

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

## **Interview with Doris Small**

**October 16, 2010**

**RG-50.030\*0597**

### **PREFACE**

The following interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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

Transcribed by Antoinette Varela, National Court Reporters Association.

**DORIS SMALL**

**October 16, 2010**

Question: This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Doris Small. Conducted by Milda Morkyte on the 16th of October at the Kindertransport Association Conference in Arlington, Virginia. So, Doris, let's start from the beginning. Please tell me when -- when you were born? Where?

Answer: I was born in Berlin, Germany, in July 1923.

Q: Uh-huh. And you were born Doris -- as Doris --

A: Dora Costinski (ph).

Q: Dora Costinski. Who are your parents?

A: My parents came from Poland, but my father was a prisoner in the first World War taken by the Germans and that's how he got to Germany. And that's how my sister and I were born there.

Q: What were your parents names?

A: My father name was Max Mosik in Polish or Hebrew, Moshe. Whichever name you want to pick.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: My mother was Hilda Moyim (ph) and in German Maria.

Q: Uh-huh. And you see -- you had two sisters?

A: I had one sister.

Q: One sister.

A: And one brother. I'm the youngest one. I was.

Q: What were their names and when were they born?

A: My brother?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: My brother's name was Alan Baer Costinski. He want that last name. And he was born in Larch, Poland. And he came with my mother just shortly before the -- the first World War to Germany.

Q: With your mother only?

A: Yeah. Because my father was a prisoner in a German prison camp. And she knew about it. She walked all the way from -- but the Germans came and they took everything away and there was nothing left. She had two more children younger than the one that I knew, and that's a boy and girl, but they both died, I really don't know how. But the Germans came in and they -- that's the first World War.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And they destroyed everything and there was nothing left for her. So when she only had that one little boy left, she took him and she walked all night. And during the day, she stopped over somewhere on a farm, and only nights she walked until she -- by the time she reached the border from Poland to Germany, the war was practically over and she just walked across. And she went to the prison camp where my father was and they got together. And there was nothing to go back to to Poland. So they stayed in Germany. But then later on after they got a little established, my sister was born in 1921 and I was born in 1923.

Q: What's your sister's name?

A: Ida:

Q: Okay. So what do you remember from Berlin? Tell me about your childhood. What did your parents do?

A: Well, after the war it wasn't bad. We were free. But unfortunate -- which had nothing to do with Hitler -- when I was only three years old, my mother fell down a flight of stairs and she never recovered. It wasn't anybody's fault. It was her own fault. She should have gone into the hospital and be in a cast. But she said, I have small children and I can't afford to go into a cast and she neglected herself, which had nothing to do with Hitler or anything. He wasn't even there yet. And, of course, after a while instead of getting better, she got worse. And she's been in and out of hospitals since I remember. So I was only three so I barely remember my mother. And by the time I started school there was talk about Hitler being the new chancellor of Germany. So my father said, well, I think we're going to put the girls right away in a Jewish school. Because my brother went to a German school.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: When he first came to Germany he couldn't speak the language, but it was different. But when he heard about Hitler being so much against Jews, he says, I'm not going to put the girls in the Jew -- in the German school. So we went right away into a Jewish school.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: From the time we started kindergarten.

Q: But you could speak German?

A: Well, we learned German and we learned Hebrew --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- in the school. We had every morning one hour of Hebrew from Monday to Friday five days a week and then it was from eight to nine. And nine o'clock we had regular subjects, German, arithmetic, geography, history, you know --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- regular subjects. But it was only for Jewish children.

Q: So most of your friends were Jewish or did you have German friends?

A: Well, not really because mostly after school you go to somebody's house. But as I did not really have a home to go -- I mean, I had a home but there was nobody there --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- because my mother was in and out of the hospital. My father was busy and I had to make a living so we had to go to day care. So straight from school we went into day care and we were there until six o'clock at night.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: By that time my father was home -- and so I --

Q: So the day care was for German children too, right? It wasn't --

A: No, it was Jewish.

Q: Oh, it was Jewish?

A: It was a Jewish day care, yes. We had sort of a hot meal during the day so at night wasn't much of a meal just, like, a sandwich or something.

Q: Uh-huh. And what did your father do?

A: Well, as I said he was in the Army when he -- before he came to Germany. So he didn't really have a profession. So the -- at first, he did whatever he could just to make a living for us. But then he opened up a little tobacco store. And those days everybody smoked and it was a good business. He was doing -- I mean, we were not rich, but he made a living. We had enough to pay rent. There was always food on the table and he was doing all right.

Q: So you remember Hitler coming to power?

A: Yes. By the time I started school it was practically -- as a matter of fact, they used to put on the radio in the schools and we had to listen to his speech.

Q: Oh, in the --

A: In the Jewish school.

Q: -- Jewish school?

A: Yeah. So his voice...

Q: Did you experience any anti-Semitism when you were a child or before?

A: You mean in the street? Well, at the beginning in the early '30s it wasn't bad. Everybody was very nice to us. And as a matter of fact, we lived in an apartment building. It was a walker. And as you come up the stairs there were two apartments on each floor. Here was our apartment and this was a -- German people. And there was only one wall between our living room and their living room and you could hear practically -- when they walked or every word they said, you know, like the next room. And we had no problem. I don't even know if there were other Jewish people in this apartment building. There were four floors, something like that. But because I wasn't home all day. I just left 7:30 in the morning to go to school. I came home late at night. I never saw anybody. But the lady that lived right next door to us on the same floor, my father used to go early in the morning, like, six o'clock and that -- those days we didn't have refrigeration -- and used to go down and buy some groceries. I don't know if every day. Depends on the weather how long you can keep it. And every time used to come out early in the morning and the lady came out. She used to say, good morning to you. How are you how? How is your wife doing? Because she knew she was sick. Once -- so sorry. You got small children and with a sick mother. And they were friendly people.

Q: Uh-huh. Do you know their name or --

A: Oh, I can't remember the name.

Q: Okay.

A: I know there was only a lady and a young boy was there.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I don't know. He was like a teenager later on. And as we (?certain?) were so many years. But then in 1936 my mother passed away. And, you know, I wouldn't even know it but -- you know what a Minyan is?

Q: No.

A: You have a ShivA:

Q: Oh.

A: Yeah. Or when somebody passes away for one week we have mourning.

Q: Yeah.

A: Which they call a Shiva? People come in the morning for service and they used to come in the evening. Twice we have the Minyan. Minyan means you have to have at least 10 people.

Q: Oh, yes. Yes.

A: 10 men to make the service. So in '36 it wasn't bad. My father belonged to the synagogue, people used to come. We're not allowed to go out for one week and people bring you food to the house. So we were in that whole week. We didn't go anywhere. But the next -- the following Sunday -- my mother died on a Friday in July of '36. So on Sunday was the funeral. So the following Sunday when we finished the Shiva, my father was going downstairs to buy groceries for following week or days. So the minute he got into the store the lady jumped on him. She says, I know your wife died more than a week ago and you did not turn in her ration cards. That's how I remember we must have been on ration. '36. That was three years before the war. And if you ask me, I wouldn't even know we were on ration. Just because he came up and he told us the story. So he says, I beg your pardon. I was in mourning. We don't go out for one week. And I came down this morning to turn her in ration card and buy my groceries. So she calmed down. Because in '36 it wasn't too bad.

Q: When did it get bad?

A: You could still talk to a Jewish person. But when we went to the park all the benches had written on, not for Jews. You couldn't sit on. But there were only three benches in that whole big park, huge park, only for Jews. But nobody ever sat on those three benches. I remember that because some time on a Saturday --

Q: How did you feel about that, that you couldn't --

A: We were just kids, you know. But like on the Saturday or Sunday when we didn't go to school or day care we use to say, oh, Papa, can we go to the park? You know, but he worked hard all week. He had to get up early. And he said, oh, I'm so tired. So in the winter, of course, he used to go sleep in the afternoon. But in the summer, you know, he tried to be nice. I mean, I didn't realize, you know, we had no mother most of the time, and he was mother and father. But when you're a child, you don't realize that it's a double job for him. So he tried to be nice and he took us to the park as much as he could. And I remember one day we were in the park, we were playing something like hopscotch on the floor, my sister and I. And he sat down on the bench and it said, not for Jews. But he had covered the writing.

Q: Oh.

A: And he figures, well -- but he did not look Jewish because he had light eyes. He had gray hair since I remember. So he must have been on the light side. And then a man, a

German man, came and sat down next to him on the bench. And he was watching us playing and he tried to make a conversation with my father. He didn't know who he was. So he says, you know, I feel sorry for those children. Isn't it terrible what they're doing to them? At that time -- so my father just sat and he nodded. He didn't say anything. So we just came over and we said, oh, Papa, something -- when he heard us calling him papa, which means father, he realized that he was our father. And he got up and he flew away like they were chasing him. In case they catch him talking to him, they'll arrest him. That's how bad it was.

Q: So that was later and not -- because you said in '36 it wasn't that bad.

A: No. Yeah, '36 it wasn't too bad. But Hitler was in power since '33.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And '36 it was already -- you know --

Q: So do you remember --

A: It was hard to walk in the street.

Q: Was it gradually that...

A: Yeah. Little by little it got worse and worse. But then later on the lady came up. Did I say this already? And she said, how is your wife and all this? And then she says, well, you have to excuse me, I wouldn't able to say good morning to you anymore.

Q: Oh.

A: Because my son is now in the Hitler Youths. 16-year-old boy. And if he sees me talking to you, he'll report me. I'm talking to a Jew.

Q: Oh.

A: 16 years old. She was afraid of him. Right next door. We were living next door to each other for years. She says, I have nothing against you personal. We've been living together for a long time. We've been -- you've been a good neighbor. It's nothing. So my father just said, I understand. He knew. It wasn't her fault. She's a very nice lady.

I don't know if there was a man there because he only was talking about her and the son.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So I have no idea if there was a father there or not.

Q: But you do remember her and her son?



A: I don't too well. But my father used to see her very often. She probably went out the same time when he used to go out in the morning.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Maybe she had to go to work or something, you know. But there was nothing personal. She was very nice. We lived together for years, you know. People lived next door, they have problems, too much noise, fighting. You know, we never had a problem.

Q: So --

A: But then, of course, in 1938 all of a sudden -- as soon as my mother died he start getting sick. But he just was losing his voice. So he went to the doctor a few times. Was treating him for a cough -- cough medicine. And we had no ideA: Finally, we found out that it was more than a cough, he had throat cancer. And --

Q: He was working at the tobacco --

A: -- he suffered for two years. And to the day same July two years later he passed away.

Q: And now were how old?

A: 14.

Q: 14?

A: Yeah. I was 12 when my mother died. I was only three when she got sick. She was bedridden for nine years. See -- which had nothing to do with Hitler.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: It a different story. It's just my story.

Q: Yes. That's --

A: Yeah. But then in '38 it was already very bad. But while my father was still alive he was trying so hard to get us out. He kept writing letters and letters to family he had in New York. And he says, it's getting very bad here. I don't care for myself, I'm an old man. He was in his 50s. He thought he was old. But the children, please, try to do something for the children. So you know what they wrote him back, if you need a few dollars, I'll send it to you.

Q: Where are the relatives?

A: Yeah, relatives.

Q: And where --

A: In New York.

Q: How close were they -- what was the relationship?

A: Well, unfortunately, my father lost his mother giving -- she was giving birth to him. She died in childbirth. And those brothers and sister were from second wife. So they were half brothers and sisters.

Q: Okay.

A: But he wrote to the sister and he said --

Q: What was her name?

A: Oh, no, please.

Q: Oh, yeah. Sure. I'm -- sure. Sure.

A: I don't want to in case somebody's alive, I don't want to say it. But -- {laughter} but she says -- he says, I don't want any money. I need a visa: Please take the children out. Things are very, very bad here. Never answered. And it was -- but in '36 and '38, the two years -- he was sick for two years. For -- as soon as she died he start getting sick. '38 he died. They both died in July and both on a Friday. Isn't that something?

Q: That's a --

A: Friday is such a day for me. Well, anyhow so --

Q: So you were left orphans in '38?

A: Yes, we were left orphans. That was in July of '38. But as I said, my brother was a lot older than me because he was born in Poland. There were two more children after him.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: There must have been, like, two or three years old, or four something. A little boy and a little girl but he was the oldest one. So that's why he's so much older than we --

Q: So how -- how old was he?

A: Well, he was 10 years older than my sister.

Q: Okay.

A: And 12 years older than me. Because, as I said, when they were in Poland, like, he was six years old and the little one probably was two and four. So by the time he came to Germany must have been seven, almost eight.

Q: So he was around 27 around that time?

A: Yeah. But then they took a few years before my sister and I were born because you just can't have children.

Q: Yeah.

A: You got to get established, you got to get a place to live, you know. It was just -- it was in the war. He was a prisoner, you know. So, you know, he had to wait until he makes a little money to get an apartment. And then my sister and I were born in the early '20s. So my brother was really quite a bit older, 10 years older.

Q: So he had already -- did he already have a job when you're father died?

A: My brother?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, he was working.

Q: What did he do?

A: Well, he was working by machine, like, tailoring because he didn't have -- he couldn't go to higher education, you know. And so he had to do whatever to make a living. And my father had the tobacco store. And around Christmastime they used to have -- I don't if they're called -- what you call it here it -- like a Christmas market.

Q: Yeah, I guess a Christmas market.

A: Yeah, they had -- they opened up tables and --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- sell things a few weeks -- like, a month before Christmas. So after school he used to take merchandise from our father's store, opened a table, put up cigarettes and cigars and tobacco. And they would sell. You're -- because it was so cold, Christmastime, and they saw a young kid, 12, 14 years old and they used to buy from him and he make more money than my father made in the store. He was jealous on him. He was a good brother and a good son. And, of course, after my father died it was very hard. We couldn't even get a Minyan to go to for the funeral. We went to the cemetery when we buried our father. And my father was collecting people and paying them so we could have 10 people for the funeral for the service. Isn't that terrible?

Q: So why was --

A: Because there was not many Jews left and -- from the congregation I'm talking, you know. And there were very few and it was very hard. It was bad already. We wouldn't walk in the street. They used to throw rocks at us. And even going to school.

Q: Did you have to wear the star?

A: Not at that time. It started after -- after I already came to England. So it was -- but they used to throw -- especially in the winter. They used to take a rock and put the snow on it, like, a snowball. And they used to throw that. It was so painful.

Q: Was it children who would do that?

A: Kids. Yeah. Teenage. They used to throw the rocks. It was so painful. I was afraid to go -- we walked to school. We had no transportation. So I was really afraid to go to school. And after my father died, you know, my brother even tried very hard. And, you know, he felt like a young father to us. He was so much older. He was responsible.

Q: He was.

A: He was trying to make a living for us. Well, thank God my father put away a few dollars. We didn't have it in the bank. So just a couple months later -- well, he died in July, this was August, September, October. Three months later. October 28, to be the exact date. Early in the morning, about 7:30 in the morning on a Friday, Friday morning, the doorbell rang. A policeman was outside. I was afraid to open the door. And my brother was just getting ready to go to the synagogue for the Minyan, you know, to say Kaddish for my father. He said a whole year Kaddish first for my mother. Now, he stopped a little. Now, he had to say it for my father. So he was just getting ready to go to say Kaddish for my father. And when the doorbell rang, he came out. He was still in pajamas. I looked through the peephole. He says, who's at the door? I said, it's a policeman. He says, open the door. We didn't do anything. Why are you afraid?

I was afraid to open the door. He went over, opened the door, and the policeman says, Herr Costinski? You know, his name. And he says, yes, it's me. So he says, better come and see -- please come with me. So he says, wait a minute. What did I do? He said, oh, I know you didn't do anything. But we just want to take you to the police headquarters ask you some questions. Then he looked at us two, my sister and me, kids. He says, oh, he'll be back soon. So he said, would you mind if I get dressed first? He was in pajamas. To him he didn't care what he wore. They wore pajamas anyhow in the camp. So he says, all right. But make it snappy. Leave the door open. Watched him getting dressed. So, you know, if you're in a hurry, you don't look what you're going to wear. Whatever was there you put on. A pair of pants and a top. By the first October 28th, 1938, the day of the deportation and it was cold. But you figure he'll be back in a couple of hours. So he didn't put a sweater or a jacket or anything. Just a shirt and pants. And he took him. I went through the front room and I saw a truck down there and I saw him sitting right in the corner. He said he'll be back soon, right? That's the last time I ever saw him. I never saw him after that day. I never forget this day. We waited and waiting the whole weekend.

Q: You were staying -- and you stayed at home and you waited?

A: But it was Friday morning. We waited Saturday and Sunday. He never came back. I never went back to school either, not since that day. I never saw any of my schoolmates or teachers. Anybody.

Monday morning was the first of November and the doorbell rang. When I saw the agent from the landlord outside, I wasn't afraid to open the door because I've known him since I was a little girl. So I open the door and I said, oh, good morning. You came for the rent. I'll go and get it. First of the month. Every first of the month -- we didn't pay checks that time. We used to pay cash. My father always taught me, every week you put a quarter of the rent away. So when the month comes, rent is the most important thing. Even if you have nothing else, no money, you got to have a roof over your head. So when I turn -- oh, you came for the rent. I'll go and get it. He said. No, no, no, no, no. I didn't come for the rent. I came to ask you two girls to leave this apartment at once. I said, why? We're paid up. We don't owe anything. So he said, oh, I know you don't know anything but you're both minors and you cannot occupy this place. So I said, but my brother is not a minor. He was older than us. And since our father died it was put on his name. So he said, but your brother isn't here. I said, he's only been gone two days. He'll be back. Oh, no. Your brother was deported and he will never come back.

Q: That's what he told you?

A: And he knew us for years since we are little girl. While I was talking to him my sister went to get the money and she came out with cash from the other room, and when he saw all that money in her hand he took the whole month's rent. And then -- I mean, he knew us for so many years since we were little. All of a sudden, you know, he was really following orders. But he didn't want to do it, but he had no choice. So he said, okay. Okay. I'll let you say a little longer. And he took the whole month's rent. But that week was Kristallnacht.

Q: Oh, it with was the same week?

A: November.

Q: So did you -- when he told you that your brother was deported, did you believe that? Did you understand what that meant or...

A: We heard on the radio that they deported all of the Jewish men from 16 to 60 from Berlin. And from -- as it's smallest towns, women and children also. But from Berlin itself it was men and boys from 16 to 60. So he was over 16. And, you know, they came for my father too a little later because he was under 60. He was in his 50s so they came for him too. And he was already dead. It didn't go in yet --

Q: Oh.

A: -- you know. So I said, you can't have him anymore, he's gone. Okay. They didn't care. But they would have deported him too. See, and we were alone.

Q: And you were left alone and you became the -- no, your sister was older than you, right?

A: Yeah. She was 16. Still young.

Q: So what did you do after the landlord left?

A: We looked around the apartment and, you know, there were five of us living here now there's only two left. What do you take and where do you go? We had no place to go. We didn't know what to take. Shall we take clothes? Shall we take dishes? Linens? What do you take? You know, we had no place to go. So my sister just look a few pictures that she can still put in her pocket, you know, little pictures, old pictures from my parents and the little one. One of the babies that died, we had a picture. He has them of us on it so I don't know if he came before or after. And she took my mother's wedding ring and I think a necklace with, like, a watch on it. She took a few things. That's not much. A small suitcase we took. Change of clothing. And that's all. What could we take? We had furniture. We had dishes. Linens. We had my mother's trousseau. Every single -- there was her name engraved. We had to leave everything behind.

Q: And where did you go?

A: We had no place to go. We were out in the street. But then we met somebody that knew my father but I didn't even know the man that well. It was a German Jew but he was married to a Gentile German lady.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: Yes. Albert Bruschi and her name was Herta or Bertha. I don't know. But anyhow -- but he lived way across town. We were northeast in Berlin and he was, like, on the east side. You had to take one or two trains to go there. So he met us and he said, what you two girls doing in this cold weather out in the street with the suitcase? So I said, they threw us out from the apartment. He said, I know your mother was sick and she passed away. What happened to your dad? I said, he died just a few months ago. Well, didn't you have an older brother? I said, yeah, but they took him away. He said, oh, my God. He says, no wonder my hair is gray. He was 64 years old. So he says, what is this country coming to? He was a German Jew but he did not practice Judaism. He was just a German citizen. He fought in the first World War in the German Army. And he was, like, a real German citizen.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But he still considered a Jew by the Nazis. No matter how many generations. So he said, well, I have only a one-bedroom apartment, but if you want to sleep in the bathroom you're welcome. I said, thank you. Thank you. So he took us to his house and my sister slept in the bathtub and he put up a folding bed next to the bathtub and I slept on this. And his wife was so wonderful. She welcomed us with open arms. She said, I'm so sorry what this is coming to. She didn't approve, but she had no choice. And she cooked for us. First time we had a hot meal and actually a bed to sleep in, if you call it a bed.

Q: Yeah.

A: But was a roof over your head, like my father said.

Q: So had you spent several days outside on the streets or was it the first day that you left? Did you have to spend some days on the street, like, sleep on the street nights?

A: It was cold. It was very dangerous until that man took us. Well, anyhow, we were there for a while and she was very nice to us. She says, oh, my God, you girls have no clothes to wear. Would you believe she took me to a store and bought me clothes and my sister? She said, I'm so sorry. And he said, I would love to adopt you two. We have no children. I would love to have adopt you both, but there's no future for you here. She was so wonderful to us.

Q: Where they well-off or...

A: Yeah. I mean, they had a car. In those days very few people had a car. He had a little business. And, yeah, I mean, I'm not saying how rich they were but they had an apartment, one bedroom, a living room, dining room, you know. They were not poor, but I wouldn't say they were rich, but they were comfortable. And -- but before we turned around it was December and it was Christmas and the doorbell rang. When she opened the door her brother was there in an SS uniform, younger brother. So he wanted to spend Christmas Eve with them. He was probably stationed nearby and he needed a place to spend the evening. So they went into the dining room and he was -- she says, quickly, quick go to the bathroom. Lock the door. Don't make a light. Don't even breathe. She was so afraid of him. So he went in and he was drinking and drinking and singing all the German songs. Oh salute, you know. And he must have been so drunk. He was singing. I could hear it. I was so scared in that bathroom with my sister. It was so dark. We couldn't see each other even. And I said, isn't he ever going to leave? Finally, he said, okay. Okay -- in German, of course, he's going. I said, thank God. All of a sudden he said, okay. Okay. One more for the road. And back to the another drink, another drink. She wanted to get rid of him already. Finally, he left. She knocked on the door of the bathroom. She said, okay. Girls, you can come out now. We opened the door, we couldn't see a thing because we had been so many hours in the dark. No window, no light. I felt like blinded until I could open my eyes. So she says, I'm so sorry. I don't

know if I can keep you any longer. My brother could come anytime unexpected. I mean, I understood this, but what could I do? Again, we were on the go. But he said, don't worry. I made an application for both of you for the Kindertransport. He says that I heard that England opened up visas. He told us this at the beginning when we first came. I forgot about this. So he says, England opened up visas for 10,000 children up to 16. And I was 14 and my sister was 16. 16 she could still go. So he says, and I'm sure you will both qualify, you're orphans, you're homeless, they should take you first, right? But anyhow from the time he made the application and he says -- well, when we had to leave there he didn't throw us out, but we had to go. What about if her brother comes back and sees us there? So, again, we had to go. Whoever took us in. So then he says, well, I'm sure it will soon come through. You'll be going to England very soon. Wouldn't take long. But do you know how long it took? Nine months. Next year we first had the apply -- the letter in July. I can go to England but my sister's birthday was in May. She was two months too old. If you would have gotten it in May she could go. But she was two months too old. They came in July and they gave you a whole list what I could take. Only two pairs of shoes, two pairs of this. You know, all this. No jewelry. No nothing. So I was getting ready for July to go. Everything happened on a Friday. My mother died on a Friday, my father died on a Friday, my brother was deported on a Friday. I came to England on a Friday. I don't know what's with Friday. The Kindertransport was on a Friday too. Well, anyhow, so on the day when I --

Q: So -- I'm sorry to interrupt. But you said it was after you left, after he told you -- they told you to leave, where did you go?

A: Well, somebody took us in one night here and one night there. It was difficult. You know, because it wasn't my life I was afraid. I was afraid of their life. They're going to get into trouble. I'm in trouble already.

Q: But who were the people who were taking you in? Were they --

A: Well, one of them actually was a Jewish woman with two teenage girls. Her husband was also deported at the same time so he must have been Polish. So she took the two girls into her bedroom and she gave us -- she rented us the girls' bedroom for a while. So we paid her rent. As I said, my father put away a little money and this we took, of course. So we paid her.

Q: Do you remember her name?

A: No. I don't think I ever even knew her name. All I know is the girls were teenagers. Like 17 and 18 or 19. And that's why they were so much older than we were. They called me a baby. I said, I'm a teenager too. But you know, 14 and 18 and 17 is not the same.



Q: Yeah.

A: Well, anyhow, so at least we had a roof over our head. But I hated that place. Well, anyhow, so when the day came for me to leave, my sister took me to the station. And this man, Albert Brusch, you know, the one where we stayed, the two of them took me to the station. When I came to the station and I looked down the platform -- oh, my God, there were so many people, children and mostly woman. There was an ocean of people crying and everything. Those mothers took their children to the train sending them to England on the Kindertransport knowing that they maybe never see them again. They didn't know if they're going to survive or what. So I'm telling you, it was terrible. But when my sister couldn't go they told her that she could make an application for domestic service. So she had no choice. So she did make and we were hoping that she would be able -- somebody would take her in as a maid, you know, because she had to have a visa, that was the most important thing. So anyhow. So -- but she took me to the station and I was hoping, hoping, she'll come soon. You know, because it was easy because the English people were looking for cheap help, you know. Because they didn't pay much. It was just, like, room and board and so on. But she was over 16, you know. So anyhow. So then I came to the station. I'm on the platform waiting for the train to come in. I haven't been back to school or seen any of my roommates since last year. Since '38 I haven't been back to school since my father died. And this was already July '39. All of a sudden somebody comes in back of me and hugs and kisses me. And she says, oh, I'm so happy you're going to be on the same transport. This is my Fritzi. That's a girl that was in my class, but not just in my class, she was eight years in my class from kindergarten on.

Q: What's her name?

A: Fritzi Hacker, H-a-c-a -- c-k-e-r.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Fritzi is a German name. But since kindergarten her mother used to bring her to school every single day. And she used to pick her up. And every morning she always had a kind word for me because she says, your mother doesn't bring you to school? Because I told her my mother is bedridden and she can't get out of bed. So she was so sorry. So every day she always ask me, how is your mother doing? And so on, you know. She was very, very nice. But I didn't know if they had any other children because I've never seen anybody else, only that one girl. I don't even know if she had a father or not. {Undetermined interruption} It's okay.

Q: Okay.

A: So -- so when I saw her at the -- until the end, she was already 12, 13, 14 -- almost 14 years old. She still brought her every morning to school and picked her up every day like

a baby. So when I saw her at the station bringing her to send her to England, I thought to myself how can this woman bring the girl knowing that she may never see her again that she was so attached, you know. So then I said to myself, oh, my God, am I glad my parents are dead. I didn't have to say goodbye to them. I didn't leave anybody behind except my sister and I knew she made the application. She's going to come to England very soon. And then the train came and we got in. We said goodbye.

Q: To your sister and...

A: Well, my sister, she made the application for domestic service. And she came, like, three weeks -- she came three days before the war broke out, the last minute. But she had a very tough time. She had to make all of the arrangements for herself. And, you know, like -- not like me. All we did -- we wore a name tag to know who you are, but everything was arranged like the train. I went through Holland. Yes.

Q: Do you remember crossing the border?

A: Yes. Fritzi and I, we were sitting and we were looking out the window. And on the other side were two little kids, maybe seven, eight years old. I didn't know them. And we didn't even talk to them. We were just talking to each other. I didn't see her in a year, you know, or any of my schoolmates. So anyhow. So, you know, in the city in Berlin there's only, like, big buildings, cement floors. You don't see trees or grass or anything unless you go to the park. So as we were going, didn't take long, you're out of the city and you see the suburbs. And there was grass and trees, little houses. So Fritzi said to me, isn't it like you're going on a field trip from school and tonight we'll be back home in our house with parents -- with our parents? So I said to -- I thought to myself, well, she still had a home to go to and a mother but I didn't. But I didn't want to make her feel bad so I just nodded my head. I said, uh-huh, uh-huh, like this. And then as we were going, all of a sudden the train stopped. I said, what happened? Looked out the window and I saw the Gestapo outside. I said uh-oh. Now they're going to come and take us off the train. And I was scared like anything. But I didn't realize -- I forgot we were going through Holland. So then I realized this must be the border because they came on. It was a border crossing. So they had to come on and look at your passport. So he says, passports, passports. You know, young guys in Nazi uniform. So I got up and I took my little suitcase down. So you know what he said? Forget about it. He didn't want to look. I could have taken anything with me. I was like -- but my sister was, like, she took everything. Boy, what they did to her. Well, anyhow. We crossed the border. It took 15, 20 minutes we cross the border. I said, thank God I'm out of Germany. Now I don't have to worry anymore once you're out of the country. But we were going for a while and all of a sudden the train stopped again. I said, what? Another border from Holland? We're going straight through the channel. But when I looked up there was no Gestapo outside. They were Dutch women with baskets of food. I still cry when I hear about this.

I got a tissue, you know. So they knew the children were coming so they brought us refreshments. Wasn't that wonder -- perfect strangers they came on the train. Wasn't that something? I never forget this. And then we traveled to Holland until the rest of the day. About 10 o'clock we got off the train that day. And we were by the -- by the British channel. And then they lined us up, make sure everybody was -- I think there were 300 children on that train from the connection spot. And they said, well, I want everybody to go straight to the cabin where they're assigned to. And it is 10 o'clock now -- 10 o'clock we got there. The boat is not going to start going until 12. But don't wait for 12 o'clock because six o'clock in the morning if you're going to be in Harwich and you have to be packed and upstairs ready to go. So go right to bed. Don't wait for 12 o'clock until the boat leaves. And when we got on the boat, Fritz and I, we shared a cabin. So they had a bunk and a top one. We had to toss a coin, which one gets the top and which one gets the bottom. That was so cute, you know. We were just kids. And anyhow she slept on the top. And as we went to bed she kept talking. She says, are you sleeping? I said, how can I sleep when you're talking to me? You know, we're just talking like kids. Teenagers, early teens, you know. So anyhow. So all of a sudden after a while the boat started rocking. Uh-oh, it must be 12 o'clock because the boat starting going. He said 12 o'clock it's going to start. So it must be two hours already. Better go to sleep. Six o'clock we have to be upstairs. So we must have fallen asleep or something. And then in the morning we got up and we were in Harwich. And from there we took a train to London. It took two hours. And then when we got to London there was, like, a big room, a little bigger than this maybe. A little wider. And there was, like, a bench here and a bench there and there. And we were sitting on those benches and some people came and they called out names. You go with this person. You go with -- nobody knew where they were going. I had no address and I still like to look for this girl. I wish I knew if she's alive, if she's in England or some place else. I never saw her since that day. Because I didn't know where I was going and she didn't know where she was going.

Q: And you never -- never saw her?

A: No.

Q: Never could find her?

A: No. No. That's a shame. I didn't -- I have -- contact --

Q: Like you don't want to talk about it --

A: Anyhow I came to England on a Friday. And -- and that week I came to a couple, an elderly couple, I mean, old enough to be my parents. They had married children and grandchildren. And I met the family over the weekend.

Q: Was it in London?

A: In London, yeah. I met the family over -- they had a married son, two or three kids; and a married daughter with some children. And then the youngest daughter was, like, in her 20s. And she was -- I didn't even know at the time she was expecting her first baby. But it wasn't hardly to see. And at that time I didn't even know where the babies came from. Now, I do. Anyhow. So -- so on the weekend I met them and then on -- she says to me, well, what are you going to do with yourself? You know, it was July. The schools were closed. So she said, well, when the schools open in September, we going to register you for school. So in the meantime what are you going to do with yourself? And they had their own -- like, a little factory. They were making civilian trousers for men. So Monday morning the younger daughter that was working in that place for her father, you know, there were a few people there. They were, like, a few men and one woman. They were in their 50s or 60s, you know. Like, four or five men and one woman was right on the corner. She was, like, 64. They were very nice to me. But they spoke Yiddish. I couldn't speak any English. So they spoke Yiddish to me. I understood but I didn't speak it that good. But it's very similar to German. So I knew what they were saying. So she introduced me to everybody and she showed me what to do. How to use this machine and this machine. A few machines she taught me at my age, you know. I never worked. I had to sew the buttons with the machine. And if you don't put it exactly in and the needle went next to the hole, you break the needles. I must have broke a dozen needles. It was very hard to get it the right way. And she was so fast because she's been used to it, you know. And then there was another machine that made the hems and another machine for the buttonholes. I had to work all three machines, and make tea twice a day for everybody who was there. I still hate tea: It reminds me. So anyhow I was working with her and she used to take me there in the morning. I think we went by bus. And then I came home in the evening. And before I had dinner she used to say to me -- there was only her and her husband living there -- she said, while the dinner is -- while you're waiting you can wash this floor. She made me do the housework before -- after a whole day in the factory. Well, anyhow -- but then this was going on for quite a few months. September came around. I forgot about it school. You know, and nobody mentioned a word. And I was just working, working every day. But then she was getting ready to have her baby. And her name was Fannie. And so she says, well -- when she couldn't go to work anymore I was on my own. And then all the work what the two of us did I had to do myself. So instead of going at nine o'clock in the morning I had to go eight o'clock and seven o'clock. And instead of staying until five or six, I used to stay until seven, eight o'clock. Five days, six days, seven days a week, I couldn't keep up. And I don't know what happened. One day I remember I was going to the bus and the bus ride was tuppence. Know anything about English money? Tuppence is like 20 cents. So she used to give me the tuppence. But then she found out they have -- what is this -- you know, if you come until 7:30 -- before 7:30 in the morning you get a return ticket. So if you give them tuppence and a half, Ha'penny, you get a ticket to go back at night. So she says,

make sure you get the bus before 7:30. And she gave me tuppence and a half, the Ha'penny. And that's all the money I had. I never had pocket money or wages or anything, only food and sleep, lodging. So I tried to get the bus -- every time I came to the bus, there was a line from here to God knows where. All these big guys waiting for the bus. They probably had families to support. They saw me, they said, that kid's probably working for pocket money and they used to push me on the side and get on the bus. And I tried to get on the bus but I couldn't push those guys away. I was trying to get very hard. If I was lucky I got on it and I had my ticket to go back home. But I remember one day I tried so hard and they pushed me on the side. And -- there be another bus in a minute. Half a minute later the bus came, no more return. What I'm going to do? I had to give them the tuppence and I had a Ha'penny left. I came to the place and I was crying. So the woman that was working, the one woman, she says to me, what's the matter, Puppala? Puppala means little doll. Why are you crying? So I said, I missed the return bus this morning. So she said, big deal. So you're five minutes late? I said, no, no, no, no, no. It's not I'm late, I have no money to go back home. She said, what it is tuppence? Big deal. Here's tuppence. And I made a Ha'penny that day. That's the first money I ever had of my own. Isn't that something? I cried because I didn't make the return bus. But I didn't tell her that.

Q: So you were living with her too?

A: I was living -- no, not the woman that worked there.

Q: Or with the family?

A: She was home. She didn't work there.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: There was people working for them. Well, anyhow. And then another day I was standing in line again waiting for the bus. I mean, every morning I was standing in line waiting for the bus. I tried to get on this as much as I could. But I don't know what happened that morning. All of a sudden I remember standing in line waiting for the bus, but I have no idea what happened. All of a sudden I wake up, I'm in the hospital. I have know idea how I got there.

Q: And what happened?

A: And I'm laying on the bed or stretcher and the young doctor bending over me and talking to me. I couldn't understand a word he was saying because I didn't go to school. Nobody spoke English to me. I was already, like, a half a year in England. If I go to school I would have spoken -- or people speak to you I would know a little English, but nobody spoke English to me. I didn't go to school so I didn't know any English. And he was talking and talking. I didn't know what he was saying. So he didn't know what to do

with me. Couldn't even tell me how I feel, why I -- I don't know what happened. I didn't even remember fainting or anything. All I remember is -- was I was hot. It was just before Christmas. This I remember because Father Christmas came. Ho. Ho. Ho. Ho. That's how I remember what time of the year it was. So he didn't know what to do with me so they put me in a big room like a ward with about eight or 10 people, woman, there all the way in the corner on one bed and they called somebody from the Bloomsbury House. That's the organization that was responsible for the children, Kindertransport children. So after a while a Ms. Feldman came to me see me and she spoke to me in German. And she says to me, how come you don't speak any English? You're here already a long time. I mean, half a year is a long time to learn English, right? At least a few words. So I said, nobody speaks English to me, how can I learn? So she said, well, don't you go to school? I said, oh, my God, school. I forgot what school is such a long time. Like, a year and a half I haven't been in school. So she says, what are you doing with yourself all day long if you don't go to school? So I said, well, I work in the factory. She says, well, do you have a permit? I said, what's that? I don't know what a permit is. So she said, well, whenever we came we check up on our children and whenever we came to your house the lady always said, she's in school. And when they came on the weekend I was never there. She's out with a friend. They probably went to a movie or something. Because I was never there whenever they came to check up on me. So they wouldn't let me go back. And they had no place where to send me. So I had to stay in the hospital until they found a place for me.

Q: How long was that?

A: I know it was after Christmas because I know he came -- you know, Santa Clause came. They call him Father Christmas. And they gave every woman a bed jacket. All different colors. And he came to me he says, oh, you're the youngest one here. You're so pure so I'm giving you a white one so to put on the shoulder. You know, to put on your arms because they don't have heat there. Not at this time anyhow. So it's like to put on the bed when you sit up in bed, you know.

So there was nothing wrong with me. I must have just had a little cold or something. I have -- maybe somebody put -- I have no idea what happened. How I was -- how I end up in the hospital.

Q: Yeah, well, you probably were exhausted.

A: I don't even remember -- I don't remember falling or fainting or anything. But they must have picked me up and take me. I don't remember it. All I remember I'm opening up my eyes and that doctor is standing over me and talking to me and I didn't know what he was talking about. But I know I was hot.

Q: So what happened then when --

A: Well, then she says to me, well, we don't have anybody that can take you unless you want to go to a hostile. I said, I don't know what a hostile is. And I don't -- I was just scared. I was afraid to go anywhere because the way I felt already. I was afraid of everybody. So do you have anybody here? I said, all I know is I have a sister here but I don't even know where she is. She -- she's working for somebody. She same here on domestic service. And you know when they --

Q: How did you hear that she arrived?

A: Huh?

Q: How did you hear -- how did you learn that she arrived in England? Were you --

A: Oh, yeah, I know when she arrived, she wrote to me.

Q: Oh, you were --

A: So I saw her but she had to go to the people that vouch for her. And one weekend I even went to visit her for one night.

Q: Where -- where was it?

A: It was far away. It took a couple of hours to get there. But that one weekend when I did go, I went on a Saturday afternoon and I came back Sunday in the evening. That was probably before I worked day and night, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And the daughter was still working there at the beginning because she came -- the very last day of August '39. Just three days before the war broke out. So the daughter was still working with me. So I went on a Saturday afternoon. So before I went on that bus, I had to go to the police station and get a special permit to spend one night at a different address because I was considered an enemy alien.

Q: Oh.

A: So -- so that's all. So I had the permit and I went there and I got there Saturday in the evening late. And I slept over in her room and then Sunday afternoon. But that's the only time I saw her. And when she came, we picked her up from the station. So I saw --

Q: Oh, you did?

A: Yeah.

Q: Who went with you to pick her up?

A: I guess the lady must have. I said, my sister is coming. Well, anyhow -- so -- but she had --

Q: So what was the lady's name? Sorry.

A: I don't remember.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But -- so my sister had to go right away there. But the people vouch for her and they were waiting for her. So that one night I spent one weekend there. And then the war broke out soon after this, three days later. But at the beginning you heard bombings and - but it wasn't too bad. But later on it got very bad. Bombs were coming down one after the other. You heard about the Blitz of London?

Q: Yes. Sure.

A: It was real bad. So all of the children were evacuated to the country. Because in London it was bad because there were factories and they tried to bomb all these things. And I lived in London. But the people my sister was staying with -- I don't know if they had a place in the country or they rented, I don't know. But they couldn't take the bombs going every night to the shelter. Because I didn't even know what it was like to sleep in a bed anymore. For three years, four years, you know, I haven't slept in the bed. So they went to the country and they took her along. So I -- then I couldn't see her at all anymore. So I -- I don't know if I knew any of this but I told this Ms. Feldman and they must have made the arrangements. So anyhow. So my sister wrote a letter to me to the hospital. And they wouldn't let me out of the hospital. And Ms. Feldman said, the only way we can release her is if a person that's already of age. Well, she was old already. She was -- what is age? 17? 18?

Q: 18.

A: 18. So maybe she's must have been, yeah, she must have been 18. So she says, well, how can I come to London and stay with you? See, first of all, the bombs and all this is bad, but I have no choice you're there too. I was sleeping with the bombs every night. But what am I going to do? I have no occupation. The only thing I know is cleaning houses. That's the only thing I know. That's what she came there for. Domestic service. So I said, but I know how to work. I work all three machines, four machines, and I know -- and I can do -- so she says, but how am I going to make a living? I said, don't worry. I know how to work. I'll teach you. So that's the only way they'll let me out. So she had to come to London. Take a risk being in London under the Blitz instead of being safe in the country. And so we rented a room and Ms. Feldman helped us a lot. She says, as long as you're in this country you're my child no matter how old you are. So -- but my sister from working all this -- they didn't have mops. She had to go on her knees and clean the floor. Her knees were all swollen, full of pus.

Q: Oh, no.



A: She was in terrible shape. A young girl, you know. But we rented a room. I think it was, like, five shilling. It was very cheap. And she got us a job in a war factory to do something, something with machines. And I had to show her how to work. And we made a living. And, you know, the room was very cheap. It wasn't much of a room. You come up the stairs. There's was one little room. There was a little bed in there, and on the landing was a sink about that size, and a little gas ring. That was our kitchen. And the bathroom was an outhouse in the back.

Q: Well, it still had a roof --

A: Yeah, I had a roof over my head. So we worked and we supported ourselves. So that's about it. But at least I was with my sister. And, eventually, we picked up, you know -- when you work, you work with English people. I hear them talking. I never even heard -- we had no television at that time. Didn't have time to watch it anyhow, I was never home. And so I picked up -- it was easier to listen than to speak. I was afraid to open my mouth in case it doesn't come out right. But I could understand already when they were talking to me. There was an English lady sitting right next to me, she was about 45 years old. Because it was an old lady to me, you know, I was still a teenager. And she was very nice and she helped me a lot explaining me what to do and this is this and this is that. She spoke to me English, you know. She didn't know German. And one day she came in and she said, oh, we had a lot of bombs last night. And they got bombed out the whole house went down. She was living with her elderly parents. And I said, where are you going to live now? So she says, well, they have the prefabricated houses. They put them up in one day. I said, really? You know, she was very nice. English lady. And so she says, I'll take you to my house and introduce you to my parents. And she took me over there and they had a beautiful living room, a kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bathroom. It was gorgeous. One day they put up prefabricated house. I said, it's a lot nicer than mine. But I wasn't jealous. I was happy. I had a roof over my head.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. It was tough. But God was with me all the time. When they came to the shelter they gave out little cards and I still have it in my pocketbook. I keep it with me all the time. It's a little card that said, God is your refuge. Don't be afraid. He'll be with you all through the raid. When bombs are dropping and danger is near, He'll be with you until the all clear. And I still have it in my pocketbook. I take it with me wherever I go.

Q: And did it help?

A: And He was with me. Because one night I came home from the -- from work. I was so tired. We had to be there at 7:30 in the morning and we worked until 6:30 at night.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So I was really -- I was dropping.

### Conclusion of Interview