now they could --

Q: -- because there's more.

A: -- eat more [indecipherable]

Q: Yes.

A: And my father still worked for the clinic, my brother worked for the Americans so he made a halfway decent salary.

Q: Right, you worked for --

A: For Lorenz and although my salary wasn't great, it was great compared to what many other kids were doing.

Q: Right, right.

A: I was making 20 American dollars a month, I mean, that was a lot of money.

Q: That's a lot of money.

A: And --

Q: So the currency was American money at this point?

A: Well, we got paid -- we calculated everything in American money.

Q: I see.

A: But your everyday purchases still was in Chinese money.

Q: Right.

A: But the Chinese money changed again. And of course, the inflation was rampant.

Q: Right.

A: You just couldn't go by it.

Q: Is the destruction in Shanghai primarily in -- in the Hongkew area? There's no destruction of --

A: There was no real destruction, even in the Hongkew area, other than that one point on July 17th --

Q: There wasn't much.

A: -- there wasn't much. The airport got destroyed, the -- some of the piers, some got destroyed, but there was no rampant destruction like you see in what happened in London or in --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- Germany in World War II.

Q: Now, as time go -- you were there for about two years, until 1947, okay?

A: Yeah, January '47.

Q: As time goes on, do you hear more about the destruction from the atom bomb? Do you -- do you get a sense of what that really was?

A: Yes. The papers were fairly accurate in what they told us about that.

Q: Did that hor -- did that horrify you, or did you think --

A: Well, the horror, it got overshadowed by what we heard from Germany.

Q: Uh-huh, right.

A: I mean, the paper started running an article about Treblinka, one of the destructive camps. Then we saw newsreels and -- when we went to movies, of what occurred.

Q: Uh-huh. And so you saw newsreels of the camps?

A: Of the camps. And then the realization, these aren't strangers, these are our relatives.

Q: Right.

A: It's my uncles, my aunts, my --

Q: Right.

A: -- grandmother --

Q: Right.

A: -- these are all in there. That realization was very, very hard to accept.

Q: So you're living with the happiness of being --

A: Free, on the --

Q: -- free on the one hand, and not on the --

A: -- on the other hand, I mean, it took a long time to absorb this.

Q: Yes.

A: I mean, to this day, none of us can fully comprehend that.

Q: Right, right.

A: Sometimes read some of these books of -- which have a graphic description, I mean it -- can't even -- you have to put it down --

Q: Sure.

A: -- put it away.

Q: Sure.

A: And what -- when we read about things happening in another country, it's bad enough, but when you begin to realize these are my people, these are my relatives, that's -- that was hard to accept. An --

Q: Did you -- did you see a change in your parents, was this -- di -- did it take a lot -- because they knew them even better than you did.

A: Of course.

Q: Right?

A: I mean, they was much closer.

Q: Right.

A: My mother's three siblings all had gotten out, only her grandmother had stayed behind. My father had four siblings and only one had gotten out.

Q: Right.

A: And the one brother that he was so close with, that he was trying to talk into coming to Shanghai --

Q: Didn't get out.

A: -- didn't get out.

Q: Right.

A: He had three children. One went to England, one went to first Holland -- Denmark, then Sweden and eventually is -- Israel or Palestine. But the third one, the youngest one, stayed with them.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And -- but the one that went to England, I fou -- eventually made contact with and we got together. It's horrible to realize what went through there. And that overshadowed a lot of the other things.

Q: Right. Yes.

A: And then the next step was to make contact with the people that were alive. My mother's sister was in Panama, her brother was in Baltimore. Her other sister was in Haifa. My father's

sister was in Montreal. So we contacted all of them, and we decided whatever comes first, that's where we go.

Q: Where you go.

A: We didn't care where.

Q: Right.

A: Well, it turned out that the United States came through f-fast. And on Christmas eve, December 24th, 1946, we got our visa to come to the United States. And of course once you had the visa, now you had to figure out how to get here. The Joint and other Jewish organizations took care of that. Was shipped -- usually troop ships, which were filled. The first --

Q: With troops?

A: American troops, yeah, yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: But the -- you know, they tried to arrange it so that husbands went to wives first, parents to children, children to parents. And we were the first group after that.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And we were told we'd have a ship leaving first week of February. I get a call at work, Ernie, come on home, we're leaving in a few days. What happened, the ship in February would not take any women because there were still G.I.s on the boat. So they said, "Well, you and your sons can go, but your wife would have to come on the next ship." And he -- father wouldn't hear of that. Said, "We've stuck together this far, we're not going to split up now." Is there nothing else we can do? This was on January the fifth. The guy said, "Well, there's a ship leaving on the ninth of January, there is still some room." He said, "I'll take it." But we have to have your heavy stuff by day after tomorrow. Okay. So --

Q: You didn't have that much stuff anyway.

A: We didn't have that [indecipherable] had stuff we had to get rid of, you know, like the sewing machine I mentioned earlier, and got rid of some of the things. But we were aboard that ship on January ninth, and 13 days later we were in San Francisco.

Q: Was it hard to leave Shanghai in some ways?

A: No.

Q: It wasn't?

A: No.

Q: You were glad to get out.

A: We loved -- we couldn't wait to get out.

Q: Really?

A: Our stay in Shanghai, I mean, even though it wasn't that tough for me as a child, was very tough for my parents, my brother, and of course it filtered down to me.

Q: And even after the amer -- a-after the American occupation, even --

A: Yes.

Q: -- even then it was not easy.

A: No, that -- you know, that was just a year, so getting out --

Q: Right.

A: -- and starting a -- a new life was all we could hope for.

Q: So you were all very happy to get out?

A: Very happy to get out. Very happy.

Q: Were there any friends there that you had made that you --

A: Yes, we had some close friends.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They moved different places. One went to Australia, and I remember him, dimly. We corresponded for awhile.

Q: And then stopped?

A: And then it stopped. There was -- we actually had a little club that we formed after the war, met in the school, called Tikvah, and made some close friends with them, and one of them came to Washington, and I got to know her -- reunite with them --

Q: Right.

A: -- after we got here. I went to one reunion where I met -- re-met many of these people from the Tikvah club. But it wasn't hard to leave. I think it -- yeah, this group from Liegnitz, we all got together the night before --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- had dinner together. And --

Q: That original group?

A: That original group.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: The Brauns, the Ritters --

Q: The Ritters and --

A: Mr. Salinger.

Q: Yes.

A: And we said goodbye to each other because we all went in different directions. We came to Baltimore, Brauns went to London, Ritters went to ta -- Palestine, and Salinger went back to Germany.

Q: Get his wife.

A: To his wife.

Q: Yes.

A: And my parents corresponded with them for a fairly long time.

Q: Mm-hm. Had you remained fairly close with them whi --

A: Yes.

Q: -- the whole time you were in Shanghai?

A: Yes. Yeah, in fact, we always celebrated Passover together.

Q: Really?

A: Mr. Braun was the one who conducted the service.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I was always the youngest in all my life, to say the four questions.

Q: Right.

A: Manishtana. And he used to practice, and I had to come over his house to help -- to do my part, and to practice.

Q: I see, so you would do it well.

A: So I would do it well.

Q: Right.

A: But e-even in Germany, my mother's family, where we used to have Seder together with her family, I was always the youngest of all the cousins.

Q: Right.

A: Then in this group I was the youngest. So I was always the youngest.

Q: Right.

A: But s-say that by heart in Hebrew to this day to a great extent. But it must have been very hard for my parents to say goodbye to them --

Q: To them.

A: -- because we spent so much --

Q: Yes.

A: -- time together.

Q: And you shared a huge decision to even go to Shanghai.

A: Decision to go to Shanghai, to live together.

Q: Right.

A: To do that lunchroom together.

Q: Right.

A: And even afterwards we stayed very close. And --

Q: Was America what you expected?

A: In most cases, yes.

Q: Yes?

A: In many cases better and some cases not so good. And by that, the racial discrimination.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I thought that this business with the blacks being different from the whites went out with the Civil War. And of course, especially in Maryland and Baltimore, that was not the case.

Q: Right.

A: There was still a lot of discrimination in 1947 and ’48. When we came here, of course, the first thing, you had to find a job. We had a little bit of money that we had brought with us, but not very much. And so looking for a job was the first thing, and we had relatives here, mother’s

brother and his family. They found out that Henry was a mechanic, and -- not an automobile mechanic, but a machinist, I should say.

Q: Right.

A: So they got him a job in Bethlehem Steel, which was not to his liking because that was quite a distance from where we lived, and it reminded him like being shoved off to Allensbach in Shanghai. When he -- my cousin heard that I was a camera repairman, he took me into Ritz camera center, and they hired me, and I was with Ritz for about 10 years. So I had a job a week after we got here, my brother had a job a week after we got here.

Q: Your mother?

A: My brother.

Q: Your brother, right, at Bethlehem Steel, right.

A: At Bethlehem Steel. And my father went to the Jewish Community Center and talking to those people he says, I'll be a Fuller Brush man, whatever you can find me. And he was told, no, wa -- I'll find you something better, and a few months later found him a job in a hospital. In Maryland you could work as a physician in a hospital without having to take all the tests.

Q: Really?

A: But this was a sa -- a sanitarium for colored people. So he was in a place called Henryton, working his profession, very happy living there. My mother decided to live in Baltimore to take care of Henry and I. They got together on -- on weekends. And -- but this is some more of this discrimination that I was talking about, these doctors, African-American doctors used to tell my father, when you go into downtown Baltimore, you can go into any restaurant --

Q: Right.

A: -- drugstore, have thi -- something to eat, or to drink, we can't do that. Theaters, some you can go to, some you can't. And that -- that surprised me, that was one of the things that surprised me. But other than that, it was just great.

Q: It was easier than being in Shanghai, I guess.

A: Much easier --

Q: In a ce -- in a certain --

A: -- much easier.

Q: Yes.

A: And we became assimilated as fast as we could. We wanted to be as American as --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- and the next guy.

Q: Now you were 17 when you came and your brother was 21.

A: 21.

Q: So you're no longer kid kids any more.

A: No, no. You know, I -- I made friends very quickly, and some of the people I made friends with I'm still friends with today.

Q: Are you? That's great. Would [indecipherable] change the tape.

End of Tape Six

Beginning Tape Seven

Q: Ernie, what did your father actually do in this hospital? Was he just a regular physician?

A: Regular attending physician --

Q: Right.

A: -- it was a TB hospital. There were quite a few little children there, and he loved little children, got some pictures at home, him and the little children.

Q: And he lived there, so when did you and -- and Henry see him?

A: On weekends.

Q: So, just --

A: Henry -- Henry got a -- a -- the idea was, when Henry was so unhappy with working in -- at Bethlehem Steel, my father said to him, as soon as I have a job, you can quit there and find something else.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And he did. He found a position as a salesman for a paper company selling wrapping paper and all that kind of stuff to retail stores, hos -- hospitals --

Q: Right.

A: -- hotels, etcetera. And for that, of course, he needed a car, so we bought him a car, and with that car we --

Q: You went back and forth.

A: Back and forth.

Q: I see. And did your father have an apartment there?

A: Yes.

Q: He did? So y --

A: And my mother stayed there sometimes for days, but she wanted to take care of Henry and I, so she stayed in Baltimore with us.

Q: So you all four were -- were subsidizing two apartments.

A: Well, the ap -- the apartment in the -- in Henryton, he didn't have to pay for it, that was --

Q: I see, that was given to him, I see.

A: -- that was given to him as part of his pay.

Q: Right.

A: My mother could have stayed there too, with him.

Q: Right, but she preferred to stay with you guys.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Now I understand that one of the reasons you came to Baltimore, because her brother was there.

A: That's correct.

Q: And then pretty much after you came, they decided they were -- or had they already decided they were going to California.

A: Well --

Q: Which was a little odd, right?

A: Yes. It -- my mother became very upset about that, because when we came into California, when we landed in San Francisco, friends of my parents from Germany, who were living in San Francisco, were there welcoming us. And the Joint gave us a hotel room where we could spend a little bit of time with them. These were two brothers, they were not married, two brothers who, in Liegnitz had department stores, something, but they came to San Francisco and lived there. And said, "Why do you go to Baltimore? Everybody from the east is coming west." My mother said,

"Well, all these years, with all that went on, I want to get back and at least be with my brother." So we came to Baltimore, we settled down a little bit, and they tell us that they are planning to move to San Francisco. My mother was furious. You could have told us that ahead of time, we would have stayed in San Francisco, the -- I forgot what their name was -- told us to just stay there. Anyhow, they decided to go there, first their son, and then they. And my uncle couldn't find a job. So after awhile they came back to Baltimore. In the meantime we had really settled down extremely rapidly. I had a nice job, maybe it wasn't paying a fortune, but more than minimum wage. Henry eventually had the job with this paper company, he stayed with them for over 40 years until he retired.

Q: Wow.

A: And we made friends. My parents made friends with other refugee people that lived there. I joined a fraternity, it had nothing to do with a college, it was like a club, and as I said, I'm still friends with these people today. A few years ago we had our 50 year reunion.

Q: Really?

A: Just the three couples, one young -- one man moved onto New York and is now in upstate New York, and we call each other on the phone every once in awhile, once in awhile we see each other. So it was a very deep friendship that developed there. My brother also became friends with quite a few people, he had now a decent job, nine t -- nine to five, so to speak, rather than all hours of the day and night that they had in Bethlehem Steel. He had a car so he could get around. Began to teach me how to drive, which was --

Q: That was good.

A: -- it was good to a point. Eventually I went to a driving school, and --

Q: I see. You needed a better teacher.

A: Well, would -- he was so nervous because he had no controls, you know what I -- driving school the guy has all the controls there.

Q: Right, right.

A: And that -- so we had no intentions of leaving Baltimore to go to San Francisco.

Q: Did you want to go to school?

A: No. That's my problem, I didn't want to go to school. I liked -- I liked making money.

Q: I see.

A: I liked work, I liked making money. But people said to us -- used to say to us, in America you don't need schooling. They don't care about your schooling, it's what you know that counts, what you can do that counts. Well, that's not true. And eventually somebody said to my father, look, your boys don't even have a high school diploma. You need to see to it that they get some schooling. So Henry and I went to night school, Baltimore City College, which although it has the name college in it, is really a high school. We went to night school, and sent our report cards from Shanghai to a department of education here in Washington. That eventually came back, and they just went by our age into which grade we should go. So in the meantime, what should we take, we -- English, of course, American history and some other subjects. We took tests in German for both German one and for German two, which we passed with about a 90 degree setting. And then we heard about the ga -- high school equivalent tests.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we both took that and passed that.

Q: So you got your high school degree.

A: So we have our high school degree. Recently I happened to come across a report card of that. I had 99 plus in mathematics, so mathematics was my field. But we didn't go on to college.

Q: And neither one of you wanted to?

A: Henry did go.

Q: He did?

A: He went to -- he went to Baltimore City College and took a two year course there. I was not eager at the time, which --

Q: Mm.

A: -- and I had no encouragement from my parents. In the meantime, my pa -- father had passed away, and my mother depended on Henry and I --

Q: Right.

A: -- to keep her going.

Q: Now, your father had a -- a goiter when he was in Shanghai, and this --

A: My father had a goiter from when he was a young man.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: During World War I is when he first noticed it. And it was in the army at the time, German army. But this is 1914 - 1918 --

Q: Right.

A: He had had a friend who had a goiter removed and he became a vegetable afterwards.

Q: So your father was afraid.

A: My father said, I don't need that, this is just a beauty spot. People either like me or don't like me with it --

Q: Right.

A: -- and just kept that. However, that put a tremendous strain on his heart, pos -- probably had some effect on his heart attacks.

Q: Because it was growing?

A: It was growing internally --

Q: Internally.

A: -- yeah, always. And it put a pressure on his heart.

Q: Yes.

A: So after we're here for awhile, we have to meet some of the doctors here, they said, look, why don't you have it taken care of now? We have Johns Hopkins Hospital here --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- one of the best hospitals in the world. He said, "But what about my heart?" I mean, now after the initial heart attack in Germany, he had had another heart attack in Shanghai.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Not as severe, but it was a heart attack. They said, well, let's take you under observation and then see how your heart will hold up for an operation. So he did that, went into Hopkins, and we went to visit him one Sunday in December, and while we were there the doctor comes in. We've checked your heart, you've been under observation, your heart is fine, you'll be able to do it. We've scheduled the operation for tomorrow, next day.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Well, he ex -- my father excused himself after a few minutes, he had to go to the bathroom, didn't come back. All of a sudden we hear, Dr. So and So, Dr. So and So, calling him. My father had had a heart attack. They wheeled him back into the room, they chased us out, and that's ho -- when he died.

Q: Oh my.

A: His heart just wasn't able to take this, or whatever. Completely -- I -- I for one never expected him to die. That really got to me.

Q: Mm.

A: And my mother now depended completely on my brother and I to take care of her. No encouragement to me to go to school, so I didn't. Two years later, 1951, I got drafted.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And that -- after I come out of the army, instead of taking advantage of the G.I. bill, I went right back to work. My own fault, I should have gone to college. It would have been paid for under the G.I. bill. But with no encouragement, in just the other way, you know, you got to go back to work so you can support me, I went back to work.

Q: And who was supporting your mother when you were -- when you were in the army?

A: My brother.

Q: Your brother.

A: And I.

Q: And you, because you were sending back the money.

A: I sent back half of my pay, I mean, I got 80 dollars a month as a private, sent 40 bo -- dollars back home.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: While the other guys got money from home, I sent it back. And my brother was just above the age to be drafted, and the age was at 26, and --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- so he just escaped being drafted.

Q: And you didn't?

A: And I didn't, and you know, so once I got home -- my brother got married while I was in the service, and --

Q: Did you know? Was he dating this person before?

A: Yes.

Q: You did -- so you knew her?

A: Yes. I knew her. And this -- also from -- she's actually from Vienna. And they took an apartment just a few doors away from my mother's house, or mother's apartment, didn't have a house, and my mother used to cook dinner for them. So they came over her house for dinner, and then went home. But then I came home, and I moved in with my mother and stayed there, and this is still in Baltimore. In the meantime I went back to Ritz camera centers, and they told me -- Eddie Ritz, a very fine man, you know, they had to send repairs out while you were gone, so now how about -- we think you'd be better salesman than a repairman. So I went into sales, worked my way up to assistant manager. And one day I got a call from Eddie Ritz out of Washington, we just bought this place called Brenner photo, how would you like to be manager of the store here in Washington? And that's how I ended up in Washington.

Q: Right.

A: But instead of moving to Washington, my mother put it very bluntly, well, if you move to Washington, you'd have to pay for two apartments. So I commuted for about a year.

Q: By train, by car?

A: By train.

Q: By train, mm-hm.

A: And then, after awhile I left Ritz cameras and then went for another comp -- with another company called Industrial Photo in Silver Spring, but there was no good train connection to Silver Spring --

Q: Right.

A: -- and I commuted by car. And couldn't wait to get out of my mother's house, so first chance I had, found a girlfriend, we decided to get married and move to Washington.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Now [indecipherable]

Q: But you still supported your mother.

A: I still supported my mother.

Q: Yeah. Did you get along with your mother?

A: Oh. To some degree, yes. Retroactively I resent a lot of what happened. This business of making us support her, not letting us have a life of our own. I got married and when this young lady and I talked about marriage, I said, "But, you know, you've got to realize, I've got to send some money to my mother every month, every week." And it was tough --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- on our weddin -- on our marriage. Eventually she got some money out of Germany, a small pension.

Q: [indecipherable] I see, yes.

A: And that's when it made it a little easier on us. But I moved to Washington and visited my mother very frequently, but even that was not frequently enough. So there was quite a bit of resentment that built up in me.

Q: Was she very isolated, do you think? Or did she have friends that --

A: She had made lots of friends among the German Jews.

Q: But she still wanted this association with you and Henry.

A: Well, you know, she wanted that, she wanted our financial support.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And made no strong effort to learn the language or to find a job. And it was very difficult to build up a family life of our own, with that.

Q: And did you have children? This is your first wife, yes?

A: My first wife, yeah.

Q: You had --

A: We had -- we had three children.

Q: -- two -- three children.

A: One of whom unfortunately be -- died a few years ago.

Q: Mm.

A: But they all got to know my grandmother -- my -- their grandmother, my mother.

Q: Right, right.

A: Although the youngest probably hardly remembered her.

Q: And do they live in the area, your children? The two?

A: The two -- one lives in Philadelphia, just outside of Philadelphia.

Q: Right.

A: One is now here in northern Virginia.

Q: How nice.

A: But she is married to a man in the diplomatic service, so every once in awhile they are --

Q: They're [indecipherable] yeah.

A: -- in other places, which is usually fine, we have a place to visit.

Q: Right.

A: They've been in Lisbon, I visited them in Lisbon, I've -- we visited them in Moscow.

Q: Great.

A: So it's very nice, and they have a little boy. My son has two sons, one of whom is getting ready to go to college this fall.

Q: Right.

A: And my son-in-law never remarried after my daughter died, but has a little -- a little daughter, a young daughter.

Q: Right.

A: She is now in high school, so they're not little any more. And --

Q: And I gather your daughter was ill.

A: My daughter had an illness that came about, well it was in her all her life. I can't think of the name right now, but it was a illness of the connecting tic -- tissue. Ehlers -- Ehlers-something syndrome. She one day developed a sore on her leg which wouldn't heal, they had to decide to amputate the leg. And then it a-attacked other parts of her body. And it's something I can't get over.

Q: It's awful.

A: I mean, you expect your parents to die before you.

Q: Right. You don't expect your children --

A: You sometimes expect your mate to pass away, but you don't expect the children to die before you. It's -- that's the tough part.

Q: Yeah. And you divorced in the 60's, or --

A: No, late -- later on. When did I divorce? About 15 years ago -- no, 18 years ago, cause it was just before my oldest grandson was born.

Q: Right.

A: We divorced, there were many reasons for it, and once the children were out of the house, it became more obvious that we don't fit together.

Q: Right.

A: And it was a -- about as friendly a divorce as you can have, I guess. One day we just looked at each other and said, do we really want to continue our lives like that, and we decided no. So first I suggested she find a place to live, and then I would sell the house and I'd find a place to live, figuring it's easier for a man to find an apartment than a woman. And she started to look around, she said, "Why would you want to sell this house, I mean, it's something valuable that we have." I said, "Well the house is too big for one person to live in." Said, "Well if you don't want it, then I want it." I said, "Well, that's fine, you know, I'll find a place to live," and I moved out. And you know, financial arrangements that we made between us hit some hard times, but not bad, not really bad.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And she eventually remarried, and a few years later I met somebody and remarried.

Q: Right.

A: And a good friend of mine asked me [indecipherable] how is marriage a second time around? I said, "Well, if it's that much better the second time around, I can't wait for the third time around."

Q: So it's a good relationship.

A: It's a very nice relationship, we do a lot of things together, we travel a lot. We bo -- she's also divorced, so we learned from our mistakes the first time.

Q: Yeah, right.

A: And any divorce, it's not one person's fault --

Q: It's not.

A: -- it's always two people who are not necessarily at fault, things just don't work out right. There are many, many parts that --

Q: Right.

A: -- play a part in this.

Q: Whe -- when you look back, it's -- in a way what I'm going to say is a stupid question, but -- because I don't know exactly how you take something out of your life and say if -- what would have happened if this didn't happen to me. But I don't know whether you experience what Shanghai has done to you. The move out of Germany, the effect on your family and all of that.

A: I think I am aware of it.

Q: You are?

A: My life -- I mean, I look at what my life would have been like if Nazism wouldn't have come to Germany.

Q: Yes.

A: I would have gone to college, I would have become a doctor or lawyer --

Q: Right.

A: -- some professional.

Q: Right.

A: I would have had a great life, you know, I would not have had to worry about supporting my parents, they would have supported me. Probably would have gone into a profession where I could make -- I've made a decent living, and -- instead of what I ended up with. I mean, I didn't do bad. Considering what I went through, I did very well.

Q: Right, right. And you enjoyed it, it seems.

A: I -- I enjoyed most of it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And -- but I find -- I -- you know, I get together with people my age or even younger, and they talk about their college life, which I'd never experienced. I never experienced living by myself until I divorced.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Because I went from my mother's house, got married --

Q: Right.

A: -- into married life. The three years between my separation from my wife, and before I met Anya, I enjoyed those, because I was on my own.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I was able to take care of myself, I didn't starve.

Q: Right.

A: Figured out how to cook, more or less, and I missed out on that part of my youth. I never had a teenage life, or a young adult life. So yes, I missed that. I decided a couple of times to go back to take college courses, but didn't really follow through on it. I did all right in my profession. I eventually, after I left Ritz Camera Center, went with a company called Industrial Photo, and

became their general manager and vice president, and did fairly well for myself. But it's not the same as what I could have been, or would have been.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: [inaudible] you know, I can hold my own with other people, I --

Q: Right.

A: -- have enough education of -- by reading and studying on my own. But certain things I just missed out on. You know, it -- like one time I tried to -- I considered opening up my own camera store, but then I became scared. I am not a big risk taker, I'd rather let other people take the risk and I work for them, but that doesn't get you very far.

Q: But you were in a very high risk situation as a child, it makes perfect sense, doesn't it?

A: Uh-huh, I guess.

Q: It wasn't your choice, it was certainly --

A: It was not my choice.

Q: No, but it certainly was a high risk situation.

A: It was a very high risk situation, I mean, we escaped Germany --

Q: Barely.

A: -- barely escaped Germany. In Shanghai I got bombed out, I mean I easily could have been killed there.

Q: Right.

A: And to think about what would have happened if we wouldn't have left Germany --

Q: You wouldn't be sitting here.

A: -- is really un -- I wouldn't be sitting here.

Q: Right.

A: Really be unthinkable.

Q: Right.

A: To realize what happened to my cousin, my uncles, my aunts, can't -- I can't dwell on that too long, it's too horrible. You read some books and you wonder how one human being could do that to another.

Q: Right.

A: And yet, it's still happening today. Not necessarily against the Jews, but human beings can be very cruel.

Q: Right. Are you a religious person?

A: No, not at all.

Q: Do you think that this set of events destroyed the possibility of becoming religious, do you think, or were -- you were just -- weren't that way all along?

A: No, it has -- I think the last straw was my daughter's death.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I always say if -- there can't be a God who can let six million people die, with one million of children, and then I say it's really six million and one.

Q: And one, right.

A: So, I'm really an atheist in -- as far as my belief is concerned. I'm a cultural Jew, and ethnic Jew, but not religious.

Q: Not religious. Well, I want to thank you very much for taking the time to speak with us today, and speak with me.

A: Well, thank you for asking me, I feel privileged.

Q: You're more than welcome, it's a privilege for me. Thank you.

A: Thank you.

End of Tape Seven

Beginning Tape Eight

Q: What is this shot here?

A: This is actually a shot of the Main Street of Liegnitz. Legnica is called now. At one point in Shanghai, somebody came across this as a picture postcard and gave it to my mother when they saw that it was town we were born in -- I was born in. And you see the streetcar on its single track down the street, and those two domes in the back, I don't remember the name of the church, but was the center part of Liegnitz, and it -- the main shopping center. This must have been taken sometime in the early 30's.

Q: And who is this couple?

A: These are my mother's parents. Their last name was Lewy, pronounced Levy in German. His name is Isadore and her name is Rosa. And my grandfather had a little goatee, looks a little bit like Lenin. He -- what I remember about him is as a child he fell out of a tree, and they had to amputate one of his fingers. And when we went for walks, it always felt funny when that one finger was missing. He passed away in 1936, of a normal death, I forgot -- I have no idea what it was. But my grandmother lived on and then eventually ended up in Theresienstadt.

Q: And Ernie, who are -- who is this?

A: These are my father's parents. I never met them. They died during World War I. I am not sure what they died of, it might have been from that flu epidemic that went all around the world at that time. But these pictures must have been taken before the 20th century started. I have the originals in the frame in my bedroom. And well I'm -- as I say, I don't know too much about them.

Q: And their names?

A: Emil is his name, and now you got me, I don't remember.

Q: You remember [indecipherable]

A: I -- Hanne, I believe. I think it's Hanne, well don't quote me on this one.

Q: And this shot?

A: This is my father, his name was August, and -- on his motorcycle. He didn't have the motorcycle any more by the time I was born. He and my mother cruised on the motorcycle all through Germany, and eventually they bought a car. And then when I came along, a bigger car. So the story goes that my brother asked once, why didn't you buy a bus in the first place? But he loved gadgets like this, and people recognized when the doctor was visiting someplace by the motorcycle.

Q: Do you have any idea what year that was?

A: Well, it is probably in the 20's, the mid- 20's, because Henry was born in 1925.

Q: Right.

A: So it would have been before that.

Q: And this picture?

A: This is my whole family, my father, obviously doing quite well, not on a diet at that point. My mother, Betty, that's me on her lap, and my brother Henry on the other side. This was taken when Henry and I had whooping cough, and we were out in the country someplace, and my father went to town to his practice, and then came ho -- back in the evening, and one day he came back with a brand new car.

Q: And who is this group?

A: This is my nursery school. The lady in the back is Miss Schroeder, who was the owner [indecipherable] of the school, and I'm the little guy right in front of her. I have no idea of any of

the names of the others, but this is Miss Schroeder, who had to kick me out cause one of the other kid's parents didn't like a Jewish boy in there.

Q: And Mrs. Schroeder's the one who came with flowers for your mother.

A: With flowers, to my mother, to tell me about it.

Q: And this shot?

A: This was my first day of school. In Germany it was common practice that on your first day of school you got a cone filled with candy. That's my brother, putting his hand on my shoulder for support. But I obviously enjoyed the candy afterwards.

Q: And this group?

A: This is my first year of school, my first grade class. I'm in the front in the center. They -- right there. And my teacher Mr. Thiel is in the background there.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: That's him right there. Basically had a pretty good time in school there. And I reconnected with Mr. Thiel when I was in the military after World War -- after -- no, during the Korean War.

Q: And this one?

A: Well, this is me in my liederhosen. And it's hard to tell who is more proud, my father of me, or me of my father. But I believe this was taken in the mountains not too far from where we used to live.

Q: And how old do you think you are there?

A: My guess is about seven.

Q: So you think 1936?

A: Yes, approximately.

Q: No -- no, December -- no, '36.

A: ’36 approximately. It’s --

Q: Yeah.

A: I don’t know if in the album I even have the dates on there.

Q: And this?

A: This is probably on the second year in Shanghai. Both my brother Henry and I joined the British Boy Scout association. He as a scout, and I as a Wolf Cub. Here we call them Cub Scouts.

Q: A Wolf Cub?

A: It was referred to as Wolf Cub. This was actually taken across the street from where we used to live.

Q: And what do we see here?

A: Here we see what is left of the SACRA building after the bombing on July 17th, 1945. You can see the bomb holes on top, and there’s a little gate in that wall that we used to enter in. The building has been razed, and there’s another apartment building in its place now.

Q: So was your apartment, once you got inside, you went [indecipherable]

A: Well it -- if you can imagine a school, where you have a walkway all around --

Q: Right.

A: -- and rooms all around, we were actually in the back --

Q: I see.

A: -- of this, but several bombs fell onto the building, and substantial destruction.

Q: And this shot?

A: This was taken in the school building when we were living there, after the bombardment. And they came by with these big bins of food, and doled out enough food for every family. We used

to stand in line with our pots, waiting for them to show up, but eventually we kids just let the pots stand there, and we played on the playground until they came by. And th -- each one got a little bit of food. That what we lived on.

Q: This shot [indecipherable]

A: This is back in -- being a Boy Scout. The war is over, and during the war we often met, but didn't dress up in uniform, always had to be back home before 10 o'clock when curfew came about. And now we started to take some trips around Shanghai. That's me right there.

Q: And this shot?

A: This is my family in our last apartment, taken by the photographer who took the passport pictures for the visa. And we asked him to take one of the whole family, my brother on the left, my father, my mother and me.

Q: And this is in Shanghai?

A: This is in Shanghai in our apartment.

End of Tape Eight

Conclusion of Interview