United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Lillyan Rosenberg
August 31, 2006
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Lillyan Rosenberg, conducted by Amy Rubin on August 31, 2006 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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LILLYAN ROSENBERG
August 31, 2006

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lillyan Rosenberg, conducted by Amy Rubin on August 31st, 2006. This interview is made possible by a grant from Carole and Maurice Berk. This is tape number one, side A. Mrs. Rosenberg, could you please begin by telling me your full name as it is today, and also what was your name at birth?

Answer: My name is Lillyan Rosenberg, and I was born Lilly Cohn in Halberstadt, Germany. I now live in New York in Beechhurst, Queens.

Q: When were you born?

A: January 30th, 1928.

Q: And tell me a little bit about your family.

A: My family lived in Halberstadt for many, many years. In fact, my grandfather was already born in Halberstadt. So we have a history of about 300 years and I have some very old papers that go back to my grandparents living in Germany and they lived in Halberstadt all these years. And my co -- family was very comfortable, and had a very cultured, lovely life in my early childhood.

Q: Who was in your immediate family?

A: My immediate family in New York?

Q: No, in -- in Halberstadt, when you were a child.

A: When I was a child, I had one brother. My brother's name was Vanna, Vanna Cohn, and he was born in 1923, and I was born in 1928, so my parents just had two children. My father's name

was Ernst Cohn, my mother's name -- maiden name was Margaret -- Marguerita Marcuza, later on Marguerita Cohn. And my grandfather's name, who was also in Halberstadt, was Hugo Cohn. He was married to Zelma Lusch.

Q: Tell me a little bit about the personalities of your parents.

A: My father had a linen factory, and we had a very good sized store in the same building where we lived. The store was downstairs and had many employees. The articles that were sold were mostly very elegant linens. In fact, when my parents sent me to England as a little girl, my suitcase has many linens from my parent's home, and I'm still using them today.

Q: And what about his personality? Can you describe him to me?

A: My father was a very jovial person. He was a happy person. I remember many parties at our house and my parents were good dancers. And the parties which my parents gave is something that always remained with me, because it was a very comfortable, lovely home in my early childhood.

Q: And your mother, your mother's personality?

A: I think I'm a lot like my mother. My mother was born Marguerita Marcuza in Stargard, and the area was called Pommern. Stargard in Pommern is now Polish. My mother was a very hospitable person, and as I remember, there were many cultured type of affairs such as music at home. There was always piano playing and entertaining, and these were the early memories that I have.

Q: What about memories of your family at home? What are some of the earliest memories you have of your family all together?

A: Well, the synagogue played an important part. Every Friday night the men would go to synagogue. I think my mother was home on Friday night, and then there was the usual Shabbas

dinner. And I do have a picture of the dining room table on a regular Shabbat evening, with the candles, and the challah, the kiddish cup, and my grandfather, who lived upstairs, would always be at our house every Friday evening. This would be routine, and then on a Shabbat morning, we always went to synagogue. The synagogue played a big role in my childhood. The men and women were seated separately. The men were downstairs and the women were upstairs like in a gallery. The children were with the women and we would look through this little fence-type thing and go downs -- look downstairs at the men. And I would look forward to the one particular time that the children were allowed downstairs in the main synagogue, and that was Simchas Torah, when they had s-sweets and candies for the children. And I even remember playing a prank here or there in the synagogue by putting some bread -- breadcrumbs or cookies into some men's jackets. My friend Ruth Oppenheimer, her name then was Ruth Lindheimer, but she also lives in New York, and we are still very, very good friends, I talk to her daily, well she and I played this prank and we put these cookies, or crumbs into men's suits and pockets. And eventually we had to go and own up to it and apologize. We did.

Q: Do you remember the name of the synagogue?

A: I only remember my [indecipherable]. I don't know if it had a particular name. There was one -- this was the main synagogue, and then there was another little synagogue called Klaus, and that was for those who were super, super Orthodox. And there were quite a few Jewish family who were very, very Orthodox. And in the building which used to be the Klaus synagogue is where they are now having the new little museum to commemorate and try to show what Jewish life was like before Hitler.

Q: And what about your family, would you consider your family Orthodox? Your family in Halberstadt?

A: No, my family in Halberstadt was not considered very Orthodox, although we had separate dishes for milk and meat, and by American standards, I would con -- probably say it would have been Orthodox. But by the standards of Halberstadt, it was not considered to be so, because people were either extremely Orthodox -- and I remember my mother saying [indecipherable] kosher, which means we are new kosher, and that meant we're not so terribly strict.

Q: So, can you describe to me a little more about the town of Halberstadt?

A: It was a very charming town of mostly half-timbered houses. Half-timbered means it's sort of cement and wood together, with a great deal of detail of wood. And I remember some of the old buildings, one having a statue on the outside, and that is the town hall. This statue was called Bucco, and we learned a little poem as children, which says Bucco von Halberstadt [speaks German here]. And it means, Bucco from Halberstadt, what will you give our children? Will you give them a new pair of shoes? Yes, that's what your children should have. And I remember some of these children's songs and some of these children's poems, because I was 10 and a half years old when I left Halberstadt.

Q: And how large of a Jewish community in Halberstadt, would you say?

A: I really don't know, but there were hundreds of families, but I do not know the exact number. I am sure that that could be found at the mew -- new museum, which is now called the Moses Mendelssohn Academy. They would have all the exact figures and details.

Q: What was your sense of things, was it a -- a fairly large Jewish community for the size of the town?

A: Yes, I believe it was. As a matter of fact, Halberstadt was well renowned in the Jewish circles, because of having a large community and a very active synagogue, and a very active Jewish community life. I have noticed that in some of those old papers that I have, and the ones that date

back about 300 years, they were written in Hebrew, so we had some of those translated. And they -- it said for instance, that many businesses were conducted while in s -- during or after synagogue when people -- it was a meeting place, so it was a very active Jewish community.

Q: And what about your family? Do you remember if it was mostly Jewish friends that your family had, or also non-Jewish friends in the town?

A: I do think that my -- the majority of my parent's friends were Jewish. Also, the children I went to school with, since I was at the Jewish school, they were all Jewish, and the parents would be fren -- friendly for many, many years.

Q: And can you describe to me a little more in terms of a physical description, your home?

A: Our home was a rather elegant home. It was situated right above these stores, which were at ground level. My grandfather owned the property, and there were at least three to four bedrooms, a large living room, then there was -- the living was qua -- w-was -- the efs -- there was [speaks German], which is a smoking room. So it's a dining room, living room, smoking room. My parent's bedroom, my brother's bedroom, and mine, and there was a guest bedroom. And everything was rather elegantly furnished. We had a maid who took care of my brother and myself. Her name was Alvina, and she was with us for many, many years. I have a picture even now of Alvina and my brother and I being at the wedding and I was the flower girl, age about four or five years old, with little flowers in the hair. But I do have the picture of Alvina. She married a man who was a carpenter, and my parents asked this ge -- this gentleman to make a copy of our kitchen, so I had a small kitchen, a replica of my parent's kitchen, and as a child I played with that a great deal. And when I went to England my par -- parents actually sent that children's furniture to England. What happened to it, I don't know.

Q: What are your earliest memories as a child?

A: They were happy memories and I remember the first day of school, where my friend Ruth Lindheimer [indecipherable] and I started school together. And children at school get like a big bag, like a huge cone out of cardboard, and that is filled with candy and toys and pencils. So that was a very happy kind of memory. That was approximately 1935, and I was at the Jewish school until the school was closed, and that was after Kristallnacht - Crystal Night.

Q: So one of your first memories is -- is probably the first day of school, and -- and tell me more about school, other memories you have of the early days of being in school.

A: I guess things were still quite normal in the early days. For instance, Hebrew was taught from the beginning on, like a foreign language. Later on I would learn a foreign language by translation. And so we translated prayers, and not only learned to translate word for word, but also how to make little sentences, so that we had a fairly good knowledge of Hebrew. I can still read Hebrew, although I must say that when I left Germany, I had little contact later on with Jewish people.

Q: So you were at a religious school?

A: Yes, the school was religious and the headmaster's name was Luntner, Herr Luntner. That family had five children in various ages from -- some -- the older one was called yo -- Jota, and she came with me to the train station on the day I left Germany. But school was a happy time, and it seemed perfectly normal, we did the usual things, like gymnastics. I would walk to school, it was not very far, probably a 10 minute walk. And having been back in Germany a couple of years ago, I saw the building again.

Q: Do you know the name of the school?

A: Yeah, this was the Juda [indecipherable] in Halberstadt. The Jewish school in Halberstadt. How many chil -- students were there, I don't know, but I do have a picture of all the students

together, taken in Halberstadt at a time when my brother and I were at school together, and my friend Ruth, and her present husband Henry are also on that picture. There are approximately 40 students on that photo which I have.

Q: Now tell me a little more about your brother, his personality and when you were very young, did the two of you get along, did you fight? Tell me about him.

A: Well, my brother was, as I said, five years older than I, and he seemed to be very proud of having a little sister. He often told me later on as we were growing up that he said [speaks German here]. In other words that means I or -- put in an order for you. So he was very proud of having a little sister. Although, as I grew up, I think I was sometimes a bit of a burden when my parents said they had to take me along, and I would drag behind all these boys, who were teenagers by then, and they had to take along the younger sister. So it wasn't always great fun for him, but perfectly normal. However, my brother took great responsibility for me. Obviously, my parents must have said that he should keep an eye on me always, and he always did because the two of us were in England, even though we were not together.

Q: And what about, since you were at a Jewish school, I'm imagining the other students are Jewish, did you have any non-Jewish friends in the town of Halberstadt?

A: I can't remember any discrimination, but I actually don't think that among my circle of friends that there were non-Jewish friends, because they were probably children I went to school with, and children whose parents my parents knew. So I don't have any real collection -- recollection of anyone non-Jewish.

Q: Now, when the Nazis came to power, you were very young. And tell me what your very earliest memories are about the beginning of the Nazis and the Hitler regime.

A: You know, times were not like they are today where you put on a television and you see instantly what is happening in some other part of the world. And I think my parents shielded us from any extra worries, or extra concerns. However, I do remember seeing signs in the windows that said, Juden [indecipherable]. That means, Jews are not welcome here. And I would question that sort of thing by -- because I could read by then. In 1933, Hitler came to power on my birthday, January 30th. Other schools had a holiday because Hitler was in power, it was a day off from school. Not in the Jewish school, we went to school. And then one day, coming from school -- and this would be closer to like 1938, other kids would call across the street, look at those Jews, look at those Jewish children, and the kids would throw stones at us. And I said -- I could not understand, why would they be throwing stones at us, we weren't doing anything. And you'd run home as quick as possible. So these are my first bad feelings on knowing that something was going on beyond our control.

Q: Well, you would run home and you would probably talk to your parents about this. What were they telling you? Do you remember any of the discussions with your parents?

A: I was aware that there was a Nazi party, because the other children, who were not Jewish, belonged to an organization called the Hitlerjugend. The Hitler youth. And of course, my brother did not belong to the Hitler youth, who would have been maybe 14 or 15 at that time. But the Jewish youngsters had their own organization, the Maccabee or some other clubs that they would have. But the Hitler youth were very visible in Germany, and of course I was aware of that. But it was not a major discussion in my parent's home until the night of Kristallnacht, when the Nazis came to our home in the middle of the night, and they knocked at the door, and if -- everybody was sleeping, it was an ordinary night, no one expected anything unusual. And there were two men at the door, and they said, we are here to get mis -- Mr. Cohn, Ernst Cohn, my

father. And he had to get dressed very quickly, and the two men marched downstr -- the street. Our home is diagonally across from the main post office. The main post office is still there, our home is not. And as we looked out, we could see other Jewish men, each one with two SS men, they're -- the Nazis. And they walked them off, we did not know where they were going. They took them and put them into a prison in Halberstadt. And a couple of hours later they knocked at our door again, and they said, we came to get the other Mr. Cohn. And my mother said, you already took him, he's gone, he -- he left. And they said, there's another one. Well, my brother was hiding in a closet or somewhere that same night. And she said, the only other Herr Cohn is upstairs, but you would have to carry him because he is an invalid and he is very old. They said no, that's not the one, and they left. That way my brother was not taken. My father was then taken to Buchenwald, a concentration camp.

Q: Can you -- can I ask you, what was this like? You were very young, and -- and was this very frightening, that night that this happened?

A: Well, I realized that things were terribly, terribly wrong, and it's a -- an extraordinarily scary event for any child. I did not know the multitude of significance of what was happening on a worldwide basis at the time. My father was in Buchenwald for a little over five weeks. We did find out where he was. I don't know whether it was Red Cross letters, or -- by some way, my mother knew where my father was. And he came home after five weeks, a good five weeks in Buchenwald, and his hair was shaven from his head completely, he had lost a lot of weight. And my father, having been on the road as a salesman for many years, said, I always brought you something home, well I brought you something. And he had dry bread in his pockets that was very, very hard, but he said, I brought this for you. It was then, when my father came home, that my parents decided they must do something to rescue the lives of their children, for my brother

and I. And they then registered me for the -- or both of us for the kindertransport. My brother, however, was 15 at the time, and I was 10, and at 15 they no longer took children on the kindertransport. They took them from four to 14, and he was a little too old, so he was not able to have guardians in England like I did.

Q: Now, let me ask you, before Kristallnacht, did you notice -- do you remember other things that were happening and changing? Did you ask any -- you know, additional questions of your parents? Do you remember anything else going on even before all of this happened at Kristallnacht?

A: Well, they came to every Jewish home and collect -- demanded all silver and gold. So my parents had to give up the jewelry, and I believe they must have hidden certain things, they did not give up everything. But they hi -- picked up sil -- silverware. You were allowed to keep two sets of silver per person. So I don't know just how many things my parents were able to save legitimately, but I remember them coming to every Jewish home and collecting these items. And of course my father's store was closed. You were no longer allowed to have a store, to run a business, which my -- was in my f -- grandfather's hands, and then my father's hands for many, many years. There was this line and fabrique Halberstadt. But it was closed, and I think my father took a little suitcase, and traveled with this suitcase to some of his customers who were located in the country -- countryside somewhere, and he would continue doing some business, going by train.

Q: What happened to that shop once it was shut? Did anything else happen there, did others take it over?

A: Others took over the store, and I don't remember exactly who owned it at that time. But at -- the building always belonged to my grandfather, and bef -- tween the main building, there was a

yard in the back of the main building, and then another house, called Hinterhouse, like the second row of houses, and that had tenants in it. So there were a lot of people living in that small area. Unfortunately, just towards the end of World War II, the whole property was bombed, and there's none of that left, and when I went over there for the first time, I thought I would feel terrible about seeing my parent's home, but it's no longer there. So I did not have to feel terrible about a building I had never seen before, built by the Russians.

Q: Now let me also ask, what was happening among your school friends? Were -- were other children leaving the town even before Kristallnacht? What -- what did you notice about any of your friends during this time?

Q: The friends -- circle of friends grew smaller and smaller. Gradually families emigrated to any country which would offer them asylum. My parents had a quota number to come to America. And I know the quota number was 51 thousand and something and it would have taken one to two years before that quota number would come up. Meantime, though, other families emigrated to Chile, to Argentina, to Palestine, to any part of the world that would take them. And it was very hard to find a country that would take in a Jewish family. For instance, in America you needed to have someone who would guarantee that they would take care of you if you did not have employment. We had an unc -- my -- brother of my mother, Hans Marcuza was living in New York, and he filled out all the necessary papers for our family. But the quota number which we had would not have come due for at least a year or two after the war had started. So in the meantime, my family, my f -- mother and father decided that it would best -- be best to send us to a safe area anywhere, and then they filled out the application at Bloomsbury House in England to -- for the kindertransport.

Q: Can you explain what Bloomsbury House is?

A: Bloomsbury House was the organization in England, similar to HIAS in America. A Jewish a -- organization that sponsored particularly Jewish children. And they took an -- not only an interest, but followed each child who was able to come to England, they would follow their progress, and you had something to fall back upon, which was Bloomsbury House.

Q: I think I'm going to turn the tape over.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning of Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lillyan Rosenberg. This is tape number one, side B. Okay, if you want to continue with what you were saying before.

A: We were discussing the kindertransport and Bloomsbury House. It was summer vacation time, and it was, of course, after Kristallnacht, so the Jewish school was closed. There was no more official school, but it was the height of summer, and my mother and I always went to visit her mother, her parent's home. And that was in Stargard in Pommern. So my mother and I were spending a week or two vacation in Stargard when my father contacted my mother and said we have to come home right away because Lillyshin -- they called me little Lilly has guardians in England and she's leaving for England next week. So we packed up, we left Uma in Stargard. Of course, this was the last time I saw her. And we went via Berlin to Halberstadt, and my mother sh -- did a great deal of shopping for me. Little [indecipherable] dresses with matching aprons, and we had a seamstress coming into our house, that was the normal thing. She made a couple of dresses and clothes for me for the departure, which was the following week.

Q: Can we back up just for a moment? I think that you started to keep a diary even before you left. Do you remember when you started keeping the diary?

A: Yes, I do remember the diary. For my 10th birthday I got a diary from my mother, and on the front page it says tagabu, which is diary, given to me by mutti, by my mother, for my birthday. And I wrote about every day life in Halberstadt, and the little pranks we played as children, and the normal life, really, because I was a pretty happy-go-lucky child, and did not have all the burdens of the world on my shoulder. So I kept this diary, and the first part of it is all written in German, however when I left Germany to go to England, being on the train and feeling very much alone and knowing no one, I wrote into the diary, and I even wrote into the diary in Holland, which is the route we took from Holland to -- from Hook van Holland to England. And since there was nobody for me to communicate with, and I didn't realize that suddenly I was really alone and on my way somewhere, not knowing where I was going, I guess it became a bit scary, and so I wrote into the diary.

Q: Even before you got onto the train headed, you know, to England, eventually, on the kindertransport, what were your feelings at the time that you heard -- you were on vacation at that time, I believe -- what were your feelings about hearing that you were going to leave?

A: Since that was my parent's wish, to have us in a safe place, my parents were actually very clever, because when I think about how my parents handled discussing this with me, I only realize how very wise they were. For instance, both my parents said, look how lucky you are. You will be learning another language, you will be seeing new people. And they just made me feel like I was very special and very fortunate, so I believed that and -- and left quite happily, not realizing then that I would never see my parents again. And of course, I must add that we were all in hopes that we would be reunited in the United States. If that quota number had come through and had not been a war declared, eventually my parents would have gone to America,

and we would have joined them. And that was the fact with many of the other children who came to England like I did. I was not one of the fortunate ones.

Q: Now before we get to the day of your departure from Halberstadt, can you tell me what else you remember having happened at the time of Kristallnacht in the town? Were there other signs of things that had happened that night?

A: Those are all very unhappy memories. I know that many Jewish families, whoever were there, it was the women, came to my parent's home, which was always a very gracious, open house, very ha-happy place for people to congregate. So people came there just to be together. And I know that eventually they all had to give up their apartments and homes and I heard that many families moved in with my parents, and that was after I had left. But my memories of the time when my father was in concentration camp, it was a terrible time and great insecurity. We did not know if my father would come home, if he would survive. We were already aware that terrible things were happening to Jews everywhere. So these were unhappy memories, and my parent's effort was to save the life's of their children.

Q: What other efforts do you remember them making for the whole family to emigrate? Were they still trying to do that, or they thought that that was not possible any more?

A: At that time it was very difficult to get across the border anywhere. I believe my father would have had the opportunity to go to Cuba, but he did not want to go alone, he would not have left my mother. So unless they could have gone together, my father did not want to go alone. I was told that, and I think that happened after I was already in England. Now, I only know that the family I mentioned before from the headmaster, those children, there were five children, would have had an opportunity to go to England on the kindertransport, but Herr Luntner said, either we all go, or none of us go. And that's the choice that people had. So that on the monument which is

today in Halberstadt at the place where all the Jewish people had to assemble to be deported, all the Jewish people, and on the men -- monument are the names of the people who were deported, and it has the father and mother of the Luntners and all five children. My parent's name is also on the same monument, and I know that if my parents had not sent me to England, my name would have been there.

Q: Now, when you were on vacation with your mother, and you learned that you would be going to England soon, what did you learn at that time about the people you would go and stay with in England?

A: Well that's an interesting question because my father's sister, my Aunt Lucy, Tante Lucy Spear was in England. In Germany she was a very wealthy woman, married to a banker in Frankfurt, Ulya Spear. Now she became a chambermaid in England, in Manchester. So my parents wrote to Tante Lucy and said Lillyshin is going to England next week, this is the address of the family, Mr. and Mrs. Allen, and the address in Rochdale, Lancashire. My aunt immediately contacted the Allens, and visited the Allens, and they were very gracious to her. So we had a little knowledge about the family I would be going to. My aunt then wrote to my parents and said that I would be very lucky to be with such a wonderful family and that they are very, very anxious to have me come. And so we had a little knowledge about the family I would be going to.

Q: And you know, how did the match get made with this family?

A: The match was made through Bloomsbury House. People who applied wrote in about the age of the children, and a photograph, and a little about the family and family background. The Allens actually had tried for a different child, but -- her name was Erica, and it did not go through for some reason because Erica had other foster parents who would take care of her. I met

Erica much later when we were at school together. I saw -- I had seen the picture of her, and now I met her, so I took the place of that child, Erica, and they chose me by the photograph and background of my family's history.

Q: Did your parents have to put up money for this?

A: I really don't know. If so, it probably was very little. I think I read somewhere that they put up some money, but it would not have been very much. I think that we were just told what we were allowed to take with us on the train, which was a rucksack and a small bag that you could handle by yourself.

Q: Did you have other items sent to you, or was that the only -- were those the only items you took from your home?

A: After I got to the Allens, my parents send the little kitchen I had, out of wood. It was about the size of a -- the height of a dining room table, it was a good size little unit of a dishwashing sink and a little table and chairs. And my friend Ruth had the same thing made. So they sent that and a very large steamer trunk. And in that steamer trunk was, at the very bottom, an Oriental rug, a runner, and a lot of linens. And of course I couldn't understand why I should have all these linens, but they're beautiful works of art, all handmade, and of course that was my father's business. And I have always kept these linens and I'm using the pillowcases to this day. They are just very, very beautiful, and they wash beautifully, and it's a constant reminder of my childhood. There was also an accordion when these things arrived. At customs they s -- thought that the accordion was sent as a valuable item that one could sell as an investment, so they said, can I play it? So I said sure. So I remember right there in the customs, where someone from the Allen's family took me, and I took the accordion and played quite well. So they were -- I was able to keep the accordion.

Q: Well just going back a little, were you musical as a child in Halberstadt? Did you play music or have other hobbies that you pursued?

A: Yes, I did have piano lessons as a young child in Halberstadt. I had piano lessons in England and played Chopin, Schubert and Mozart and Beethoven.

Q: Any other hobbies or interests you remember as a small -- as a young child in Halberstadt?

A: Art was always my hobby. If I had a choice to go to a toy shop or a dress shop or a place for pens and pencils and paint, I would certainly choose whatever had to do with art. And that has remained with me throughout my life. But then, my mother was an artist, so maybe I saw her painting and I just took to it, and it's something that I have enjoyed, and I have enjoyed being creative.

Q: Did your mother work outside the home?

A: I know she would not have a job, but I think she was in the store downstairs for a certain time, but there was someone taking care of us, Alvina was always there. So she might have helped in the business, but art was my mother's hobby, and I just remember her painting a great deal.

Q: So now let's talk a little bit about the -- the day -- the days leading up to your departure from Halberstadt, what you remember about either the preparations, any family discussions you remember.

A: The preparations were pretty frantic because it was only one week and there was the shopping and the packing, and then of course my mother sat down with me and said, you know, there may not be anyone there who will explain the facts of life to you. And little did I understand what my mother was talking about. She said, you know, you're a pretty little girl, and don't sit on a man's lap and don't let a man get too close to you. And I couldn't understand what she's talking about. I said sure, sure. I didn't realize until I was in my teens did I know what my mother was talking

about. She also explained menstruation, not to be scared if that should happen. And of course at the age of 10 it's very early to be speaking about these things, especially since I wasn't asking these questions, but my mother probably anticipated that there may not be anyone there who would explain these things. And it wasn't until much later that I really understood what that was all about. But my recollections in getting ready were all positive, because I was told how lucky I am and you see this [indecipherable] Ruth I was talk about, she doesn't have guardians -- she did eventually, and she also came to England. But at the time, each child who was lucky enough to go was considered very, very fortunate, because -- and by that time everyone was trying frantically to get out, just to be secure and to save lives.

Q: And do you remember any discussions with your father as well, or mostly with your mother as you were leaving -- getting ready to leave?

A: The discussions were mostly with my mother, but the letters are more for my father because they were typewritten letters that came to England. And they were always good humored and good-natured. In none of the letters did it ever say, your room is empty and we miss you. It was always, look how lucky you are. And in my first letter to my parents, I wrote that ma -- the guardians wanted me to call them Pop and Ma, and I didn't want to do that. But my father wrote back -- no, it was my mother who wrote, you see how lucky you are, you already have two sets of parents and I had to wait until I was married to have a second set of parents. So you're very fortunate. Go to them and give them a hug and tell them you love them, and always be gracious and be grateful. So my parent were extremely positive about everything and that made me feel, well they know what is right and -- for me.

Q: Do you know how it is that they wound up being so positive? Do you have any perspective at this point, or insight as to how they were able to do that?

A: I think it's -- you just have to have very strong character to be able to do that. And now that I am older, and have children of my own, I have often thought that if I were in that same position to send children away, I'm quite su -- I am not sure that I would have done that, because I think it is a terrible thing for parents to part with their children. As I said, there were some who said we will all go or none of us go, and it's a dreadful decision for parents to have to make. And I am not sure that I would have done what my parents did.

Q: So what do you remember about the actual day that you left Halberstadt?

A: I played the piano in the morning, and I played a German song that I know, it's -- what was it? [speaks German here]. Because I played the piano quite well, that means, do I have to go, do I have to go out of this town. That's the name of that song. And I just thought it was very fitting. And I took my diary with me, and a sandwich, which was in the rucksack. And my parents and my brother and Yuta, somebody we knew from very good friends, came to the train station. And Yuta took the picture of my departure at the train station. So the whole family, my brother, my parents and I are on this picture at the train station in Halberstadt. And today you can see the same water tower at the train station in Halberstadt. It was not bombed, and it's still there. When I was in Halberstadt a few years ago, I went back to the same spot and had a picture taken.

Q: So this was in the morning you went to the train?

A: Yes, we went to the train from Halberstadt to Hanover. Hanover was the next bigger town. And in Hanover my parents were no longer allowed to go onto the train station, to the track to say goodbye. They kept parents away at that time. That's why I think the picture of my parents and I at the train is a rather rare picture, and it is used a great deal for teaching purposes in American schools and schools in Germany. So that particular picture was taken in Halberstadt at the train station, but not in Hanover. There was one other boy who went with me on the

kindertransport, his name was David Winter. He was in England with me, and eventually went to Israel.

Q: So your parents were able to travel with you from that train platform where the photo was taken, to Hanover, and then that's where they had to say the final goodbye. And tell me how -- how was the final goodbye at the train station in Hanover?

A: Well, I n -- I think my mother was sort of hiding under a big collar of coat, and it's just a very heart wrenching time in everybody's lives, and suddenly fi -- I found myself sitting on a train -- in the train with other youngsters, nobody knew each other, and it was a very, very strange feeling. I guess I looked out of the window and at that point there was no one there, and I -- it was the first time I realized that I'm really alone, and where am I off to? However, the kindertransport was well organized. It was a locked train, Nazis came in, they would ask questions. Do you have rings, do you have a diamond, do you have a watch? They would ask all kinds of questions, but for security reasons I think everyone was very careful with their children. Parents would not put their children at risk, so -- but they would be walking around, and finally we came to Holland, and suddenly the older children were very jubilant and so happy. They said that we have left Germany. This is the -- this is an upsetting time, having left Germany. However, people got onto the train once we got to Holland, and they brought cocoa and cookies and apples, and the older children, who were more aware of what was going on, were very jubilant and they sang Hebrew songs, the sort of songs they would sing at a club or at a party. And it was only then that I realized that we are really out of Germany. From Holland we got onto a ship, which took us across the English channel. And we were assigned certain berths. My berth was the upper berth. And I had never slept in a bed that was made with sheets and blankets, because in my parent's home we had a feather bed. Was like a huge pillow, and you got under

the -- under the feather bed. Well, I didn't know what to do with this. I slept on top of the bed, I did not know that you had to get in between. And I thought it was a rather strange way of living, but -- so I did all the things that were expected and required, and by morning we arrived in England. I believe it was Harrage. And we were all herded off the ship, and were taken to a huge, huge hall, with lots of benches. And we all had a tag around our neck with a number, like a cardboard tag with a ribbon. And you -- each per -- kid had a different number, and then you waited until somebody called your number. I guess they did it in English and German at the time, just the numbers. And when my number came up, this -- to me she seemed like an elderly lady, she was probably in her 40's, and that was Nellie, Nellie Mills, the private secretary of Mr. Allen. He sent his private secretary to pick me up. And Nellie Mills was always very, very kind to me and very good-hearted. I had great respect for her.

Q: So what was the first meeting like that day?

A: Well, Nellie told me later on that of course she couldn't speak to me in German and I -- cause I was babbling away in German, and whatever she said I couldn't understand, but by my actions -- she knew that I was wiggling around, and that I needed a bathroom. So the first thing she do -- did, was to take me to the bathroom, and eventually we ended on another train which took us to Manchester, took us north, and from Manchester we went by car to Rochdale. And Rochdale is where my guardians lived. So Nellie was the one who took me to my guardians. And was a very, very lovely house, and Mr. and Mrs. Allen were very anxious to have a little girl there. It was only later on that I found out their reason why they wanted to have a child in their home. It was a very gracious, beautiful home. They had several cars, a Rolls Royce, and a Lady Austin, a private chauffeur, and Mr. Allen owned a bus company. In America we would call such a company like Greyhound. It was privately owned, called Yelloway. So he was the owner of this

particular bus company that rode buses from Manchester to London, or Manchester to Liverpool, long distance bus lines. They were quite wealthy people. And the Allens have a son called Hubert. Hubert was already grown and he was in his 20's. So he was about 25 years old when I came to them. So, you know, he couldn't really be bothered with a youngster too much, but he was always very kind to me. We had a very nice relationship. They told me that's my big brother.

Q: Do you remember -- do you remember the address where -- where their house was located?

A: Yes, I do know, it was on Bent Meadows in Rochdale, and this county is called Lancashire. Lancashire is known for linens, but ha -- the bus company was one of the big businesses in Rochdale. Mr. Allen owned the company until after the war. It was his son who ran the Yelloway bus company later on.

Q: And also, just to go back, do you remember the address where you lived as a child in Halberstadt?

A: Yes, it was Halberstadt, Lilly Cohn, Vestendorf [speaks German here]. Vestendorf is the name of the street, it's still called Vestendorf, 34A and B. They were two houses that were attached, two houses in the front and two houses in the back. Yes, I do remember the address and I still remember the telephone number in Halberstadt. [speaks German] 26-38. But one learns it, you know, in German, and that's why I said it that way, that's the way I remember it.

Q: So your first impressions, arriving to this new place in England, what do you remember?

A: Well, I was shown to my room, and I cried a lot. I know I cried a great deal, because I think it was only then that it hit me that no one could understand me. Of course, they knew why I was crying, because I was homesick and it was, I'm sure, quite normal. The Allens did have my aunt come to visit, because my aunt who lived in Manchester, who had a job there as a maid, sh-she

came to visit and of course that was very exciting for me to have someone to talk to. But very soon the Allens sent me to school. And they were very smart, because they chose the convent high school in Rochdale. The convent high school was run by nuns, and these nuns were from Germany, so they all spoke German. It was a German order. And since no one could speak to me at the Allen's house, as soon as I went to school, they could speak to me, and they were very, very kind to me, the nuns. And I wrote to my parents, of course, and by pa --

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a United States Holocaust Memorial in -- Museum interview with Lillyan Rosenberg. This is tape number two, side A. So you were beginning to tell me about the school you attended, and your parents corresponding with the nuns, I believe, at the school?

A: My parents wrote to the nuns in Rochdale, and said to them that they should please not try to change my religion because my religion would be very important to me, and my parents begged them to honor my background. And they did. Of course, it was a Catholic school, and every morning -- they would have prayers in the morning and when children knelt to say certain prayers, and I know all of them, because after all, I memorized them in the name of the Father, and all these prayers that I know, but I would not kneel, I would sit. And no one would ever say anything. And eventually they actually let me have some lessons with the Father, who was assigned to the convent, and the Father knew Hebrew. So I had the [indecipherable] with me from Halberstadt, and the Father and I would sit in this big room with the stained glass windows, just he and I, and he would continue tran -- letting me translate what I was learning in Halberstadt. But that just lasted a little while.

Q: Do you think religion was important for you at this stage, this transition as a -- as a youngster? Did it help you?

A: Religion was already very deeply imbedded in my life, so that I knew I was different. The Allens were not religious people, they just kept the big holidays like Christmas, there'd be big parties and certain times. But they were not people who would to go a church, and I never went to another synagogue. I don't think there was one in Rochdale. But the nuns were very kind to me in many ways. For instance, when Mrs. Allen was -- Mrs. Allen was rather sickly. She had mental problems of depression, and sh -- at times she could not put up with a child around. I

might be doing something perfectly normal, what I would consider normal, playing with a ball or something, and that could upset her terribly, which I couldn't understand until many years later, when they explained to me that she was having mental problems. And that was one of the reasons why they thought that having a child in their home would be good therapy for her. But it isn't such good therapy for a child, because I couldn't understand these things. So I would either live with Nellie for awhile, or I would live with the nuns. And with the nuns I would frequently have religious debates at a very young age, because I knew a lot from Halberstadt, being that it was a rather religious community, I was pretty well versed in the Bible, and the -- what I have learned from home. So you could not change me, I was pretty -- pretty strong-willed.

Q: What kind of debate would you have? Do you remember any of the specifics?

A: No, I -- I don't know the specifics, but I know that I would stand my point, I would say no, no, no, it couldn't be that way because God did it this way, or God spoke to Moses or whatever. I was pretty strong about the things that I had learned. And I never did have to participate in the New Testament, only in the prayers that they had every morning. And as far as the English language is concerned, I learned English very quickly. I would think that within four weeks, I was able to understand the Allens, although I thought they spoke too quickly. But within two months I was able to do all the schoolwork, like all the others, and I was on an even level as far as math and other subjects were concerned. I had no difficulty in catching up with the English children. I wore the uniform of the convent, a navy blue uniform with a white collar, and a blue and red hat, and blue and red scarf, and I was dressed like all the other children in the convent and made friends there, and that seemed to be a normal life, which I became accustomed to quite quickly.

Q: Were you the only Jewish child in the school?

A: As far as I know, the only Jewish child, yes. I never met anyone Jewish while at the Allens. And I had very little contact with my family, because eventually my brother came to England, but by that time the Allens really wanted to keep me away from the family, because they wanted me to feel that I was their little girl.

Q: Well, let's go back. First of all, what's the date when you arrived to England?

A: In July, 1939.

Q: And when did you brother come to England?

A: Approximately four or five weeks later, I got a letter from my parents saying, guess what, you are very, very lucky, your big brother is going to come to England. And my brother did not get out until just before the war started, and he got onto a boat in Holland, but he was able to make it. And he was not nearly as lucky as I was, because at the age of 15, he found himself alone, where I had someone to take care of me. He knew some English and was able to get around, and my aunt was in Manchester, but he had a difficult time to just survive. But he got a job, and then another job, and he did very well.

Q: So you occasionally saw him, but not very much, it sounds like.

A: The Allens did not encourage me to have any contact with my aunt or my brother, and by then the war had started. And when the war started, there were no more letters from my parents, though -- the contact between Germany and England, there were no mail -- there was not the usual mail service, was completely stopped. Eventually my parents would write to someone in Switzerland who they knew, who readdressed the letters to England. So they would go from Germany to Switzerland, Switzerland to England. We still had letters from my parents for a year or two.

Q: What were they writing about, do you remember?

A: Every letter was a very unhappy letter. It was always, can you do something to help us get out. This and this person has left Germany, we can't get out. The old people were taken to a nursing home, so I think my grandfather was no longer living upstairs. And it must have been a very desperate time. And of course they would write, why haven't you written, and can you send us a picture? And this is, you know, several years like that. Eventually there were Red Cross letters. A Red Cross letter was 25 words. 25 words from my parents, and they came like a telegram, and you were allowed to write back 25 words, and it goes back to the sender. So that was the only communication during the war that was official communication.

Q: Now, can you give me a better description, a sense of the Allens? Could you tell me each of their first names, and -- and their personalities, even physical description.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Tell me more about them.

A: Okay. Well, when I first ca-came to the Allen's house, Mr. Allen was sick at the time, so he was bedridden with something, no-not on a permanent basis. But he was a very patient and kind man, so I spent a lot of time at his bedside, and he would teach me English. He would point to the ceiling and say ceiling, I would say ceiling. He would pa -- point to the floor and say floor, I'd say floor. And I repeated everything that he said and then he would point again and see if I would remember it. And I did fairly well. Then he went t -- he asked me to bring his wallet, I brought his wallet. And he took out all kinds of change. And he said, this is a penny, that's a threepenny bit, that's a sixpence, that's a shilling. And so I said, a penny, a threepence -- I couldn't say threepence, that was very hard, because to put your tongue between your teeth to do a t-h, doesn't exist in German. So I probably said tripence, but it's threepence, three pennies. And sixpence, a shilling and I think that's as high as it went. When I had it all correct, he said I

could keep it, it's mine. That I understood. So I thought I was very rich, I now had all this change, which of course I wrote to my parents. I wrote, I have a penny, a threepence, sixpence, and a shilling. And my father, which I have in the first letter said, now that you are so rich, shall I send you the safe which we used to have? You see, we no longer had the store. He said, because you need to put all that money in a safe place. So my father's good humor always came through. But Mr. Allen was very, very kind and very patient, but he was a true businessman, very, very successful. Hubert, the son, who was in his early 20's, was one who played cricket. He had this cricket outfit, and at Christmastime would sing in the Christmas carols, there were all these young men, they were there. They were all a lot older than I was. But he was very, very nice and very kind to me. He was already active in the business at Yelloway. And Mrs. Allen was the typical English housewife. When I look back on the times with Mrs. Allen, she was very spoiled, because she had everything done for her. She had maid service all the time, she had a chauffeur just to take her around. And she lived -- could live very graciously, but she had phobias. She thought people were laughing at her. I could not understand these things, because a youngster does not understand that. But she was a very kind person, and as I said, they told me to call them Pop and Ma, which I did. And Hubert, who was the big brother. And I was very happy. It became a new home for me. By now the war was on one year, two years, and a ve -- at one time, after Mrs. Allen had been sick again and hospitalized, she got a shock me -- treatments, several times while I was there. So they told me that they would send me away. And I couldn't understand that. They said, well we did not know that the war would go on so long, and we will always take care of you, and they gave me all these stories. But I was extremely upset. I think it was much more upset -- maybe more upsetting for me to leave the Allens, because it was a second, complete upheaval. The first one I was well prepared for. The -- leaving the Allens I was

not prepared for, and I didn't have that security behind me as having parents, real parents. So they sent me to Tunbridge Wells, which is in the south of England. Tunbridge Wells in the state of Kent. And that was a -- don't remember the exact year, but probably 1942. There was still a letter from my parents saying that I should not leave the Allens, please stay with the Allens, but this was beyond my control.

Q: Did you talk to the Allens? Did you tell them that you were unhappy? Do you remember conversations at the time?

A: You know, this was like a fait accompli, they n -- this was it, I could not argue with anyone about anything, because they made the decisions. They told me how much they loved me, and I have all kinds of letters from them, how much I meant to them, and they wanted to have a child of their own, but I would have to be of their religion and they fou -- noticed that they could never change my religion, I was probably too old and too strong for that already. And eventually I was sent to Tunbridge Wells.

Q: What was their religion?

A: Protestant. Church of England.

Q: And can you tell me what -- what are both of their first names?

A: Margaret was Mrs. Allen, Margaret Allen, and Herbert Allen was Mr. Allen, and Hubert, the son. Now, the son eventually got married, and I -- and has a d -- one daughter, and I am still in touch with the whole family.

Q: So you were probably with the Allens for at least a couple years, or what do you recall?

A: Two to three -- two to three years, I don't know the date exactly, although in my diary it might record what date I went to Tunbridge Wells. Tunbridge Wells had a school, and I presume

they made the arrangements through Bloomsbury House, because all the children who were refugee children were sponsored through Bloomsbury House.

Q: So what age are you at about this time?

A: By then I was 12. 12 to 13, maybe 13 when I got to The Beacon. The Beacon was the name of the school in Tunbridge Wells, and The Beacon has been a very big part of my life. Of course, I didn't realize that at the time, I was unhappy getting there, but then I suppose every other child who was there probably felt the same way about leaving their guardians. Cause every child who was at The Beacon had a guardian somewhere. And suddenly here we were, we found ourselves all together. There must have been maybe 50 children or more, of different ages, who had all come to England on the kindertransport. But now the war was in progress for a couple of years, and the guardians did not realize that they would have these children for so long, and sent them to this particular school, called The Beacon. They -- the children there were in age from approximately six to 16. When I first got there I was a junior. Later on we -- we became middles and then we became seniors, depending upon your age group. And we shared one large dormitory room together for at least 12 or more girls in one room. And we got to know each other very, very well. The same girls who were at The Beacon then are still my closest friends today. Some of the girls stayed in England when the war was over, and others went to different parts of the world. A few were fortunate enough to be reunited with their parents. Some knew that their parents were alive. I was among those who were hoping that the parents were alive. But, to no avail.

Q: Do you think you stayed pretty optimistic throughout this time period of your life?

A: Yes, I believe so. I think I have always had an optimistic nature, that's probably inherited. But I don't think I ever thought about not seeing my parents. I just presumed that when the war was

over, I'd find them somewhere. We did not know that they were transported to Warsaw, not until several years after the war.

Q: So tell me about the physical surroundings. What -- what was the -- set the scene a little bit at The Beacon.

A: Well, The Beacon was an old mansion many, many years ago, and when I think about it from America, I think of it as a huge, huge building. When I went back there for a reunion after 50 years, it's not as big as I thought it was, it's just an average big house. But it was a gracious building, and there was lots of laughter and lots of -- of good fun among the girls, although we lived under pretty meager conditions. This was, after all, wartime. Food was rationed, and we had a cook at The Beacon, her name was Mrs. Hayward. That name Hayward was important in my life. Mrs. Hayward was the cook, and we had certain assignments to help. To either peel potatoes or help with the dishwashing. After all, there were many, many children there. The food was mainly boiled fish, boiled cabbage and boiled potatoes. So you weren't really hungry, because you could eat more potatoes, and you could eat more potatoes, but it was pretty awful. I mean, it was very healthy food because everything was boiled. They did not have fats. You did not have oil, you didn't have butter. These things were highly rationed during the war. And we did not see fruit, but vegetables were growing in the area, and there were beautiful, beautiful grounds attached to The Beacon, with three what we called lakes, but they were really puddles. What we thought was a lake, we took an old bedstead and thought that was a boat. We paddled around in that. We improvised with everything. Occasionally clothes came from America. There would be a bunch of shoes, and you could try them on, and if a pair fitted you, they were yours. So we had a lot of clothes like that. Schooling was at The Beacon, it was not too great. Later on they sent us to a school in the town and it was called Holy Trinity. It was worse. It was really not

a good school at all. I was able to take an exam for a special high school. Like in New York we have Stuyvesant High School, Bronx Science, a special school. The school would have been in Tunbridge, we were in Tunbridge Wells. Tunbridge was maybe 10 miles away. I passed the test, but then they -- the government said I was not a British subject is what they called it, so I was not able to go to the school, but continued at Holy Trinity, which was not much of a school. But I read a lot and eventually, at the age of 16, I was still there, we all had to choose a career of some sort. Most of the girls went in for nursing. And I said no, I didn't want to be a nurse. And how about a secretarial school? I said no, I didn't think I would like that. They said, well what would I like to study? So I said art. So I di -- took some kind of art exam, probably drawing something very basic, and I was able to go to the art school. So I went to the school of arts and crafts in Tunbridge Wells, and loved it. We drew from the skeleton, and Michelangelo, and nude figures. And I think I did quite well, but one of the ladies from the committee who took care of The Beacon girls said, you have to learn a profession where you can earn money. I hadn't really considered that, seriously. So they told me that I should concentrate on dress design and dressmaking, and they did teach that at the school, at the art school. So I learned how to draw dresses and how to make patterns, very basic patterns. And I took an exam while at the school of arts and crafts for the [indecipherable] of London, and I got a degree in fashion at the time. I was still very young, and enjoyed doing that. However, after about two years at the school, they said you now have to take a job and earn money. And that's rather difficult in the fashion field, especially when you have no background. So one of the ladies from the committee of The Beacon in Tunbridge Wells had dresses made at a very fancy couturier shop in London called Jaquemar. So I had -- they told me I would have a -- get a job at Jaquemar in London. And my

brother lived in London by that time, so that was a very good thing for both of us, because that -- from that time on, my brother and I were always in touch, I think we saw each other daily.

Q: Now, just to go back, when you arrived to The Beacon, were most of the other girls at the school Jewish?

A: All the children were Jewish, all the children were refugee children like myself, and they all had different stories to tell. Some were with very good guardians and some were not. So we -- we knew all about each other, we were like a group of sisters, and I would say we still are. Half of them now live in England, and ha -- maybe half in America, and a few are in different parts of the world. But th -- all the children had a similar background. Now, the interesting part is that I had a friend in New York, her name at The Beacon was Sylvia Balbera. Her married name was Schneider, Sylvia Schneider. And she lived in New York until last year, she passed away. If you asked Sylvia about the years at The Beacon, she would give you a completely different story about how dreadful it was, not only the food, but the way we were dressed, and that nobody loved us, and nobody cared. And yet, I look at the same years as saying they were productive. They made us realize what is important in life and what is not so important in life. Cause we had next to nothing, and yet we had each other. I think it taught us a great deal about the values of what is important and what isn't important.

Q: Did you also feel more comfortable being around Jewish friends again? Did that make a difference to you at the time?

A: I think it gave all of us a certain comfort knowing, for instance, on a Friday night we could have prayers over the bread and wine, and basic things that I remembered from home. I think I was pretty much the leader. They said I was very much of a leader type person. When the s-

superior there said that to me, I didn't know what she was talking about, but in life she was actually quite correct.

Q: So, while you were at The Beacon, what did you have to -- you -- you started to talk about how you eventually learned you needed to make money, but while you were still studying at The Beacon, what -- how were you taken care of in terms of money? Were the Allens sending you money, and -- and what did you need in those days in terms of money?

A: I don't remember receiving money from the Allens, although I visited them, I would say, about twice a year. I would go to get to London -- you had to get pol -- permission from the police department that you were leaving your residence, since we were known as enemy aliens all during the war. All the children were enemy aliens, cause we were not British subjects. But that was not difficult, to get the permit to go. So I would go to London and from London I would get on one of their buses, to go to Rochdale, to go to Manchester, and from Manchester to Rochdale. And most of the drivers knew me from the time I was a little girl. So I did visit the Allens on a somewhat regular basis, and they always wrote to me. But now The Beacon really was our home. The one thing I need to mention is that when I was told that I need to have a job in London, Mrs. Hayward, who was the cook, had her son and daughter-in-law as visitors most weekends. And they came there by bicycle from London with a young couple, to stay with her because there was a lot of bombing going on. This was the height of the war, and the doodlebugs, which are one kind of bomb, would come over the area of Tunbridge Wells, and they had balloon barrages up to prevent the planes from reaching London. However, this couple, Hayward, Alec Hayward -- Alec Hayward, right, and Agnes, would come to Tunbridge Wells most weekends. And Alec was an artist. So he and I would do some sketching together. We would draw The Beacon, or we would draw a tree, or whatever, and I got to know this couple

quite well. So Mr. Hayward, this is the young Mr. Hayward, said to me, where are you going to live when you go to London? And I said I don't know yet. I did not know. So he said, well if you would like, you can live with us because we have a small house in West Wickham, which is just outside of London, and we have an extra bedroom, and if you like you can stay with us. And that is what I did, I then lived with the Haywards in London. I did not make enough money to pay for the train fare, and I paid a little bit to the Haywards for room and board, it wasn't very much. But the Bloomsbury House helped out at that point. So Bloomsbury House paid the ou -- the Haywards something towards my keep. And I earned 35 shillings at Jaquemar, and I learned the dress trade from the bottom up. I started by picking up the pins off the floor with a magnet, and then they let me put in some basting threads, and take out basting threads. I was allowed to do little things, but gradually I learned more and more. And in England one learned a profession by being an apprentice. It's not necessarily a school. At the school I had learned the pattern making and design part of it, but --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lillyan Rosenberg. This is tape number two, side B. I wanted to just go back a little bit and ask you -- back to your childhood memories in your hometown of Halberstadt, can you tell me -- I know you mentioned a little bit about going to synagogue, but in the home, what are some of the favorite holidays that you remember? Do you have vivid memories of holidays at home?

A: Oh absolutely. The holidays were really celebrated and we looked forward to them. The dress would be made for what to wear on a high holiday such as Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. Course, a child is growing all the time, but it was a very festive time for any of the high holidays.

But every Shabbat was a high holiday in my parent's home because Shabbat is every week, and everybody would get dressed accordingly, and even the photo that I have, the men are wearing ties, including my brother, and I would be asked to sing a certain song, which is from the fr -- prayer after meals [indecipherable] and I would sing that on a Friday night, and that was entertainment for my parents. But holidays were always celebrated, whether it was Purim, where children get dressed accordingly and have these Purim parties, the story of [indecipherable]. I remember all these things from Halberstadt days, it's a long time ago.

Q: And you remember Passovers as well?

A: Passover, my mother would start a week before, getting out the new dishes, the other dishes that would be used only for Passover. They were white with just a navy blue frame and a little gold around. They would just be used for Passover. And I remember my grandfather, Opa, going around the house with a feather, and going into the corners to see if there's a crumb anywhere. These are childhood memories from way back, and I'm surprised that after 70 - something years I still remember such little details. But the holidays were really something to look forward to. The various holidays, the Simchas Torah, where children get candies in the synagogue, and we're allowed to come downstairs to be where the men are, which was a big treat. And that same synagogue today has just one wall left, but they're picking up the pieces and trying to reconstruct whatever they can of the synagogue the way the original synagogue was.

Q: And I think you mentioned this in one of your other -- excuse me -- interviews, but I was curious, could you tell me a little bit about what your parents maybe said to you about being Jewish. Did you feel special, did you feel different in some way?

A: We were always told that we are special, and I grew up feeling that way. There's no way anyone could have changed my religion, even though I was just a little over 10 years old when I

left my parent's home. But I knew that that was a very important part of my life, and I also knew that I would never marry anyone who was not Jewish, because I could not bring up children in any other faith. It was already deeply imbedded in -- as part of my life.

Q: And what about -- I believe you wore the Star of David around your neck and can you tell me what happened when you moved to England?

A: I had this little Star of David, Mogen Dovid in silver, silver filigree, it's quite small, insignificant, on a silver chain. And I wore it when I left my parent's home, when I left Halberstadt to go to England. Of course, when I started going to the convent high school, was the name of the convent I went to where my guardians sent me, they of course realized that the Mogen Dovid was not appropriate to go to a Catholic school. So I was told then that I could not wear it at all, and I never did, but I always kept the Mogen Dovid. So I had it for years and years. Whenever I would look at it, it brought back memories, of course. Many years later, it would now be 19 years ago, our son Steven got married to Susan, Susan Soto. Susan was not born Jewish, but she became Jewish before Miranda their daughter was born. So when j -- when Susan converted to Judaism, and that is in Florida, I don't know the exact year, but it is 19 years ago, Susan went into the ocean with her husband, our son Steven, because there was no mikvah in Palm Beach, so the rabbi was there at the ocean with Susan, who was pregnant with their daughter Miranda, and Steven said, you know, my wife is pregnant, I can't put her in any further. And the rabbi said further, she has to go down more. She had just had her hair done for the wedding. Said further, she has to go down further. And Susan went to the so-called mikvah in the ocean, she was converted to Judaism, and Susan received the Mogen Dovid, which I was not allowed to wear as a child. And Susan has the Mogen Dovid very proudly, and will pass it on to Miranda one day.

Q: That's so nice. So, now when you are at The Beacon -- I know that's where we left off, with you at The Beacon, and I wanted to just try to establish, what were some of the other kinds of changes. You told me about the air raids, I believe, or maybe you might want to speak a little more about that, but what other changes since the war had started, how -- how were things changing with -- with the war going on?

A: The war was a very difficult time for everyone in England. In London they had the major air raids, where huge areas were bombed. But Tunbridge Wells was in direct line from Germany via Tunbridge Wells, to London. So the bombs and the planes, which were called doodlebugs -- they didn't have pilots, it was just a plane with a bomb that would come over. In the area of Tunbridge Wells and surrounding farm country, they put up these huge lines on different levels, and balloons, this cal -- they were called balloon barrage, hoping that they would entangle the flight of any one of these planes so that they would not reach London. And indeed, quite a few f -- fl -- planes were intercepted. Another thing which was typical of a doodlebug is that it would go so many miles and we would hear this droning voi -- noise. You knew what it was, but when the noise stopped, that's when the agony went off in all of us, because we didn -- it was coming down, but we didn't know where it would come down and explode. It was really meant to go another 35 miles to London from where we were. But the way of life for everybody was very difficult. We had the air raids at night or during the day and people would rush into shelters. And the food was rationed so that it was very minimal, what everyone received. But being at The Beacon, the food was less than minimal. They did not give us, I think, what we were entitled to, which was maybe one egg a month, because I don't remember ever, ever eating an egg, or ever seeing fresh fruit like an orange or banana. I did not see those things all the war years, not until I came to America.

Q: And what about the correspondence with your parents? If you can sort of characterize what that correspondence was like through this time period. We talked a little bit about, I think, the early days with the Allens --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- but going from the Allens to The Beacon, and when you heard from them, and then when you didn't hear from them.

A: There was very, very little information for my parents. The letters dwindled because they were still sending them to Switzerland, and they would be forwarded to my brother or my aunt, and then eventually they would come to me. The letters were always sad, it was always we are trying to get out, we are trying to get by. And my mother would use the phrase very often lorg zundt, only -- only good health. In other words, she was hoping that they would stay healthy. I know that because I donated all the letters from my parents, the originals, to the museum in Washington, D.C., and -- except for the first and last letter, which we kept. My daughter-in-law in Florida has the first and last letters. The first one was particularly meaningful to me, and the last letter from my parents said we have to be at the dorm in Halberstadt -- the dorm being the big church in the center of th -- of town, at something like five o'clock in the morning, or something -- something very early, and we may take with us only a rucksack. And I understand that all the Jews assembled there, and that was in the last letter from my parents. They had to then give up their keys, their house keys, and they were deported. This was all unknown to us because my brother and I were in England and we only heard about that later on, after the war, and from the little museum in Halberstadt, and they have the information from some of the soldiers in Halberstadt, and that is how they received the names of all the people who were deported. But you know, the Germans were very accurate about their recordkeeping, so they

have records of names and so forth, and that is all recorded now on that monument in Halberstadt.

Q: When did that last letter come to you?

A: I believe it was in 1942. And then from where they went we never heard. Maybe there was a Red Cross letter, but I'm really not sure. I'm only aware of this particular letter from my parents. And we were hoping that when the war was over, we would find them maybe in Russia, in Siberia, or someplace, but it never happened.

Q: Did you -- did they seem to know at all where they were going to be sent, in that letter?

A: I don't think so. I don't think they knew where they were going. They just wrote that they all have to be there early in the morning and that was the fine -- the last letter that I have. So the -- those two letters are in -- with our son and daughter-in-law in Florida. All the other letters are in Washington, D.C., and wis -- the y-young lady in Germany, Jutta Dick, who runs that little museum, called Moses Mendelssohn academy, she asked for copies of all those letters, and received them with my okay. So she has the details of all of these letters, which I never read again.

Q: Never?

A: Never, no. Only the first and the last. So, I did not want to read all those letters. I found them to be very depressing, and it was a subject that in our home, we just did not discuss.

Q: And what -- what about keeping your diary? Did you continue writing in the diary when you were at the Allen's and at The Beacon? What do you -- what do you remember about the diary?

A: The diary, which was started in German, for a long time all the writing was in German, in green ink, and then it continued later on in blue, I believe, ink, and a completely different handwriting. You would not think it was the same person, and now it's in English. And very

positive, that was at the time I was at The Beacon already, when I wrote just a few more pages in very good English and a completely different attitude, a much more positive attitude.

Q: And also at The Beacon, were you interested in boys at this time of your life?

A: Oh, we had a lot of fun with the local boys, we really did. The Beacon girls were very popular with the neighborhood village boys. The Beacon being rather an isolated building on a hill, the area is called Rusthall in Tunbridge Wells, and it's still called The Beacon. It is now like a pub, and a bed and breakfast both. So it's well taken care of by a young couple at this time, because after our reunion of children being in England for 50 years, we went onto The Beacon, and visited The Beacon. And at that time some of the village boys were invited to come over. These village boys are now in their fi -- 60's, but we knew them as kids. And they would come and visit us by climbing through the basement window, which was ground level. And when we heard a matron coming down the stairs, they would jump out of the window and disappear. So we had a very good, but very innocent time.

Q: Okay, so now I think we're caught up, and we were last talking about The Beacon and your transition from there to London. Do you know when that was, and maybe now you want to just start over and talk about living with the Haywards, I believe.

A: I believe the year would have been 1946 approximately, because I was now out of the school of arts and crafts in Tunbridge Wells, and had to take a job in London. And the young Mr. Hayward, who was this artist, said to me, would I like to live with them -- of course with the okay of his young wife. And I didn't know where I was going to live, so that sounded fine to me. They said they would live -- they were living in the vicinity of London, a little on the outskirts. So then I started my job in London at Jaquemar, this very, very fancy dress house, which gave

me a very, very good background in basic knowledge of dressmaking, which came in extremely useful later on in my life.

Q: So this was -- this was actually already after the war, or is this while the war is still going on? Cause you --

A: The war was -- the war was still going on, yes.

Q: Okay, so probably not ’46, so it must have been earlier.

A: Maybe fort -- ’45 to ’46 that I stayed with the -- with the Haywards. I don’t know the exact date any more, but I was with them when the war ended, so I was still going to work in London, and being that I was working in London at Jaquemar, my brother was also working in London, not too far away, and we would le -- meet at lunchtime, and we would meet at a restaurant called Lions, Lions Corner House, and my brother would always pay for my lunches. I really d -- earned very, very little money. It wasn’t even enough to pay for the train fare and staying with the Haywards. But the Haywards had a very positive influence upon my life. For instance, I had had piano lessons in Germany, and they felt that I should continue with my knowledge of music, and made arrangements for me to have piano lessons every week, which I did, and I went to high s -- to further my education in art, I went to an art school at night. So I would work during the day, commute, and then go to an evening art school. So they really influenced my life in continuing my education, and I was very happy staying with them. They were not at all wealthy. They bought me a men’s bike. I know because it had the bar in between, and we used to visit The Beacon, now from London, and we used to bicycle there. It was 35 miles each way. And Alec and his wife Agnes had a tandem and I had the single men’s bike. So they were slow going uphill, where I would be ahead of them and going downhill they would be much faster. And 35

miles in one direction is quite a good trip, but we did this quite regularly and it helped me in having very strong legs to this day.

Q: And that's still while the war was going on?

A: Yes, the war was still going on, and when the war was over, I was still with the Haywards on the outskirts of London. And I must say one day when I was supposed to take the train after work from Charing Cross to West Wickham where they lived, I missed the train, which could happen when you work in London. And that train was hit by a bomb, and they thought I was on it. And I guess the good lord felt that I wa -- he wasn't ready for me, so here I was saved once more, and it was the train that I had taken on a regular basis, and that day I missed it, the train.

Q: And that's before the war ended?

A: That was before the war ended, yes, and I was still with the Haywards.

Q: Did these sorts of things scare you at the time, or did you take them in stride in a certain way?

A: When you live in London during the war, you just never knew where the bomb would go off, or when a doodlebug stopped whether it would hit you, or the house next door, or -- it would be nearby, but you were just lucky if you made it. And we spent many, many nights in the air raid shelter. The Haywards had a shelter in their home, in the hallway. It was about the size of a ten -- ping pong table, but out of iron, and you would sleep under that ping pong table the moment the air raid siren went off. And it was routine. That could be daytime or nighttime. Of course, everything was a blackout at all times. No lights from the outside, you could not see which house had a light on. And they had air raid wardens walking around, checking each of the houses. It was a way of life. And in London, many people just bedded down in the underground, which is the subway system. They had bunks, one on top of the other, and parents, rather than dragging

their children out in the middle of the night, would just put them to bed in the subway. And they would be there every night, occupying these beds. There were hundreds and hundreds of them.

Q: But still, you somehow weren't terribly frightened, it sounds like.

A: Yeah -- no, I think I took the life pretty much in stride, like that's the way it's meant to be. And I think even to this day, we are planning to go to Israel next week, and it's not a very safe time, since we just got over this war maybe two weeks ago. And I feel whenever the hot time is to go, that's it. Meantime, I'm positive about living -- about living every day to the fullest.

Q: So what do you remember about the war coming to an end?

A: I remember the huge celebrations in London, but I was not in -- in the center of town then. My only recollection is really that my brother said to me, it is time for us to go to America. Our parents said that we will meet them again in America. And we were still hoping that there would be a sign of our parents somewhere. We thought because of lack of communication during the whole war, that maybe they were hiding somewhere. Maybe in Russia or Poland, or somewhere. We did not know. But we were not fortunate. However, many of The Beacon girls were reunited with their parents. Some in America, some in Australia, and different parts of the world.

Q: How did you feel about the possibility at this stage, going to America?

A: By now I felt very English. I really didn't want to leave England. But my brother had this attitude of being responsible for me, and he said, this is what our parents wanted, and that's what we're going to do. He really did not give me a choice. I was about 18 by now, and he said, this is what my par -- our parent's wishes were, and we're able to go because now the quota number had come to pass. In other words, we are entitled to go. And my uncle who was in New York had given us the appropriate visa and my brother made the arrangements for us to go, and I believe that Bloomsbury House paid for part of the voyage by boat to come to America.

Q: When did you leave for the U.S.?

A: It was in 1946, that I came to America. I came on a ship called the Drakninghome, and fell in love on the ship with a man from Canada, which sounded very, very far away from New York. But he was much older than I, but it was sort of a quick romance, but that's as far as it went.

Q: What was his name?

A: Bill, yes. And my husband when he heard about Bill, and that Bill was coming to visit me, was very upset.

Q: So you remember the journey fondly, going to America?

A: Yes, the journey was a very happy crossing for me, it was a very broadening experience to say the least, however I was still listening to my mother, which I learned later on what that was all about. The journey though, was a very happy one and we finally reached New York, and my brother was here to greet me, he came before I did, and an aunt of mine were at the ship when I arrived. And I spent the first couple of days at my uncle's house in Washington Heights. The uncle is my mother's brother, Hans Marcuza. Hans Marcuza was married not too long, and had a little girl called Barbara. So now I met my first cousin for the first time, and she was just a couple of months old.

Q: What were your very first impressions coming into New York?

A: I was not too pleased. My brother was showing me the skyscrapers and the Hudson and saying how wonderful and how beautiful, but I was used to a simple life in Tunbridge Wells, really the -- a country life, and I found all the brick and stone and the masses of people overwhelming.

Q: After that, how did you assimilate and adjust to being a new immigrant here?

A: I soon realized that I could not stay with my uncle too long. I think I stayed with him at the most for two weeks. At the time there was a newspaper in New York, and I believe it is still in existence, called Aufbau, A-u-f-b-a-u. The Aufbau also played a role in my life. First day I found a furnished room in Washington Heights, which cost five dollars a week. So, it was a walk-up apartment and I just had this tiny little room there on 180th Street, with a family. And of course, I needed to look for a job. So I went to an unemployment agency, the regular U.S. unemployment agency, and there was a very nice gentleman there who was sort of fascinated by my background, which I did not find particularly fascinating at all. And he helped me to get my first job in sketching bridal gowns. S -- my first job was on 85th Street, very near the mu -- Metropolitan Museum of Art. And people would explain to me what they want, a dress with lots of buttons down the back and puffed sleeves or whatever, and I would sketch it. And I was a pretty good sketcher, and I had a -- quite a nice background from the school of art in -- in Tunbridge Wells. And there was a showroom and people who would make the dresses, but my particular job was to sketch. Later on I would get a second job, and a third job, and each one was an improvement over the job I had before. I always earned more money, and I did quite well money-wise. I know I started with 35 dollars a week, and my brother and I thought that that was incredible. We thought we were so well-to-do. At that time I guess it was not too bad, because my room was only five dollars, so we did fine. And my brother and I saw each other regularly. He also took a furnished room in Washington Heights, we were near each other. And we were always very, very close in our loving each other, and -- but my brother felt responsible for me. And it wasn't too much longer, when I visited my other uncle, Dr. Friedel Lusch, he was a gynecologist in New York, on 92nd Street and Columbus Avenue. And I went to visit Friedel Lusch, Uncle Friedel, and there were other people there, a Mrs. Lowenstein and her daughter,

and a young man, and this young man was Jerry. I thought he might be the husband of the other young woman, turned out that that was his first cousin, and that was the aunt he lived with when he came to America, also on the kindertransport. And that's where I first met my husband Jerry, and I was only here maybe a month or not much more and Jerry has not left me out of his sight from then until today, and we are married 58 years.

Q: What year did you get married?

A: We met in '46, got married in '48, had our first child in fi --

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lillyan Rosenberg. This is tape number three, side A. As you were saying before, a lot of things were happening to you in your first years in the U.S., right?

A: I came to the United States in 1946, and that is when I met my husband-to-be, Jerry. And in 1948 we got married. In 1950 we had our first son, Steven, and in 1952 we had our second son, Ralph. So every two years, an important event happened in our lives.

Q: So it sounds like you adjusted pretty well to your new life in the U.S.. Would you say so?

A: I got used to life in America quite quickly, even though my first impulse was not so enthusiastic, I got used to the life here, which is of course, much more pleasant than the life that I had been accustomed to in England for all the war years. I had never seen such an abundance of fruit and flowers, and wealth that I had seen here, because we grew up in a very modest way, which I'm not too sorry about because I believe it has given us a different perspective in life, knowing what is an important thing in life, and what isn't. And it's not the wealth.

Q: So at this stage of your life, would you have felt more German, or more British in your sort of national identity or -- or background, if you will.

A: I never really felt German any more after I lived in England, I got very used to living in England and would have rather stayed there, but my brother insisted upon coming here. However, once I met my husband and we were married, I was able to become an American citizen because my husband was in the American army during the war, and I became a citizen within the first year of our marriage, and I would not change that for anything in the world.

Q: Can you tell me about the reunion I think you had, back in England at The Beacon?

A: I don't remember the exact year, but after 50 years of children coming to England on the kindertransport, Bertha Leverton wrote t -- an article in some newspaper, saying she is looking for contributions of letters from youngsters who came to England on the kindertransport, and she put together a book. The book is called, "I Came Alone" and it has stories of at least 300 children within that book. And sh -- then she decided that we should give some sort of acknowledgement and thanks to England for having brought us to England for our safety, because without that, none of us would have survived, or maybe very few. But this way, whether we were happy or not, cause some children were and some were not, I was among the luckier ones, but some children while they were in England were used as maids, some were used as sex objects, they were not all very lucky, and -- with the choice of their guardians. But I got accustomed to living in America a -- quite quickly, and that has become our way of life, and of course our children are born in New York, and they don't know anything else.

Q: And how did it feel to go back to this reunion? Was it emotional for you?

A: It was emotional for many of us, because it brought back things that we would just as soon not think about. Everybody was talking about their past, they had groups together who lived in different parts of England so that they would have a chance to meet again. And people came from different parts of the world to this particular reunion in London. And that was the beginning of other chapters of the kindertransport starting up. There is an organization in New York called kindertransport link, I believe. They have a newsletter for all the people who were children who came to the New York area. But that happened also in California and in Florida. So they have different groups of people getting together on a regular basis, who were all children who came to England with the kindertransport.

Q: And when you were back in England for this reunion, did you go to The Beacon?

A: We did. Those of us who were there from The Beacon, that might have been about 12 or 15 Beacon girls and their husbands, because now, most people were married and with children at this ti -- point. So, many husbands came along, and we all visited The Beacon for one day. It was closed to the public, and of course it was written up in many newspapers. But The Beacon still exists, and it brought back a lot of memories, because that which are now elegant dining rooms with tables and white tablecloths, and very, very pretty, and a beautiful setting, that was our dormitory, that was our room, and that's where the Rusthall boys came to visit us. So it brought back a lot of memories.

Q: How many girls in total were at The Beacon when you were there, do you know approximately?

A: At least 50, in different -- different ages, and they were divided up into junior, middles and seniors. I started as a middle and ended as a senior.

Q: Now, when you arrived to the U.S., were you still hopeful that you would find your parents, or hear from your parents?

A: By the time I got to the U.S., there was little hope, because we had not heard anything. But we heard from s -- some people -- I mentioned the name Ruth Lindheimer in Halberstadt, the girl I went to school with, she was in England also with the kindertransport, but her father was in New York, and he was in the American army, he served in the war. And Ruth's father knew of other people from Halberstadt who are also living in New York, so he had some contact with other people. And they somehow received a list which was published in the Aufbau newspaper. And in that list, which a soldier had on him, the soldier had the list of these people, an American soldier, I believe, and he gave it to the Aufbau, the Aufbau published it. It had the names of all

the people who were transported to Warsaw, which we did not know, we never really knew where they were transported to.

Q: So this is the first concrete information --

A: Mm-hm, right.

Q: -- and then, did you know where they may have gone, or -- when did you find out anything else, or did you find out?

A: [indecipherable]. We actually never found out anything else. We don't know a specific date when they were possibly killed, but we just don't know. All we know is the monument which is in Halberstadt at the dome where all the Jewish people had to assemble to be deported, and it has the date of birth, and it doesn't have a date of death.

Q: And so it sounds like that transport, did anyone ever find out if that transport when to Auschwitz, or it went somewhere else?

A: Went to Warsaw. It went to Warsaw, they all went to Warsaw, that's all we know. What -- we -- we don't know any details after that and I don't think that there were even any Red Cross letters, any more from the camp. But in my -- the last letter from parents, they wrote that Oma in Stargard, the -- that's the other grandmother, and her daughter, were also deported to Poland, but we don't know any details. We also don't know what happened to Opa in Halberstadt, the one who lived above us. I believe he was sent to like a nursing home, but we were trying to find his grave when we were there a few years ago, and we could not find it. We found the grave of his wife, Zelma Cohn, and it's in the Jewish cemetery in Halberstadt. It's written in Hebrew, and a rabbi, a present rabbi from Berlin made a rubbing of the gravestone and sent us the translation, which was really quite warm and heartwarming. So that was Zelma Cohn, born Lusch. And that

gravestone is there in Halberstadt, but we could not find Opa, Hugo Cohn, we don't know where he was buried.

Q: But your grandmother, when did she pass away?

A: When I was about two or three years old. So that was a normal burial.

Q: So was there any point at which it really sank in for you that you wouldn't see your parents again, and when was that?

A: There wasn't really any one particular day or one particular time. The only thing that we know concrete is the list of names that they were deported. So we know they were there, and we know very few survivors came from Warsaw. We just never heard.

Q: And so the last time that you saw them was at that train station?

A: Mm-hm, yes. The last picture I have is the picture in Halberstadt on the day that I departed on the kindertransport. And my parents came with me until Hanover, where the actual train, which was a locked train, they just took the children for the transport, no parents were allowed on the platform at that time.

Q: Now this photo, plus I know other photos are items that you've been able to hold onto for the rest of your life.

A: Right.

Q: Can you tell me, just about the photos right now, how it is that you managed to do that, and that one photo from the train station, did you have that throughout, or was that sent to you at some point?

A: My parents sent it to England just as soon as I got there. They sent it to the Allens, and I left Germany with a considerable number of old photographs, family photographs. They have been

copied and reproduced, and a -- the copies are in the little museum in Halberstadt at the Moses Mendelssohn academy. But I have the originals right here.

Q: And so you probably always felt that it was very important to -- to hold onto these photographs. Did you feel that from a very young age already?

A: Yes, I always felt that that is my heritage, that these were the most precious things to me, and these are items that cannot be reproduced, I mean, if I would lose them. And I thought I did this year, because I had the young lady from Halberstadt visiting us here in New York, we were sitting at this same table in our apartment, and we went through my history and so forth. And when she left, I was looking for the family album, and I couldn't find it. So I called Germany frantically, and yes indeed, she took the whole album, with all these original pictures, and I was very, very upset, and told her so, but she said, well I needed to make copies of them, and how else could I make copies? She took the whole book, and I'm glad to say, it's back in my hands.

Q: And what other objects -- when you did come to the U.S., what other objects from -- from your past did you bring with you at that time?

A: The diary which we referred to before, I forgot that I had that, and it showed up quite unexpectedly about -- what it's -- 1987, that's many, many years after we -- I was in America, I came over in about '46, I came to America. So until '87, we moved into the present apartment where we are, and by -- in the move, I came across this diary, which I had forgotten that I had, and I though to myself, oh gee, if my children ever see this old book, and the hat I wore when I left my parents on the day I came to England, I kept the diary and the hat. Why, I don't know. And I showed it to our children on a particular Passover when the whole family was together, I said, "I came across these items and someday you're going to say, why did my mother keep this old hat?" I said, "Well that's the hat I wore when I left Germany." And I donated that hat to the

museum in Washington, D.C.. I understand it's on show there with the picture of my wearing the hat.

Q: And were you surprised when you re-read your diary? Was there anything in there that surprised you, or you hadn't remembered?

A: Yes, I am not one to go back over old letters or old things too happily, because it sometimes brings back unhappy memories. So I would just as soon not really read the old letters, but one day I translated the whole diary into English, because if my children wanted to know what it was in that diary, they wouldn't understand the German. So I translated it page for page, and marked each page with the number where you can find it in the actual diary.

Q: Was that a difficult process for you?

A: Well, the English and German is not a problem for me because both languages are identical. I have no problems speaking either one, but emotionally it brings back things that I'd just as soon not think about.

Q: Do you think that's helped you in a way, not to dwell on the memories, the bad -- the -- the difficult memories?

A: I believe so. I don't believe in dwelling on difficult or bad times. I would rather think about the positive, but that's the way I am, it's the -- my nature.

Q: And what about with your children? Did you talk much about your experiences as a youngster with your children?

A: No, didn't talk about it at all. Our children were born in New York. We lived in a small house in Middle Village, and they grew up with all the other neighborhood American children. Went to school at the public school in -- in the park, very close to home. And actually the conversation never came up, even though my husband and I both speak German fluently, we really did not use

the German language. My husband was also born in Germany, he was born in Göttingen, but at home we just spoke English, with one exception. When Jerry's mother, my husband's mother came to America after the war and I met her, she didn't speak English, she would speak German. And I always understood it, but I hadn't used the language for so many years in England. So she would say well, why don't you answer me in German? And I really hesitated to speak German, but the more she insisted and the more she spoke German, I understood everything, and eventually I would speak to her, so the children would hear a little German here and there, when -- you know, when the grandmother came to visit, which was every weekend. But my husband and I only speak English at home. But a ga -- regarding whether we spoke about our childhood and kindertransport, I didn't. I don't think the children were even aware of any of this, except that we visited the Allens with the children when they were about five and six years old, we went to England and visited the Allens, who were, of course, very, very proud to have me back and to see our children, and they were very, very kind to us. And at one time they came to America and visited us in our little house in Middle Village. So there was always this connection, and I told you that I am still in touch with the granddaughter, very much so. And just a year ago the granddaughter, with her seven children, came to visit our son in Connecticut, and then to our house. So it's like part of my life is definitely in England.

Q: Why do you think you didn't talk much about this, or at all, with your own children?

A: I don't know that it was deliberate, except for the fact that I wanted the children to have a very happy childhood, and I didn't believe in burdening them with anything that was an unpleasant past. But the time did come when they started posing questions. And the first question I remember, the boys are only 14 months apart in age, one of them saying at Thanksgiving time, they were now in public school, saying, everybody is going to their grandmother's and

grandfather's house, why don't we have grandparents? So now the question came from the children, and I told them in short that there was this bad man in Germany, and because of that I came to England, and I said, you know, Pop and Ma in England, and of course they did, because they had visited and they knew them very well by now. And I said, well that's why I came to England. But I would make it very short, I never dwelt on it, and neither did my husband. It was just, when they asked a question they got a real answer, but we never talked much about politics, we just wanted them to have a happy childhood.

Q: So now if you would tell me about what happened with the other items, this sort of surprise phone call that you received, other items that wound up being -- belonging to your family, and that you didn't even know about.

A: All right. Well, it's just a -- a little over a year ago, in 2005, and we're now in 2006, I received a phone call from this woman in Halberstadt, Jutta Dick at the Moses Mendelssohn academy, and she said, "Lilly, I had a phone call from somebody called Horst Hesser, do you know Horst Hesser?" And I said, no, I don't. She said, "Do you know Horst?" So I thought about it, and I said, "Well the only Horst I know is the doll I had. My little doll I played with in -- in Germany was a boy doll, and his name was Horst." I said, "That's the only Horst I know." But I must have called that Horst after -- that doll after somebody, somebody I liked, but I couldn't remember. She said, "Well, Horst Hesser is trying to reach you, and he says he has some items that belong to you." I said, "No, that can't be, I -- I just don't know anybody." So she said, "Well, he said he has certain belongings from your parents and he has looked for you all his life, and he just found you through the internet, through the computer." Well, apparently Horst Hesser has a son-in-law and he is very creative with the computer and Horst has said to him at various times, could you put in the name of either Vanna Cohn or Lilly Cohn and see what happens. And

over the years, nothing happened. And Horst said that when he went to Halberstadt, he would always ask, what happened to that family, Cohn, and anyone he would ask would say, we don't know, or we'd rather not talk about that. So this time this son-in-law put in the name Lilly Cohn, Halberstadt, and it came out that it said, Lilly Cohn, Halberstadt is now Lillyan Rosenberg, tour guide in New York. So he was extremely excited and went to see his father-in-law and told him, I think I found her. So one thing led to another, they contacted the guide association in New York and said, do you know Lillyan Rosenberg? And they said, oh sure we do, because of course, they speak different languages and I did tours in German. They said she was president of the multilingual guide association. He said, well how can we reach her? So they told him how they could reach me, and that is how Horst called Halberstadt and she told me to get in touch with Horst. So now I called him, and one f -- morning I called, and of course my German is fluent, and I said to him, "Here is Lilly Cohn." And he said, "Are you the little girl I played with?" I said, "I don't know, I can't remember." He said, "Well, if you are the one," he said, "our parents were very good friends and they used to have coffee and cake at your house, and you and I would play under the table and do some crayoning or play." I must have been all of seven years old at the time. And sh -- he said, "While I am speaking to you, I have paintings in front of me, and these paintings were done by your mother, and they have your mother's signature." And so I said, "That can't be." He said, "Yes, I have several items from your parents." And he told me that his father and my father were doing business together. So I believe that after my father's store was closed, he still sold linens by going to people's houses, or business, I don't know. But with a suitcase I remember him getting on the train and that was after the store was closed, before concentration camp. So apparently he knew this family well. So ma -- now --

Q: And where -- and where were they, where did they live?

A: They now live in a different town called Schwerin, but at the time, his father and my parents lived like 10 miles apart. He -- the father of Horst and family, they lived outside of Halberstadt, a real farm country. Like we have Pennsylvania Dutch, real country. There'd be one house here, and a half a mile away, another house. That's how his parents lived. So apparently, during the war, my father said to Horst's father, would you come and get some of our precious belongings in case we ever have to leave our home and would you hold them for safekeeping? So apparently, Horst's father, at great risk to his own life, came in the middle of the night with, I think a horse and buggy, and took furniture and carpeting and silver and paintings, a s -- little statue, and various items from my parent's home, and he drove them during the night because nobody would see him where they live, and he hid them in a barn. So these items were hidden in a barn all the war years. And of course, eventually, my parents had to leave home, their ho -- our home. And after the war, Horst's father said to his two sons, who were now teenagers, "We have belongings from a Jewish family, the family Cohn, and I'm trying to find them, and if I don't find them, I want you to promise me that you will always look for them, and we have to return these items to that family." So I couldn't believe what was happening. But it was just a year ago in July that we made arrangements then to come to Halberstadt and that Horst and his wife would come to Halberstadt, and then my husband was coming with me, of course. And the two sons said, "Well then, we'll go too, because if you're going, we'll go." And the three grandchildren said, "Well if you're all going, we want to go, too." So on July of nine -- of 2 - '05, we all arranged to be in Germany. So it was the two sons, one daughter-in-law, and the three grandchildren and my husband and I, we all went to Halberstadt and we met Horst and his wife. They are also in their 70's, like I am, but he's a little bit older, and they're a very charming couple. And we spent a few days with them in Halberstadt. And there were great festivities, if

one may call it that, because there was the press, and television and newscasters, all at the museum where this took place. And some students, and outsiders. It got a tremendous lot of publicity and Horst returned the paintings to me, and a whole set of silverware with the initial C for Cohn, and a little statue. It took quite awhile, but eventually it reached our home in New York, and we are now blessed to have the paintings and the silver and the statue in our home.

Q: I want to ask you first of all, when's the first time you ever went back to Germany after the war? Tell me a little bit about that.

A: Well, I was once in Germany when I was working at the German national tourist office, and I acco-companied American tourists to Germany, and I was more or less the interpreter.

Q: And when was that?

A: In 19 -- approximately 1974. I worked at the ger -- German tourist office for five years and gave advice to American travel agents and tourists who were thinking of going to Germany. Of course, I don't remember Germany as such, I only know the map, and I studied that. But eventually I had to take American travel agents to Germany, and I would have a local tour guide over there explaining things to me in German, and I in turn interpreted it into English.

Q: So tell me, how did it feel the first time you were back in Germany, how did that feel?

A: I decided that I will think of it as if I was in Scandinavia, because it was all strange to me anyway, and I did not like the idea of going to Germany, and on my own, I would not have gone. But that was business, and I did what I had to do, and it was successful.

Q: Did you feel uncomfortable around Germans, especially if they were of a certain age, old enough to have been active during that time?

A: At times very much so, because --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lillyan Rosenberg. This is tape number three, side B. So you were telling me about your interaction with every day Germans, I guess whether that first trip to Germany, or tourists who came here and any of the discomfort that you may have felt in the earliest times that you can recall?

A: I did not go to Germany voluntarily, but since it was part of my job, I decided that if I didn't do it, somebody else would be doing it. And we visited a synagogue in Worms in Germany, and my question was to the guide who showed us around, who was wearing a yarmulke, you know, skullcap, a-are there any Jews who ever come here? And he said no, there were no Jews who came to Worms, but they built a token synagogue like a goodwill, restitution thing. But the synagogue is used at times by American soldiers who are stationed in the vicinity. So it was used there, but otherwise there were no Jews who came back to Worms, which was a very active Jewish community before the war.

Q: So that was your trip in the 70's, is that right?

A: Right.

Q: And then you were starting to tell me about perhaps feeling uncomfortable, even German tourists -- did it make you uncomfortable sometimes to meet Germans who you wondered about what they had done during the war time?

A: Well, very often they would ask me political questions. Now that I was dealing with them -- with German tourists in America. But I -- I would turn that around very quickly by saying, my job is to tell you about America, and I want to tell you about the Empire State building, or the Chrysler building, or whatever, and I never really went into my background. It was only once, when German tourists introduced themselves on one of my longer tours, where I have people

coming up to the mic, and they say, I was a teacher in Frankfurt, and the other one says, oh I'm also from Frankfurt, so they got to know each other. And this one woman said she's from Halberstadt. So that took me by surprise, and I didn't know just how to handle that. And I did not tell her that I was born there until the last day when I took them to Kennedy airport. I decided on my way there that I would dec -- would tell her about it. And I asked her what kind of work they were doing, and she said, we made uniforms in Halberstadt. So I wasn't too happy, and I did not want that to be the conversation on the whole tour, because I'm dealing with Germans, and Australians, or Austrians and English, they could all be in one bus, but I really didn't want to have that as a conversation piece. So in general I avoided having these kind of conversations.

Q: Now when's the next time you went to Germany, and what were the circumstances of that journey?

A: We got this letter from Jutta Dick from the Moses Mendelssohn academy in Halberstadt, Germany, saying we would like to invite you to come over to -- to Germany, and this was approximately year 2000, approximately. And she said, would we be willing to address some of the students of the vicinity, and it was mainly because of the diary I kept, because I sent a copy of the diary, I think it's about 66 pages, I sent a copy to the museum in Halberstadt, because they're trying to show what life was like in that community. And that tagabu, this diary of mine, which I have right here, became a textbook for the students in the area. And they studied my background and the way of life in Halberstadt. So she asked if I would address students and come over there and s -- that they could a -- meet somebody and speak to me directly. So my friend Ruth Oppenheimer, who I mentioned before, and her husband, and my husband Jerry and I, and one lady from Israel, her naveda -- name is Judith Beerun, and she goes to Halberstadt fr -- quite frequently from Israel, she is older than I am. We were all in Halberstadt together, and we

had interviews, mostly at the museum and sometimes at a school where students of a -- an age about 16 to 20 -- not the youn -- very youngest, could ask questions, anything they wanted. And being that my German is quite fluent, they -- they would speak to me and give -- and I would answer their questions. I also offered them that if they had any questions that they could write to me and I would answer their letters, which indeed I did. One of the letters which is outstanding in my mind is where a young student wrote to me, of course all in German, I was born in Germany, and wherever I go in the world, wherever my parents and I travel, people always refer to us as Nazis. What can I do about it? After all, I wasn't even born. What can I help what my grandfather may have done, and so forth. So I gave it quite a bit of thought how to answer such a letter. And I wrote back and I answered every letter, but this came up in several versions. And I said, you know, you are not responsible for things that happened before you were born. But you're very responsible for all the decisions you make in your lifetime. And therefore, all I can tell you is that you do not have to feel guilty for things that happened before your time, but be very sure that whatever decisions you make in your life will be the right decision, and not only because of the majority doing it. So I ho-hope that I gave the youngsters the proper advice.

Q: Did you feel -- on these trips to Germany, did you feel a certain inevitable resentment toward Germans, toward Germany?

A: I must carry on for what I just said. I feel that the young people are not responsible for that which happened before their time. I look at the old people in a different way. And yet I feel life must go on, and we must be positive. I cannot say that one can ever forget the type of childhood that I had because of the loss of my parents. I cannot forgive them for that, but I cannot hold it against all the Germans, because I think they're doing the best they can to help Israel, and I have found many, many positive things, including some very, very good people, including this Horst

and his wife. They had, for instance, the various pieces of silver for my parents, which my parents might have hidden somewhere, I don't know, and that was distributed among the various members of the family. And yet when they heard that we were coming to Germany, they all gave it back and we have all these things from all the various members. So there are many good people, and we have to realize that and go ahead.

Q: What about Horst himself? During the war time, was he of age to be in the German army?

A: I believe he was first in the Hitlerjugen -- youth -- children's you -- Hitler youth, and later on he was in the German army, and he was imprisoned. And he is quite a character, and when we visited him in Schwerin, which is where they live now, there's this old castle, and he showed us the castle, and he said, I was imprisoned in that castle and I jumped out of the window over there and trotted for miles and miles and miles along the train track. And he told us the weirdest stories. I mean, he's quite a character, but they're very, very good people. Yes, he was in the German army, and it wasn't until the war was over that his father told his sons that they have the items belonging to my family.

Q: Now, in particular, you said there are paintings by your mother. Can you describe the paintings that you received from Horst?

A: Well, when I first saw the painting, when we met Horst last year, I realized that I had a photograph from my parent's home, because I had quite a few old photographs, but on that one photograph is the living room of my parents, and in the corner of the living room, on the one corner, is this big painting, and that is the painting that he had, and another, smaller one. Also, I had one painting in my suitcase for the Allens, so it was a pr -- a pr -- a present from my mother to the Allens when I came to England, so there was always one small painting, which is in our son's house, the Allens gave it to me. And now we have the two big paintings which Horst gave

us, and of course it has changed our whole atmosphere in our home, they just look like they belong there.

Q: Describe them. What are they paintings of, the three in total?

A: The one which my son in Connecticut has is of the Hartz mountains, and it's a river and going over a lot of stones and just countryside. The other one is -- the very large one, is a big church in Stargard in Pommern. Horst's wife did some research by going to various libraries to locate which church could that be, and she located it as the church in Stargard in Pommern. And the smaller picture is the fish mart in Halberstadt, which is still there now. There is a round fountain in the center of town, and that seems to be quite a landmark with Bucco from Halberstadt in the background on the new town hall. Because the new town hall was bombed, but they must have had Bucco hidden somewhere, Bucco is still there.

Q: How did it feel for you to be in your hometown? I guess the first time you were there was 2001? Or --

A: No, just e -- no --

Q: -- you didn't go back. Describe when you first --

A: We came from Berlin a -- because we met our children in Berlin since the whole family was joining us to meet Horst. I had never been back to hal -- oh no, I had been in Halberstadt when we spoke to the students, and I was very much afraid that I would feel very badly when I would see my parent's home. But when we got to my parent's home, and they told me this is Westendorf, and the exact address, the post office is still there, but vis-à-vis the post office where my parent's home was is now a very ugly building which was built by the Russians in their style of building, which was very unattractive. Like a factory type house. So I did not associate with

that building at all. I had no feeling for that building at all. So that which I was afraid of, never happened.

Q: Let's see what other questions I wanted to ask you. So, on -- is there anything else you wanted to mention in terms of the reunion with -- with Horst? Anything else that -- that we haven't covered? Cause I know that was a very -- I mean, this was really a dramatic development, I mean something that just really took you by surprise, it seems.

A: Absolutely. And it -- it was an absolute surprise, but I must say, it was one of the more pleasant surprises in my lifetime. Cause no one could have ever predicted that over 70 years would -- would come -- go by and someone would come up and say, I have belongings from your parents. I mean, it was something that I could not have even dreamt up. It's just so unpredictable. And then they turned out to be such warm and kind people. So that I speak to Horst every week, even it's a year now that we are back from over there. And his son-in-law writes to us on the email, so we know what is happening. In fact, my husband and I are trying to figure out what we can do for them, and we've come up with various suggestions. We'd like them to come and visit us, for instance, in New York, but he has said it's too far, his doctor would not let him fly that far. So then we came up with different suggestions, but we have not gotten together yet. I think eventually we will fly to Germany and invite them somewhere, or maybe meet again in Halberstadt, something like that.

Q: Do -- does this episode in any way change just some of your feelings about going back to Germany again? You say maybe another future trip?

A: Mm-hm. Yes, I feel much more relaxed about going back to Germany. By choice I would have never gone, but when we were fir -- invited to go there to speak to the students, I felt that that could be my contribution to history. To do something, to let them know that this is not just a

story, that this is indeed true, cause here I am, and you can speak to me. And I told the students then, if it had not been for Hitler and the Nazi period, I would be one of them. I would have lived here possibly for the rest of my life. But because of destiny, it was different, and I had no control over that.

Q: Because, of course, your family felt very German, right?

A: Oh they -- my fa -- father said, nothing can happen to us. After all, I served in World War I. I was on the front, I was a -- a soldier, I fought for the Fatherland. That couldn't -- nothing could happen to us. But we all know that that's not the way it was, but they felt very German, just like I feel I am an American, and I'm sure that my children feel a hundred percent American, they were born here. But our parents felt the same way about Germany. They did not feel different. They had been in Germany for hundreds of years. And they felt that n -- they -- they were Germans, just like we are Americans.

Q: Now, I think there is one other item that was in your family's possession, that there's another, separate story about this item, because it was not returned by Horst, but it was still -- still somewhere else. Can you tell me about that?

A: Yeah. Well, when I met Horst, I said to him, the only picture I actually remember from my childhood is a picture of Moses. And to the best of my knowledge, the whole picture, in my mind, was done in Hebrew letters. Because I can remember standing in front of that picture, since I was always interested in art, saying how can somebody make a picture by using only letters? So that's what I remembered about the picture. So he said, "Oh, you mean the Moses picture with the 10 commandments?" I said yes. I said, "That's the only thing -- I wonder where that is, because if it's only in Hebrew letters, there can't be many of those around, it must be somewhere." So he said, "Oh, my sister had it. She gave it to the Jewish museum in Berlin." And

that's the old Jewish museum, not the [indecipherable], it's called -- has another name, something or other [indecipherable] in -- in Berlin it was behind the wall when the wall was still up. So --

Q: Does it -- is it still there, or were those items taken to the new Jewish museum in Berlin?

A: No, it was at the old j -- at the old synag -- at the old synagogue, the alt [indecipherable]

Q: The new synagogue?

A: Not the new one.

Q: Okay.

A: Not the new one. It's a combination of synagogue and museum. If you want I'll look up the name of the mu -- museum late -- of the synagogue later. So, I contacted that particular museum and was in touch with Dr. Simon and told him that I am the sole survivor of my parents fa -- direct family, and I heard that the picture has been donated to the synagogue, or the museum, and I would like them to know that I am here, and I would like to have the picture returned. He was very, very evasive. Eventually I made an appointment with him to meet with him while we were on our trip to Europe last year when we met Horst. And I made a date to meet him at the museum with Jutta. And I spent a whole hour with him. I said, look, I have sent you my birth certificate, which is from Halberstadt and you know that my parents are Ernst, Marguerita Cohn, and you know that the picture was given to you by Horst's sister. And he never denied having the picture, but for almost a year we have been talking back and forth. And he told me then that the museum has never returned anything to anyone, because if they would return that picture, then other people would re -- want their belongings back, too. I didn't see it in the museum because I think they had it in a cellar somewhere, it was not exhibited. We tried very, very hard for him to give it up. Jutta would go over fr-from Halberstadt and collect it, and there were all kinds of legal things

back and forth. Eventually our son from Florida contacted his senator, who contacted the American consulate in Berlin. And the American consulate in Berlin contacted Dr. Simon and said, why are you not returning this to Lillyan Rosenberg? She is an immediate heir of that painting. Then he softened a little bit, he did not want to have problems with the American government, because now the government got involved. And a little while ago, approximately four weeks ago, he said it -- a yo -- to the man at the American consulate in Berlin that all Jutta has to do is make an arrangement with him and come and pick it up. So Jutta has picked it up, it is now in Halberstadt and will be on view at the little museum of the Moses Mendelssohn academy for awhile, and then we will make arrangements to have it shipped to our home.

Q: So -- and tell me a little of the history. This is not something your mother created.

A: No, this -- no, this is not done by my mother, it's just a picture that I remember from my parent's home. And the picture is not the picture the way I remembered it, but you know, I was a child and it's many, many years ago. But I do remember the Hebrew, and the 10 commandments. So I am not sure that this is the picture that I was describing. But we decided my parents could have more than one picture which they have given away, and -- so we -- we d -- I don't know for sure if that is the picture that I had in my mind. It is, however, Moses and the 10 commandments.

Q: And obviously, it sounds like it's -- it's important to you that it be on exhibit in -- in the museum in Halberstadt, right?

A: Yes. And this way it gives some publicity to the area. And the little museum is doing very well. It's getting tourists from all over the world. And one of the things that the little museum has been able to do -- for instance, when Jutta was here in New York about four weeks ago, and she stayed with us, she told me that one of the professors from a university here in New York, her family is from Halberstadt, she thought she was alone in the world. Her back -- background, her

family name was h -- Hirsch. Because there was Hirsch Kupva and Hirsch something else in Halberstadt. So when she got in touch with Jutta, Jutta told her, you know, you have a lot of members of your family in Israel, which she did not know. So this woman by the name of Hirsch, here in New York, did not know that she had family in Israel. They all met again in Halberstadt. So the little museum there is getting people together from different parts of the world. And this year they invited grandchildren, that would have been like our age grandchildren, to come there and write about genealogy of their family. So they're doing a lot of good things in this little town.

Q: And so there were a number of survivors, maybe mostly children, but it sounds like there were survivors of Halberstadt.

A: In different parts of the world, yes, and all over. I mean, they are just scattered. I believe the -- a family from the Rabbi Owerbach, that family is in Israel. But of course, I've lost contact with most people, but through a reunion in Halberstadt, or the kindertransport reunion, people do find each other.

Q: Okay, and let me see if I have any other questions to ask? Did you keep this baby doll that's named after Horst?

A: No, unfortunately I only have the picture of the doll called Horst. And one of the newspapers in Florida put the title, a doll called Horst, and had two full pages on the story of the reunion with Horst and myself.

Q: How does it feel, this media attention you've gotten here, and Germany, is it -- is it also a surprise, or -- or how has that been for you?

A: I look at that as though my life, which I didn't think was so -- so unusual, because when I have a -- neighbors here, and they say, oh you have such an interesting life, and I'd say where

were you from? Brooklyn. I'd say, I wish I was born in Brooklyn. I don't want such an interesting life. But now that it is the way it is, I would like it to be a contribution to history, so that no one will ever doubt what has happened to children like myself. And on a positive vein, I would say that of all the people I know who have grown up under very difficult conditions and I s -- look at their family and their children, they have all done a very good job with their sons and daughters, and most of them are professionals and doing very, very well. So I believe we've been able to teach them very good values.

Q: Do you -- for yourself, would you say that -- that is a direct result of the way that you had your own childhood and the hardships of your childhood?

A: Yes, I believe so, even though I think children of kindertransport parents feel that they are overly protected. That is a complaint we get from all the children. They will say my mother wants to know where I am, my father wants to know where I am, they're always keeping tabs on us. That might be some of our insecurity of people like myself. But when I watch my children, who now have teenage children, they're doing the same thing with theirs -- children, they're bringing them up the same way, and I must say I'm glad about that.

Q: Do you find it difficult to reminisce and to remember all these details about -- about your childhood?

A: I would say yes, because it's not a subject that I dwell upon at all, I look at the future. Although, we already pretty old, there prob -- I don't know how much future there is, but we look at it in a positive way. And the past seems to have its very emotional moments. I know that when we spoke about the time I was told to leave the Allen's house, how upsetting that was for me. I think that that was equally upsetting as leaving my parent's home.

Q: And has religion played a very important part in your life, in part because of -- of what you went through, would you say?

A: I don -- I cannot really answer that with a yes or no ques -- statement. I know that I feel absolutely Jewish, you could not change me. But I think we're also very tolerant of all other religions. We have the two sons, one became very religious, and one married a girl who became Jewish, as I told you. So we brought them up in a modest way, not in a kosher home, but they learned about their background by going to Hebrew school. They were Bar Mitzvahed, they had Jewish weddings. They keep a different kind of home, the one in Connecticut, Ralph and his wife, they have a kosher home. Steven and Susan and Miranda have the average kind of home like we have. But we do keep all holidays and we try to get together as a family at least once a year and that is on Passover, so that we are at one table with both sons. That was my request to both daughter-in-laws when they got married.

Q: Well, I want to thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed, and just wanted to see if there was anything else you would like to contribute or share before we end the interview.

A: I think you have delved into my life quite deeply, and if I can be useful to others because of my past, then I will feel it's my little contribution to this world, apart from having a wonderful husband and two great sons. We've made the best of every possible situation. And I thank you for the time you've spent with me.

Q: Thank you very much. This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lillyan Rosenberg.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview