United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Fred Lorber
December 2, 2011
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PREFACE

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FRED LORBER
December 2, 2011

Question: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Fred Lorber**, on December 2nd, 2011. The interview is conducted by **Noemi Szekely-Popescu**, in **Washington**, **D**.**C**. **Fred Lorber** is in **Des Moines**, **Iowa**. This conversation is being taped over the phone. **Fred**, can you tell me where and when you were born, and your name at birth, please?

Answer: I was born in **Vienna**, **Austria**, at that time an independent country, on November the 23rd, 1923.

Q: Thank you. And your name was?

A: My name was the same, except I changed my first name; it was **Fritz**, and when I came to the **United States**, it was changed to **Fred**.

Q: Oh.

A: Otherwise we – all names are the same, **l-o-r-b-e-r**.

Q: Thank you. And can you tell me where and when your parents were born, along with their names?

A: Yes. My father was born in 1898 in **Nadworna**, which is a small town in western **Poland**, and he left there just at the beginning, or before the start of World War I, and emigrated to **Vienna**. My mother was born of five children. Excuse me, my dad was of – was one of two children – two or three, and I don't quite recall. My mother was one of five, and she and her parents left **Belz**, **b-e-l-z**, **Poland**. Again, that was

under the governing ship of **Austria** at that time, before the first World War, and when the war broke out, my grandfather apparently had a general store in **Belz**, and they buried all their merchandise, because they felt that the war would be taking place where they lived, and they went on to the west, and they ended up with relatives in **Budapest** for a very short time; then emigrated to **Vienna** at the beginning of World War I.

Q: How old were your parents around one – World War I?

A: My parents were in their late 30s. Excuse me, when – you mean when they left?

Q: Wh-When they got to **Vienna**.

A: They were very young. I think – well, 1914 when the war broke out, so they were either 16 or 17 years old.

Q: And how did they meet?

A: That is a puzzle. I don't know. I think that the Jewish population of **Vienna** was pretty large. I think the city itself was – had a population of about two and a half million, and about 200,000 were Jewish. And so apparently the people that came from the same areas in the – eastern **Europe**, because the **Hapsburg** Empire at that time was really large, before the first World War, and encompassed much of western **Poland**, and **Czechoslovakia** and went as far as down to northern – what later became northern **Italy**. And so there was a lot of social activity going on, and I

really don't quite know how they really met. All I knew that I was a child that really be – that came in 1923, so the war was over in 1918, so this was a very difficult economic time, and I – not very much was talked about on how they met, and I really never found out.

Q: Did they speak –

A: I should have been much more inquisitive.

Q: What – what language did they speak with each other?

A: They spoke German and Yiddish. And my – I think they both knew some Polish, but I don't think – think – because their schooling both was done in ger – in German, because I think that the Austrian empire at that time went as far east as where they lived. And most of the Jewish populations in these small cities, either had a **chayder**, which was a religious school, where things were taught in Hebrew and in Yiddish. And then I think there was another school that I attended, which was in German.

Q: What kind of – o-obviously they were Jewish, what kind of religious backgrounds did they have? Did they have different tradition –

A: Ah, it was Orthodox.

Q: Both of them?

A: Semi-Orthodox. Modern Orthodox.

Q: Mod-Modern Orthodox?

A: Yeah, I guess.

Q: Did – did they keep a different religious life as adults than they had – had as children?

A: Yeah, we joined a synagogue in – when I grew up. And I think that was rather late. At that time there were small, and I think it then continued also in the **United States**, there were little, itty-bitty storefronts, which functioned at high holidays, and a rabbi somehow, he was – had another job, and then he conducted services at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; the two, you know, very important Jewish holidays. And they were sometimes held at a storefront. But we belonged to a conservative synagogue in **Vienna** when I was growing up. I don't know what the sh – really religious affiliations were before I was born. I just never really – was so, I guess involved with the present time, and changes that took place culturally, and language-wise, and new locations, and all the things that took place that I think that the inquisitiveness was not there to find out how all these things really came to be.

Q: Sure. Did your father serve in World War I?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Did your father serve in World War I?

A: No. He was – I think he was – he must have been 16 – 15 years old, or 16 years old when the war broke – the war broke out in 1914 –

Q: ’14?

A: – and he was born in 80 ni – in ’98, so, he was 16 years old.

Q: Mm-hm. And he –

A: And I don’t think he was an aus – I think he was a Polish citizen rather than an Austrian one, they **[indecipherable]**

Q: I see.

A: – became later. So, he was not drafted.

Q: I see. Did they speak German with you at home –

A: Yes.

Q: – or you were just – German?

A: German.

Q: Did you know Yiddish at all?

A: Somewhat, yes. Not very well, but they did speak Yiddish and German and sometimes fall into Polish, but not very often.

Q: What part of **Vienna** did you live in?

A: In the 20th district, which was a – **Vienna** had 21 districts, the first district was the inner city, where all the **[indecipherable]** buildings, museums, and the opera

and all the public buildings were and the – was in central **Vienna**, and it – even though it was the 20th district, it – it joined the second district, which was very – it had a very substantial Jewish population. The 20th district also had a good size – well, not so **[indecipherable]** but had a sprinkling of Jewish population. And it was next to the second district and the first district. So, it was pretty close within the inner city, even though the numbers really were the disparity.

Q: What kind of socio-economic groups lived there? Was this a middle class, a merchant –

A: Middle class. I would say middle class.

Q: And what – what was your – did – did both of your parents work, or only your father?

A: No, my mother never worked. My father worked for a fairly large manufacturing company of textiles, who had plants in **Czechoslovakia**. They made tablecloths and towels and other linens, and their headquarters was in the first district in **Vienna**, and he was one of the sales – started out as one of the salesmen, later became the sales manager for the company for **Vienna**.

Q: Do you recall the company's name?

A: Yes. **Heinrich Klinger**, **k-l-i-n-g-e-r**.

Q: And –

A: They were on **[indecipherable]** I remember the address.

Q: Oh, go ahead, give us the address.

A: It was on **Rudolfplatz**(ph) and at least the significant, it stands out in my mind, because the Gestapo later on was kind of cattycorner from – there's a square, they were on a kind of a small square, if I remember, with trees, and some – a few benches, and diag – di – dial – diagonally – diagonally? Right.

Q: Yes.

A: There was a hotel, kind of a meet – it wasn't a luxury hotel, but it was a – it was a good sized hotel called the **Metropole** Hotel, which later became the **SS** headquarters and the Gestapo headquarters for – for **Austria**. And I'll refer to it later on, because it did play a part in our lives.

Q: Okay. Do you have a sense – do you recall the – the dates that – or maybe even just the years that your father worked there? Do you know the beginning and the end of the –

A: That's – I think – I can only give you a rough –

Q: Sure.

A: – estimate on that. I think he started working there at the end of – or the beginning of peace, 1919 or 1918, and then became the sales manager, as I mentioned before, I think, for the – for the company, for the city of **Vienna**.

Q: Okay. Were you born an Austrian citizen?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. So your parents would have had Austrian citizenship by the time you were born?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Okay. Can you describe a little bit about your childhood memories of school, school friends?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Was it an integrated group, did you go to a Jewish school?

A: Yes. I went to – the first part I went to called a **Volksschule**, which is first four grades, and did very – from what I understand, I did very well. Not because I was so smart, but I think the competition wasn't very great – it was in a neighborhood school, in a very traditional school building. It was, as a matter of fact, when I visited **Vienna** later on, it was still there, and I – really, I think I was a little bit of teacher's pet, because my parents always got very good reports. I don't quite remember the names of the teacher, but there was a close relationship. In other words, a respect between my parents and the teachers of that school, and I did come out pretty well academically.

Q: And this was a public school?

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A: It's a – no, it's a sc – well, yes, it was a public school, this one was.

Q: Right.

A: From there I went to gymnasium, which is a kind of semi-private, or it was really the track up to the university. And –

Q: Do you recall which one it was? The name of the school?

A: Yes, **Ul-Ultaberg**(ph) gymnasium. It was named after the street it was on, it was next to a very large well-known park called the **Augarten**, and it wasn't very far away from where we lived; I would walk to school. I took a – used to take me about probably 25 or 30 to 30 fo – maybe 40 minutes, every day.

Q: And the school did not have a religious denomination?

A: They had a religious – they had a – Catholics had a priest come in and the class was separated at that time, twice a week, I think, maybe an hour each time. The same thing, we had a Jewish rabbi that came in, the students would be pulled out, the Jewish students, and took religious in-instruction. I think that still is the German way of doing things, I think they still do that.

Q: Do you recall – sorry – do you recall how many Jewish students went to your grade?

A: Yes, my class had a number of Jewish students, because the neighborhood, you know, where we lived did not have many Jewish people, but there were maybe three

to four families on one large city block, or a couple of city blocks. And further **[indecipherable]** one fur-further toward the center of the city, the Jewish population became much larger. So, we did have an – quite a good part, I would say 30 percent of the students must have been Jewish.

Q: Now what years –

A: The boys were separated from the girls, and I mentioned before that a rabbi would come in twice – I think once or twice a week, and the Jewish students would be separated again, and would take Jewish instruction.

Q: And now what years were you at the gymnasium?

A: What year was I at the gymnasium?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Ah, let's figure that out. Had to be from 1930 f – let's see, I was born in '23, so six – four – in 10 years, when I was 10 or 11 years old, I went on to gymnasium from **Volksschule**. So I would assume I must have been 11.

Q: Okay, so isn't that 1934?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And you were at the gymnasium until when?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: At when – when did you f – did you f – get to finish the gymnasium, or did you have to leave?

A: No. It's an eight year cour – it's an eight year –

Q: Eight years, okay.

A: Yes, so I did the first four years.

Q: First four. So 1934 through 1938.

A: That is – so 1938, and when the Nazis took over in March of 1938, by May they told us the Jewish students could no longer go to any public or semi-private school in – in **Vienna**.

Q: Okay, now I –

A: And I got kicked – in other words, all the students got kicked out.

Q: Okay. Now da – I – I just want to go back a little bit –

A: Sure.

Q: – to the 30s. Do you have – do you have memories of 1933? Do you have any memories of your parents discussing the Nazi party's rise to power in **Germany**?

A: Yes.

Q: And what are those?

A: The – it's – what stands out in my memory, and it sometimes fades out, but I still remember, in 1938 – January of 1938, at that time the German and Austrian schools

had a winter vacation. In **Austria**, their national sport is skiing, and soccer. And I was just – I was put on skis at only six years old. So, I was with my school on a winter vacation at – at some of the mountains, the **[indecipherable]** kind of not the **Alps**, but kind of the foothills of the **Alps** for one week with my school, skiing – for a skiing vacation. And it was – had to be January of 1938. I still remember it because I wa – I participated in a ski race, and I won kind of a little trophy, and I was very proud of it, and I – but by the second run or whatever it is, I ken – I had a bad fall, or whatever it was, and I kind of dislocated my thumb, and I remember that. So, when my parents picked me up at the railroad station, coming back from that school vacation, they seemed at edge, and explained to me that things were not doing very well. They had received information and in contact with some friends or relatives in **Germany** – and as you know, **Hitler** took over 1933, and at that time, the **Nuremberg** laws, which this qualified and you know, makes the Jews of **Germany** not only second class, but third and fourth class citizens and they lost their jobs, particularly if they were government jobs, or sensitive jobs like movies, or livit – or publishing and things like that, the discrimination really was beginning to really hurt in **Germany**, and my parents were very much aware of it. So when I di – they picked me up and I still remember they picked me up at a – at the railroad station and on the way home were telling me what was going on politically in

Austria at that time. And it was, if you go back into history, there was a chancellor of **Austria**, his name was **Schuschnigg**, and he represented the – kind of a little bit of a also – I would say little bit a of a dictatorship, but not as strongly as what the Nazis had. He represented the Christian Austrian Christian party, which was the – the Conservative party. **Vienna's** representation was more social democratic, and my father was involved in the social democratic party. And at that time there were all kinds of demonstrations in **Vienna**. The Nazis had become determined again that they were, since 1934 the Nazi party was outlawed in **Germany** – in **Austria**, because they had tri-tried to have a **putsch**, and overthrow the government. They killed **Dollfuss**, who was a chancellor, in tr – in trying to do it, but that was aborted, and the Austrian government was able to arrest and – and kill some of the people who tried to overthrow the government, and this – and that time outlawed the Nazi party. So, in 1938, the beginning, the negotiations were going on between the pr – the president of **Austria** and **Hitler**. He would summon him – **Hitler** would summon him to **Berchtesgaden** and really threaten him with all kinds of bad things, and scream at him, and was looking to annex **Austria** to **Germany**. And the guy stood firm, **Schuschnigg** did, for a while. So all this demonstration of voting for annexation to **Austria**, or **Austria** re-remaining independent, took place in the beginning of 1938. Some of the negotiations that took place which – in **Austria** and

Germany, that **Austria** submitted to **Germany**, and let some people, Nazis, out of prison, and – and also appointed them to certain key jobs within the Austrian government. **Seyss-Inquart** was one of them, and I don't quite remember what names of the other people that became like the commissioner of safety, and some other tr – cabinets – j-jobs, and it really did not look very well for the independence of **Austria** at that time. I know a lot of street demonstrations in which my father had participated.

Q: Do you recall –

A: So they were telling me this whole story, what was going on at that time.

Q: Do you recall what they were saying?

A: What they were doing? They –

Q: No, no, do you – do you recall what they were saying to you on the way back from –

A: Yeah, this is – they told me the politic – about the political situation.

Q: Okay, and –

A: I also remember we went to a movie that day.

Q: What was the movie?

A: Yes, if I remember correctly, it was **John Hall** and **Dorothy Lamour**. Some movie called "**Hurricane**." An American movie.

Q: Was any part of the conversation geared towards –

A: I should tell you my grandparents, who lived also in **Vienna**, had it – owned the movie theater.

Q: Oh. Which movie theater was that?

A: That's – I'm sorry you asked me that, I don't remember the name.

Q: Do you remember the location?

A: I could point – I could point it out when – if we would – you go to **Vienna** with me, I could point it out where the movie was.

Q: D-Do you remember the approximate location, or what part of town it was in?

A: Yeah, it was in the 20th district, next – facing a – a park called the **Augarten**. And that's when movies were silent.

Q: Were these your maternal –

A: They later on sold – they later – later on, I think gave up that and sold the movie to somebody else.

Q: Were these your maternal or paternal grandparents?

A: My maternal grandparents.

Q: Did they speak German well?

A: Yes.

Q: Is that something –

A: They were fairly – they were well educated.

Q: So this would have been a language they spoke back in **Poland** too?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you recall – be-before 1938, do you recall – oh, first of all, did you have any non-Jewish friends, given that you were going to a new school?

A: Yes, yes, yes now, quite a few.

Q: Do you remember any of their names?

A: Not really.

Q: Okay.

A: I played on a soccer team with non-Jewish friends.

Q: Okay.

A: I competed with the – I think that we were 12 and under. And I had a team that I was part of it, and the day that I got the measles, the day that we was – I remember that, because I couldn't participate when they played for the city championship.

Q: Do you remember the team's name?

A: No.

Q: Did – growing up, and this is again, before 1938, an-and because you were in a – in an integrated part of the city, and in a mixed school, did you witness – did you feel any anti-Semitism growing in the 30s, did you witness any violence?

A: Good question. Let me just think for a minute. There were occasionally some words thrown, anti-Semitic, you know, about Jews, but not too much, because many of my friends were non-Jewish, even though I had my – I also had two cousins to whom I was very close, my mother's sister's sons. And one was same age as I, and one was a year and a half younger. And they were very di – they, at very young, were very involved in **Hashomer Hatzair**, which was a left wing of the Zionist movement in **Austria**. And I used to also belong to that youth group. I'd go occasionally. I wasn't this vehement about it that – as my two cousins, to whom I was very close. And we would sometimes walk together. And I don't quite remember, and I – I just don't know if there were ever any anti-Semitic sl – you know, slogans –

Q: Slurs?

A: – or words thrown at us. I – there must have been, but it may have happened later, and not about that time. I think I lived a very secure – being an only child, and fairly – my parents, you know, were fairly well-off, and we lived a very comfortable, middle class life, and I was never aware of these things, and I – most of the kids I went to school with – not most, but a great portion of them were not Jewish.

Q: So, y-you just said that you were a member of **Hashomer Hatzair**?

A: No.

Q: You were not, you were just with your cousins who were.

A: No, my two cousins were. Yeah, I went to a couple meetings, and I really wasn't into it.

Q: Well, why weren't you into it? What was wa – what – what turned you off?

A: I don't think of – I think because of maybe my economic status – not mine, but my parents', and they – I think I was more sheltered, being an only child. And somehow or other, I don't know, politically, I think we're – we were maybe much more assimilated. My parents are very – they did – they were Zionists, to a degree. I mean, I remember going to certain propaganda movies that we went to as a family, which there was a tremendous amount – well, actually, tremendous is a little bit – as you know, **Herzl** the founder of **Israel** was a li – you know, lived in **Austria**, lived in **Vienna**, and there was a – a very strong Zionist Jewish force that really played – played a very, I – I think positive role in the Jewish life of **Vienna**. You know, there are 250,000 Jews living, so you had all kinds of political positions and beliefs. And somehow my two cousins were very much into – into – even though they were one a year younger, and one the same age as me, either 15 and 16 years, or 14 and 15 years old, they went to a lot of those meetings, and I didn't. Why? I still question it because later on I became very strong, both in my, you know, in my l-living here in

Iowa, I was very involved in Jewish affairs, I was president of federation, I was president of annual drive, and I've been participatory in national politics, you know, with **AIPAC** and some other organizations. So, it's – it – that time, for some reason, I was much more assimilated.

Q: So you said that your father was active in social democratic circles?

A: Yes, right.

Q: Do you know whether he had been always politically active since his – since a young age, or –

A: I don't think he ro – I don't think he had a very, very important role. I just knew that he came home, there was a lot of street demonstrations, and he came home sometimes hoarse, he couldn't speak because all the slogans they would throw out, you know, doing their demonstrations.

Q: So you're – you're – you kee – you don't recall whether he had been politically engaged before the early tim – 30s.

A: Oh, not very strongly.

Q: Okay.

A: He was busy working. He, I remember, use – used to bring work home, like pricing inventory, things like that, and then – so he was very ambitious and very hardworking.

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Q: What did your mother do during her days?

A: She was a housewife.

Q: Did she have any –

A: She read books, she baked and cooked and had a number of friends. I remember she's had – she had two – two or three – two sisters and two – two brothers. One brother. One la – one moved. One emigrated to the **United States**. I think there were five children. **Karl**(ph) – I'm trying to remember. So she had **[indecipherable]** you know, three siblings, or four, living in **Vienna**, and she had a number of very close friends.

Q: Did your family keep kosher?

A: Did they what?

Q: Did they keep kosher?

A: No. They keep **[indecipherable]**. I shouldn't say that. They kept kosher the way we had no pork, or we had nothing that was not kosher, but it wasn't a strict type of kosher.

Q: Did you mix meat and dairy?

A: I think they were a little careful about that. Maybe on the outside we did, but not in the house.

Q: Did she have any – did she have any help around the house? Did you have a – a maid?

A: Yes, yes, we had a maid.

Q: Did – did you have a nanny?

A: No. She – the maids came – did not live with us. She came in once a week and cleaned.

Q: And do you recall whether she was gentile or Jewish?

A: She was gentile. As a matter of fact, she threatened us. Or not threatened, but I think she came and demanded money after the Nazis took over.

Q: What – what was her claim?

A: She just came and wanted money, otherwise she said she would report us to the local Nazi party.

Q: And did she say –

A: I don't quite remember, except my mother was – did give her money a few times. We were fairly not – somewhat affluent, and – because I remember that – that many Jewish people had no money, my parents used to dish out money. And there was a – a system where rel – if you had relatives, for example, in the **United States**, and they had poor people, or people who ran out of money, or had – didn't have jobs, to try to help the people in **Vienna**. And the official rates, you know, of – later, after

the Nazi occupation of marks – before it was shillings, then now it became mark, that – let's assume that it took 10 marks, or five marks for one dollar. There's a black market thing going on and you would have to pay 20 marks for one dollar. And this way – my parents would give money out that way to people who really needed it, and the relatives who – to put some money into a bank account in – in **New York**, that my parents had.

Q: This would be your mother's brother, who had emigrated?

A: Yes. Was somebody that yes, I think they probably did establish some bank account. So when we came to the **United States**, there was some money that allowed us – that allowed my par – I'll tell you about that later.

Q: Okay, let's go forward to 1938. Oh – ho-how do you remember that year?

A: Well, I remember coming back from my – as I mentioned before, coming back from vacation and going back to school, and knowing what was going on politically, on the outside, and that there was all the – there were all these demonstrations. Then in March – was it February – February, March, that the – the – the one Saturday morning, the negotiations stopped, and the German army marched into **Austria**, and **Austria** became part of the German Reich.

Q: Do – do you have a memory of that day?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Can you describe it to me?

A: Yes. My parents kept me at home. We didn't know what to really expect. Things on the radio, you know, warned you – there wasn't any private radio, or the radio was controlled by the government, there was one station. No **TV**, of course, and we were told to stay at home. There were all kinds of warnings given out. The – I think it must have been on a Saturday, and the German army marched in.

Q: The warnings were over the radio, or did some friends stop by?

A: It's over the radio, it was over the radio. And of course, I mean, words traveled in between people, and friends and relatives and – so you heard this really changed from a – it was expected, you know, it wasn't anything that surprised people, except it shocked everybody. So, many of my friends went out to the **Rykestrasse**, it was just a main drag in **Vienna** in the first district, on which all museums or parliament and the opera, and all the – it's – it's where wos – it's like **Champs Elysees** in **Paris**, it's a six – six or eight or 10, or I think in – avenues, like very wide and dep – so there was a parade there of the German – as the German army marched in.

Q: Were you there with your friend?

A: No, no, I was at – two weeks later **[indecipherable]**

Q: Were these – were any of these friends Jewish?

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A: Some were ja – yes, but they were – did not live – what hap – to – one friend that lived next building to us, who was about eight months older than me, or a year older, and the rest of them were not Jewish. The **[indecipherable]** friends I had lived next district, in the second district, what a – 18th district, or – or were school friends that did not live where I lived. So there was one or two Jewish, I think one that I was close to. I still remember his name, **Leo Schickler**(ph), and we were kept at home tha-that day. So, things changed very rapidly. I was told that our school would stop; Jewish kids would no longer go to school after summer vacation. I mean, July, we – we were all kicked out. At – what happened at that particular time, the – the immensity of the political change really did move very fast, but it was not at that to – time, life threatening. It wasn't a point that I would get beat up on the street, or would get arrested. So, what really happened to begin with, that small Jewish businesses, of which there were many in – in **Vienna**, you know, haberdashery stores, or grocery stores, or what the case may be, all the graffiti was to be painted on their windows, don't buy here, **Juden**, it would say, or they would have the star Jew – you know, Star of **David** painted on the windows, or they would – they would put an **SA** guy as a Brownshirt, you know, semi-military person in front of the store and discourage people from walking in.

Q: Do you remember what that was like to see one of those graffitis?

A: Yes. It was scary. The – I could tell you what – what kind of threw me off. I used to read quite a few books and I belonged to a private library, and so I went to return a book to the library, and want to take out another book, and they told me that I could no longer have a membership there. And I was startled, and I said why? Well, he said, you're Jewish and we cannot any more allow you to be a member here. I was in – I think of all the things I've no longer been able to go to the movie, or to stand on a railroad ca – excuse me, on a streetcar, rather than sitting down, or that – that was long before Jews were forced to wear a Jewish star, you know, on their garments. We had no identification except everybody wore a swastika in their lapel, except the Jews. So I was, you know, you're easily recognized.

Q: Now you say –

A: You were Jewish.

Q: You – you say except the Jews. Did your – did your –

A: I'm sorry?

Q: You were saying everyone was wearing swastika lapel – o-on their lapel –

A: Yes **[indecipherable]** Jew was – was – and there were different kinds of swastikas, you know –

Q: Okay.

A: – you know, the early Nazis had a number on their swastika emblem, and they had a red – it was red and black, and it was a – with a swastika in the middle, so you knew they were party members, and that there were others. But everyone wore a swastika except – if I would have been caught wearing a swastika, I don't know what could have happened. So Jews didn't do that. They were not allowed.

Q: Did your parents have any non-Jewish friends?

A: That's a good question. We had some neighbor friends, to – my parents did. I later found out that they were very helpful to my parents, and I'll mention that later, because I returned, you know, to **Vienna** as a soldier. And then later my mother would say, and she sent me money to give out, American dollars. I went to – to our old building and I knocked on doors, and I dished out like hundred dollar bills on my visit there, to certain people that Mother – my mother gave me names, who were helpful, who were –

Q: How far did a hundred dollars go?

A: – or 50 dollars, or 20 dollars, but th – she did send me hundred dollar bills, I remember, and she gave me instructions who to give the money to.

Q: But you were unaware, or you hadn't much –

A: I was unaware who – I think it was kept fairly secret, you know, on what help they received. And because we – there was no – one other Jewish family that lived

in our apartment building, who left very early, they were very close friends from my parents. And another Jewish family which was really half Jewish, where the husband was Jewish, but the wife wasn't.

Q: Did they leave?

A: And that was the Jewish – and then next building to ours, there lived a Jewish family, and when my father was arrested in November 10th, you know, **Kristallnacht**, my f – one of my friends lived next building, also was arrested. And they were arrest – they came to arrest me on November the 10th, and my mother – and came – two storm troopers came to our apartment and wanted to arrest my father and me. And my mother demonstrated very forcefully that they're not going to take her son, and had this big argument that took place, and she stood up to them, and they walked out with – after about 30 - 40 minutes of discussion and – and examining our – our apartment, and wanted to know what books I read and they went through my room and pulled out books that they felt were suspect, and there was – I remember that very well, cause it happened very late at night, and it was November the 10th, and they did walk out with my dad arrested.

Q: Now I – I do want to go over the – the night of November ninth to the 10th –

A: Sure.

Q: – in detail, but I'm – I'm just a little curious still whether, in their social life and be – 1938, and before 1938, do – do you recall whether your parents were mixing with – with non-Jewish people socially?

A: Not very much.

Q: Not very much. So you wouldn't have had people over to your house –

A: No.

Q: – who were non-Jewish?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: Much of our social activity took place at our grandparents, and much of the family met there every, I guess every w-week or second week and – for dinner, and some kind of occasion. But there wasn't that kind of, you know, social activity in our house.

Q: Now your grandparents, did they sell the movie house, or did they have to give it up, was it seized?

A: I don't – I think they sold it. That was long before.

Q: Long before.

A: Yeah, when there were still silent movies.

Q: Did you – were your grandparents concerned during the year of 1938? Do you remember their feelings?

A: Yes, yes, they were concerned. They were smuggled out of **Austria**.

Q: When was that?

A: I can't tell you that when. That – I'm a little confused about that.

Q: Do you recall which organization smuggled them?

A: No, it – yes, I – they were private smugglers, between **Germany** and **Belgium**. And they left **Vienna** very early after the **anschluss**, or annexation, and sometimes – it must have been oh, I would guess in August or September of 1938.

Q: Where did they go?

A: They went to **Belgium**. **Brussels**.

Q: Did they stay there?

A: And – and then came to the **United States**, yeah.

Q: They did? When – do you recall when they got to the **United States**?

A: I have trouble with that. I try to think about this, because they – it somehow happened when I was gone, and I don't know how they got through th – they – and they moved to the **Lower East Side** in **New York City**, not far from where we lived.

Q: Do you know if this was directly before the outbreak of the war?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Was this before 1939?

A: No. No, it had to be before 19 – that's what I am confused, because how – I think even happened after 19 – and I don't see how they got out, because when **Hitler** started it September 1st, 1939, when the war started, they – you know, they moved across **Europe** very, very rapidly and took over **Belgium**, and – you know, and **France** and every other democracy.

Q: Right.

A: And I'm trying to remember how they got – and I – I can't – I have nothing to refer to, I've tried to find – my cousin doesn't know –

Q: And –

A: – how and when they came. I knew they were in – when I came out of the army, they lived on the **Lower East Side** in **New York City**, which was – which was in – what chi – December of 1945 – I'm sorry, 1944.

Q: Now th – I-I know I had asked you before, I'm sorry, bi –

A: '44 - '45, I don't remember – '43 – '44? No, '45.

Q: Just the – these were your paternal grandparents?

A: My maternal grandparents.

Q: Maternal. The one who had the movie theater.

A: Yes, they lived in **Vienna**.

Q: Now what about your paternal grandparents? Were they still alive in the 30s?

A: My – I didn't have – I never knew I had a grandmother the other side, she died very early.

Q: I see.

A: And we lost complete track of my grandfather and my aunt and an uncle.

Q: I see.

A: They got killed.

Q: All right, so let's get – let's go ahead then to November ninth to the 10th. So this was – this was in the evening, is that correct?

A: That was in the evening, yes.

Q: So wi –

A: We were told not to leave our apartment.

Q: Okay. And what happened?

A: And so we stayed. So it was – it must have been – I cannot recall – I cannot restructure my anxieties or fears, I – I just – I tried, but I can't. I do remember exactly what happens. I could – I can remember what the two **SA** guys looked like.

Q: What did they look like?

A: They were tall, crewcuts, blonde, wore boots, brown shirts, the same brown belt. A – they had a heavy – they had a coat on, each one of them took it off when they walked in. And they were overpowering. I mean, physical al – not physically, I mean, visually. They were tall –

Q: Do you know how old they would have been?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: How old would they have been?

A: I would say they must have been in the late 20s – middle 20s, late 20s.

Q: And – and clearly these were people you'd never seen before?

A: Yeah, never seen them before.

Q: So did they –

A: They were very correct, they did not – didn't touch my mom, they didn't – they didn't put – they didn't put handcuffs on my dad. They wanted to take me. They said by – they came to arrest my father and me.

Q: Do you recall about what time they came to your apartment?

A: Yes, it was either between 11 - 12 at night.

Q: Had you already gone to sleep?

A: Nope.

Q: Was that –

A: We were – we were – it was – it – you were like under siege, I mean emotionally. You se – I don't recall whether we still had our radio or not, they would – confiscated radios from, I think some Jewish homes. And – or our neighbors were telling – gave – giving us news of what was taking place.

Q: Does that mean that you were on good relations with your neighbors?

A: Yes. Was thanks to our – I'll tell you, as we talk you'll – I have a couple episodes about that.

Q: Go ahead. D-Do you recall hearing anything from the street?

A: Did I what?

Q: D-Do you recall hearing anything from the street or from other apartments before th – they men came to your apartment?

A: No, no, no. I think we must have had our radio on because we don't – we knew what was going on. All schools were closed, all the schools. And they used them for per – for – for person – not person, for putting in Jewish men **[coughs]** excuse me – Jewish men into arrest, because they filled up all the prisons. If there were 240 some odd thousand Jewish families, I would say there must have been a substantial number of Jewish men. And they didn't catch everybody. Whoever was – like my father, we were not very smart sp – staying home, but if he would have been hidden by someone, or gone to a non-Jewish neighbor or friend, they never would have

found him. So, because it was all done, they burned down every synagogue on November the ninth and 10th, and – and then by the 11th and 12, it just – they arrested so many people they had no room, and th – it overwhelmed them. My father was – we found out that somebody said they saw him carrying out – the field kitchen, helping carry out a big pot, which they fed, at one of the closed schools wher-where we lived, in the same district. So we rushed over there, and sure enough we saw my dad carry out a big – a – with another man, a big pot, you fill it up with food or soup or whatever it was, from – it was – the field kitchen was on the – you know, on the street, and a lot of people smelling around, watching and trying to find their relatives. They had heard they was arrested there. And we waved to him, and that was the last we saw him. He then, the last we heard was we got a postcard, which was preprinted. It must be somewheres around, I don't know. I hope I kept it. I don't know where it is. My wife and I are going to – through – go through some of our things that are stored away in our basement. And – and we wave and my – we hollered, and – and we threw kisses, and that was last we saw him. And next thing we heard was that postcard, preprinted, and all – it was kind of green, I remember. And it – on it had my father had a very **Leon – Leo Lorber** with a big, very nicely handwriting. And the only thing that was there was all preprinted, I'm okay, I'm

fine, I'm all this, and all that. Which every postcard said the same thing, and then his signature, which we recognized.

Q: Did he –

A: So we knew he was alive, and that was from **Dachau**.

Q: Did it give his location, did it say it was **Dachau**?

A: Yes.

Q: Now, I – I just want to go back very briefly to the night that your father is arrested. You said that the – the two men who came were not physically violent?

A: No.

Q: Did they say –

A: They were very correct.

Q: Did they say why they were taking him, and where they were taking him?

A: Yes. No. They didn't say what, he said, we have orders to come to arrest wip – th – every synagogue has been burned down. Your – it was called the **[indecipherable]** temple, where we worshipped, not far – well, a few blocks – quite a few blocks from our house. And – and we're here to arrest Mr. **Lorber**, **Herr Lorber**, and **[indecipherable] Fritz Lorber**. They showed that they had a warrant for our arrest. So, that was it.

Q: Okay, so they take him away, and –

A: Yes. And then you heard what – that the last – next we heard. He later told me that – this – the most people – it was November, and it was cold, that the – it was a kind of a cold November. And many people when they got arrested, they didn't bring warm clothes. And they put them on these for – what we called 40 and eights. It's a – no, it's a – it's a – it's a railroad car, you know, where they transport horses or – or merchandise, you know, not – not a passenger car.

Q: Sure, sure.

A: And they were so crowded, that people stood up. And they would – they would have that real – that train stopped on **[indecipherable]**. And it took from **Vienna** to **Munich**, where **Dachau** is located, I don't know, two days, three days, and it was very cold, and people would defecate – they couldn't – they wouldn't let them out of those boxcars – right there. And many people who were old and fragile, not – I don't know how many, but some people died on his – where he was standing. He was less than – you know, you're born in eight – 1980 – eight nine – '89 – '98 – '98?

Q: Right.

A: Yeah. I'm getting confused **[indecipherable]** the numbers. And – and so he was – this was 1938.

Q: Right.

A: He was 40 years old. He was a young man.

Q: Right.

A: And so he was strong, he was – he was – I'm looking here, I have a picture of him here in my o – I'm sitting in my offi – I have an office in my home, and – and there were people that were 70 - 75 years old, who couldn't stay, you know, who died, on the short trip –

Q: In – on the – on the transit.

A: Yes, on the transit. And he said that was very, very terrible. He would ra – never speak, or try. Never – I tried to, and he didn't want to talk about his in – being incarcerated into **Dachau**.

Q: He never wanted to talk about **Dachau** itself, or the ride to **Dachau**?

A: No. The ride, nor about **Dachau**.

Q: Now, the – the –

A: Was very unpleasant. He told me one thing – no, he didn't tell me this, I heard it from a relative of ours who was in the same barracks as he was. My father was very amb – he was a – he was a very hard worker, and very conscientious about what he did. And this is what I heard; he would never tell me that. He washed handkerchiefs, he washed rags in – you know, where water was available at night, during the night, for people. A rag in your pocket was probably the most important possession. Every morning they – all the prisoners were in mass formation, like six o'clock or 5:30 in

the morning, standing out there, you know, by barracks, and they would count them off and make sure that nobody escaped, which was a – which was a lot of bull, but they kept this discipline in this thing. And as a matter of fact, my friend who was arrested was a year older than me, lived next door to us – I mean, next building to us, **Leo Schickler**(ph) his name was, also told me his experience, you know, in the morning. And they would say that barracks number 104 can go to the latrine at 10 o'clock at night. No other time. And everybody, every barracks was assigned a certain time to go to the bathroom, to relieve themselves. And there was a lot of dysentery, so people couldn't control their bodily functions. And they would have to wait. So they would, you know, make up and make it in pa – in the pants. And they needed to have a rag to wipe themselves with. And that was very important possession. And then at night, they would – he would help people who we-were incapable of doing it, to wash their rags. I heard that from another person that – about my dad.

Q: This was a person who had been incarcerated with your father?

A: He did it for a lot of people.

Q: Did – did you friend **Leo Schickler**(ph) ever encounter –

A: Well, he tells me that story, my friend – this is fore be – before penicillin and we all, including me, always had earaches, very early in – you know, the de – there was

no – you just to outgrow something, you – I don't know why, but we all had earaches when we grew up. And he was a year older than I, and he was standing in formation at five or six o'clock in the morning, and – and a guard came by, you know, the counting off, and he said anybody – he said, anybody needs to go to the – to see a doctor, what is it, to – to the – what am I thinking of, what word?

Q: Infirmary, hospital?

A: Yeah, clinic, clinic –

Q: Clinic?

A: – whatever they had, yeah. And he raised his hand, and he said, what's wrong – and a guard came over to him, and he says, number – had a number, didn't call you by name, called you by number. He says, what's wrong? And he says, I have an earache very bad, and I need something, terrible. He says, which ear, and he show – points to his right ear. And the guy takes the stock of his rifle and smashes it across his right ear, knocks him unconscious. He says, now this will help you, ther – it will stop hurting. It was little things like that –

Q: And I – I'm assuming **Leo** survived?

A: And I figured you know, and then – and then the rest of them didn't want to talk about. It's – it – it just seems almost unbelievable that a culture or a – you know, a civilized people would have members in their midst who would carry out these

terrible things. And you know, and particularly **Germany** that, you know, has a rich history of democracy and civil – and scholarship and education and health care and all the other things that took place in the 18th and 19th century, would – would be able to change a people to these murderers, and unbelievably s – without conscience type of animals. I mean, they lost all their sense of value, and sense of humanity. And that always puzzles me. I've had some discussions on that when I talked to some German soldiers, you know, that we – in – that we had in our – we picked up, and – when I was overseas. All right, so that was – now I will tell you how we got my dad out.

Q: Now hold on, I'm just –

A: Oh.

Q: – I'm going to pause just for a moment.

A: Sure.

Q: One second. Okay, I've un-paused it. I just asked **Fred** whether he wanted to take a break, but he is good to go. And my question is, your friend – your friend **Leo**, did he survive the war?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. Then we'll get back to the story later. You wanted to talk about how – about your father.

A: Well, I don't quite recall the panic, or the helplessness, cause I don't remember that. I just tried very hard to try to figure out what did it really feel like. And what I was really doing. Well, in the meantime, there were some Jewish organizations and some Americans that came to, or were in **Vienna** and established some trains, and picked up where the public schools left off. I was given a choice to – to learn a trade. So I was 15 years old. And I was assigned to a Jewish dentist, who could only do – treat Jewish patients, and became his assistant. I would, you know, mix plaster of Paris and help make false teeth, now, you know, to put people's – that had problems with their dentures and other things like that, and I would assist this and learn how to give the right instrument to this –

Q: Was dentistry –

A: And that was a Jewish je – single, young man who was a doctor, and I was assigned to be his assi – learn the trade, as a mit – as a dental mechanic, or whatever it was called, and – because I couldn't go to school, there was no school for Jewish children.

Q: So was dentistry something you could choose amongst other things, or was this assigned as a – a subject?

A: It was a big – I have a picture of – someplace, of the sign, his sign on the outside of – of this apartment building. Big sign, with a Jewish star on it, and it says, you

know, it gives his name, being a dentist, and underneath it said, only Jewish patients, he could not treat anybody else. And I worked for him maybe for – this is a time that my father was gone, and so that must have taken some – some of the hurt and guilt feelings and uncertainties away from me, you know, learning a trade, or learning a profession.

Q: Was it – was it a choice amongst trades, or were you assigned this trade?

A: Yes, I think there must have been, and I don't quite – I don't remember whether I chose it, or they told me that's what I have to do, or here's my chance to do it. His office was not very far away from where we lived, so I could walk there in the morning, and –

Q: Do you recall what street it was on?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Do you recall what street it was on?

A: I – I could point it out to you. I don't remember the name of the street, it was on – my – you know, my German is really – it has disappeared quite – quite a bit. Let me just think. There is a **danuk**(ph) – have you ever been in **Vienna**?

Q: Yes, but I'm not very good with the topography.

A: Okay, there is a – a river that runs through the city –

Q: Sure.

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A: – and it's like the canal, the **Danube** canal, it's a – they had – it's an artificial thing. It's not the **Danube**, the **Danube** is on the outskirts of **Vienna**, but it's in the inner city. And my – then there is a – between the first and the 20th district, ther – th-tha-that **Danube** canal runs. And next to it is a park that runs along the river, with benches and trees. And my grandparents' apartment was – it was called the **Lände**, **l-a-n-d-e**, with an umlaut – with that umlaut over the **A**. And his – they – he was about a block away or a few buildings away, the dentist, from where my grandparents had lived, in this very, very nice apartment, on the **Lände**. So –

Q: Speaking of benches, did – do you recall any benches being segregated?

A: Every bench. I've gotta tell you, because this – about – you asked me. When I got out of school, gymnasium, there was a park called the **Augarten**, which is a very large park. It is part of – was right next to the exit of my gymnasium, and the kids would meet out there after school, and there were benches in that park. Every bench, in every park in **Vienna** was immediately, they have stenciled on the back of each one, **Juden verboten**. Jews – Jews cannot sit on a bench. Now, I've been in **Vienna** four or five, maybe six times, and I've been riding my bike someti – there's a bike path that runs from **Germany** into **Vienna** and I've been on that a few times with my bicycle, and – and some time it occurred to me what I have to do is go to this

park where they – every bench said **Juden verboten**, I would sit on these bench – I sat on eight benches there in a half hour, just to get even with them.

Q: What year was this?

A: I think it was about three, four years ago. And I think people sitting there, looking like I was crazy. And anyways, I felt I had to do that.

Q: D-Do you recall any incident when you were – in '38, when you would be going through this park, perhaps with non-Jewish classmates? Any kind of sense of you being different?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: D-Do you have any – any story that illustrates that?

A: I felt insecure. I fa – if I see a group of young people, men, you know, boys, travel – who are walking, you know, they're with four or five, six together. I would find a – out pretty quick – I was running, I was a – I was on a track team in my gymnasium also. So I was little – I was somewhat athletic. And – so I would find someplace that I could disappear, or run, or make sure I don't cross that path.

Q: This would have been before or after you were wearing the star? I'm assuming at one point you had to wear a star.

A: There was no star.

Q: There was no star?

A: Never. No, no, we left before the star became law.

Q: Were you running because you felt that they would recognize you?

A: I would tra – yes, they would – I would be threatened, or I would be beat up, or would had some confrontation, and I tried to avoid that.

Q: Was that because they knew who you were, or was there a way of recognizing you?

A: Well, they knew it would – I mean, the first thing is – I should ste – send you a picture, do I look Jewish? I don't know.

Q: Well, the question is, did they think you look Jewish?

A: That's exactly it. I didn't wear a swastika in my lapel, an-and – and I have curly hair, to this very day. And – and I think that maybe I do look – I don't know if I look Jewish or not. I think in the **United States** I don't, but I think in **Austria** I may have. And you know, I was 14 - 15 years old. So it –

Q: Now was there any altercation that actually happened, or did you just –

A: Yeah, I knew it was going to happen, I would get confrontation.

Q: What would they say?

A: They would, you know, call me names, dirty Jew, or this and that. And at this time I was very sensitive to that. I had – I did have a number of non-Jewish friends who were very – who really stuck with me, very early in the game. And I – when I

went with them, was no problem. But my mother was not very happy that I would go to places I shouldn't be.

Q: What kind of places?

A: Well, I wasn't allowed to go to a movie, and I did sneak in a few times. I-I think there are certain places that – where Jews were not allowed, a park. I did not sick on a park – I did not sit on a park bench until that episode I mentioned. And I was very sensitive and really very careful on how – what my behavior was, and that almost any time I walked or went someplace, I was very, very – I knew I was very vulnerable, and I was very careful about doing things.

Q: This heightened sense of vulnerability, did this only, well, grow after **Kristallnacht**, or where you already quite sensitive before?

A: Well, how do I – okay, there was a famous Jewish – that's not – I'm sorry, famous German author called **Karl May**. Ever hear of him?

Q: No.

A: He wrote 64 books, each one four, five, 600 pages, I've – I think I read every one of them. And he wrote about **America** and about the Indians and the trappers and the west – the American west, the – he had heroes like **Winnetou** and **Old Shatterhand –**

Q: Yes, I am – I am familiar with those books.

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A: Okay. I read every one of the books. And it – he really – and the guy never left **Germany**. He – all out of his head. As a matter of fact, two of my friends and I, we decided to revisit some of our last – was it two years ago, we went to **Paris** and **Berlin** and – and **Vienna**, and doing kind of some spots from the second World War, and they're both veterans. And we stopped in **Berlin** for a week, and they had an ex – they had a special exhibition at one of the museums, the city museum of **Berlin**, of **Karl May**. He was a faker, you know, but he wrote the books that to this very day are very popular, a hundred years later, still very popular in **Germany**. It's all about **America**, the American west, Indians and trappers and the whole thing. So I was big fan of that. As a matter of fact, once one of my teachers asked my mom to come to school because te – she felt I was reading too many of those books. So I had that little adventure seed planted into me. So it became a game to me a little bit, of avoiding being – you know, meeting someone that – with whom I would have a confrontation. And having – and living in an area which there were mostly non-Jews. I was used to that, and the people were somewhat protective of us wher-where we lived. I don't ever remember being threatened or – except that one thing of our cleaning lady coming and then demanding money from my mom.

Q: Was this before or after –

A: And our neighbors – our neighbors were very, very – they didn't go out of their way, they didn't ou – they didn't violate any of the Nazi laws, but they were protective of us.

Q: The cleaning lady who came to demand money, this was before or after they took away your father?

A: I have to think about that. I think it was after they took my father away. **[indecipherable]** that my mother was – she was very strong, she was really determined. And she – we got my – I got – we got my dad out of –

Q: **Dachau**?

A: **Dachau**.

Q: What – I – and I want to talk about that, about – but one question. Be-Because it was your mother who stopped the – the officers from taking you away on **Kristallnacht**, did her attitude change about safety, especially your safety in the months after **Kristallnacht**? Was she particularly concerned?

A: I think she very – she became very careful, and very sensitive to what was going on and wan-wanted to make certain that I don't make any waves, or to open up my mouth and say the wrong things.

Q: Di-Did she say something specifically? What not to say?

A: I don't remember.

Q: And you were talking about –

A: I don't – I think it's primarily the environment she created, probably more than anything else. She was a gutsy lady, she was very smart. And not because she was my mom, and I'll – it'll come as I tell you my story, but she – she had her – her feet on the ground almost all the time. She never panicked. And there was plenty of opportunities to panic.

Q: You were talking ab-about trying to get out of the way of – of young men on the street –

A: Yes.

Q: – but that you felt relatively safe when you were walking with non-Jewish friends. Do you recall whether these friends perhaps were wearing any swastikas on their lapel?

A: Yes, they all did.

Q: They all did?

A: Yeah.

Q: How did they reconcile that with the fact that you were Jewish? Was this ever a – a conversation?

A: That's my phone, so don't worry about that.

Q: Oh, you're free to – to get that, should I – should I pause?

A: No, then I'll lose you.

Q: No, you won't lose me.

A: Yeah, they'll call, I'll leave a message.

Q: Okay.

A: Ah, 11 o'clock here. Give me your question again?

Q: Well, the question was, you – you were feeling relatively safe walking –

A: I don't quite say **[indecipherable]** I think they all wore swastikas, I can't swear on that. But I think that was the – that was the law. That was to be able to – to – to survive, to be – you know, the whole country took on an entire different look. Go and see that film that – that is – you have in your library, about **Vienna**. It's a 10 minute film – if I have it handy here – no, it's – it's someplace here in my office. And, I could look at it. And you have it. And it shows you the enthusiasm, and the – this is in March of 19 – or April second of 1938 when **Hitler** first comes back into **Vienna** and – and the whole town goes berserk. So you have this – the ab – the unbelievable propaganda machine working with such efficiency and dedication to turn the whole culture around. This was the ability that they were able to do. I mean, if you go – you were in an environment where you see all the shoes and all the luggage and all the boxcars and – in your mu – in the museum. And you say, how do the civilized and – civilized people do that? And here's a guy, you know, here's that

– that – that believe this – this unbelievable corruption of morality and ethics and humanity and everything that we have been taught to believe in as we live on this earth, go to pot. So you see that tremendous change that takes place within people that just – to this very day I don't quite understand it, how a normal, civilized people go and kill people, or put them into a gas chamber.

Q: The f – the friends that you were with when you were walking outside, did they change during those months in '38? Did –

A: Yes, they did, I'm sure.

Q: Do-Do – do you recall –

A: But you see, you – you – here's what happens. Yeah, I – you know, I'm an anti-Semite, but you are my – you're – you're my Jewish friend. I am – I'm an anti-Semite, but you're my buddy, and I'm not – I'm not against you.

Q: Did –

A: Though there's always this emotional exception that people make.

Q: Did – did any one of them actually say something like that to you, or was it a sense?

A: I don't remember, I don't remember any of the conversations, because these instances of me walking with them, or talking to my friends, or the ones I went to school with, the – the – the occurrence of that were overco – you know, were really

– became minor. The – the major things that – that one was thinking about was well, how do we get out of here? What do we do, what's the future? How do I get my father out of **Dachau**, what has to be done, you know, how are we – what's our future going to be? I can't go to school any more, or I'm now working for a dentist, or – so he – your values system takes a dive, and all the things you've been taught just absolutely disappear.

Q: Do you know why your parents didn't choose to emigrate when your grandparents emigrated?

A: Well, that was going over the – because we had applied very early, my – either my dad or my mom went to the American embassy and put our name on the list. And then we received an affidavit from relative of ours, that lived in **Cincinnati**, whom I never met, who sent us an affidavit.

Q: What year was this?

A: 1930 – must have been in 1930 – the end of '37, or to be – or the first month in – or January 1938 that they went to the American embassy and they said well, you have – you put your name here, on the list, because there's a waiting list that once you get your affidavit, before, we going to issue visas depending upon when your name appeared on this list. So that name didn't appear on this list until November

1939. That's our names. And that was – it had to be very early, before the Nazi takeover of **Austria**. But they've –

Q: Be-Before the takeover in '38?

A: – they o – o – they only issued 24,000 visas in that time, between people from **Germany** and **Austria**, born in **Germany** and **Austria**.

Q: So your – your parents put their names on the list –

A: Yes.

Q: – in, let's say, January of '38, or perhaps in the last months of '37, is that correct?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: And then did you say that your names actually came up on the roster for – for these visas?

A: It didn't show up –

Q: Until Novemb –

A: – our visa – our affidavit came very early from our relatives in **Cincinnati**, and with – that was filed with the American embassy, and then we had to wait until our name was – appeared on that list when, you know, and that didn't happen until November of 1939.

Q: And at that point your father was already incarcerated.

A: My father was very – we got him out of **Dachau**.

Q: Okay, so then let's – let's talk about that, how did that happen?

A: Okay. I ran – I was walking on the street one day by myself and I ran into a really good friend of mine that I had not seen, he's non-Jewish, was in my class for four years in gymnasium, had not seen since the Nazi takeover. They lived quite a ways away. And were so surprised to see each other. And he wanted to know what – what was going on, how we were doing, and what was happening. And I told him about our situation.

Q: Hold on, I just – I just want to –

A: Right.

Q: – understand something. You say you haven't seen him since the Nazi takeover. That was January, is that correct?

A: I what – that was –

Q: That was January, or –

A: What, when I met my friend?

Q: No, no, no, what – th-the Nazi – the **anschluss**.

A: The what?

Q: The **anschluss**?

A: The **anschluss** take place – took place in March of 19 –

Q: Yeah, in March, okay.

A: – March of 1938.

Q: But you were still in school until May.

A: June.

Q: June. And had you –

A: Of 1938.

Q: And – and had you – this was a classmate, so had you been in school with him through June, or is that an –

A: No, no, not Jewish. I hadn't seen him since the end – since July 1938.

Q: Okay. All right, and –

A: So I ran into him a year later.

Q: A year later, okay. So – so –

A: Or something like that, you know. June – had to be June or July. And he asked me what was going on, and I started crying, telling him about my dad, we don't know what to do. And he listened very patiently, and I never will forget him. And he said to me, you know, I have an – my uncle is a **sturm**(ph) something. **Obersturmgon**(ph) something **fuehrer** in the **SA**. That's before they got rid of the Brownshirts, there were the **SS** and the **SA**, they were kind of semi-military. They got rid of some of them, but I think this guy was a very high up in – he says, I

should go and come – he's gonna see his uncle, and I should go, my mother and I should come and visit.

Q: Do you remember your friend's name?

A: No. Terrible, I know.

Q: No, I'm not –

A: I should have re –

Q: Not at all.

A: – I should have written all these things down, or what –

Q: Not at all.

A: But all these things happened, you know, so fast. I don't remember very – you know, I remember the things that happened, but don't ask me for details.

Q: Okay.

A: Cause I – somehow my mind doesn't click that way. And I was really bad about stre – cause, you know, I was back in **Vienna**, looking up people. But anyways, my mom and I went to see his uncle. He had a travel agency. And he said, there are ways to get out of – of **Austria** to go to – I think I mentioned that, to go to **China**, to **Shanghai**. And he fou – and he sold some tickets to some Jewish people. And **[indecipherable]** the whole thing, it's just my mother, you know, were talking. And I said to her, listen to this, and when she tells him that we can't leave, because my

father is in **Dachau**, and we're not gonna leave and leave my father in **Dachau**. And he said, oh. He says he's gonna find out who has responsibilities, or who is involved with **Dachau**. And he was pretty high up in the es – this hierarchy, the Brownshirts.

Q: And you don't remember his name, right?

A: Beg your pardon – I don't know – remember his name at all.

Q: Ye – ye – okay, all right.

A: I just remember what he looked like. And you come back to this – we met at his office, and my friend was there, and his father, who was a brother to this big shot in the Nazi party. Now, to be a big shot in the Nazi party, you had to be an – a member of the Nazi party for a long time, during the time that it was illegal. So this guy must have been – for many years been a Nazi, which doesn't sit very pleasant with us – pleasantly. So we came back, I think a week or two later, and he found out that if we could go to that – he found out who has responsibility of the **Dachau** inmates that were arrested in **Vienna**, and it's an **SS** officer that has a desk at the **Metropole** Hotel in first district on **Rudolfsplatz**(ph) and he was going to make an appointment with – for my mother to meet this officer, and find out what has to be done, if we could get my father out of camp. He said to us that we, I think, have to show proof that we would leave within a very short time. So where would we go? You know, **Europe** at that time, almost every border was closed. My mother had an ex – old

boyfriend who was English Jewish person, that she was, I think seeing romantically, or just a good friend, before she married. And he was a British officer by this time, Jewish fellow.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: No. I should. Some are –

Q: No. It's not a value judgment, I'm just curious.

A: Yeah, I – they'll be someplace. I may have to think up these things in my documents that I haven't had the energy to kind of go my – down the basement and start – we're getting rid of things, you know, and not fast enough. So, we didn't – I mean, that – that developed itself later in **Israel**, but so he made an appointment with – for my mother to see this guy at the – at the headquarters of the Gestapo.

Q: Why did this man help you?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Why did this man help you?

A: Because he was an uncle to my friend that I went to school with. The – remember I met him on the street –

Q: Sure.

A: – and he brought me to his uncle.

Q: I'm – I'm – I'm asking this kind of bald-faced question because I'm –

A: I also think – know that there was some money passed.

Q: Okay.

A: We are – he sold – I – I'm not sure about this, and I can't really pr – take – swore on it, but I think that my mother bought three tickets on a boat to go to **China** from him; he had – he owned a travel agency. So – and I'm not sure about it, but I think this has something to do with it. So all this conversation took place, and appointments were made and – now let's see, what did I forget? And there was a question about getting a visa that was – visas sold illegally by a embass – a Chinese embassy official who – who wasn't supposed to do it, but sold permits to go to **Shanghai** from **Vienna**, and also, it was done out of **Germany**. So that's, you know, a number of people, Jewish people landed up in **Shanghai**, and later found out they were – they – they sold those to make money, and it was not a policy of the Chinese government. But the – they did s-save a number of Jewish families.

Q: Now, i-if I –

A: I know two of them here, that lived in **Des Moines**.

Q: If I understand correctly, this was – this was probably costing quite a little bit. During – and – and – and given that your father was incarcerated, and he had, I – I'm supposing, lost his job earlier, were there any financial difficulties during these months?

A: For us?

Q: Yes.

A: I don't think so, because my mother still was dishing out money to people who had no money.

Q: Was this through any organization, any charitable organization?

A: It was kind of a unofficial done, you know, that things happened when – when panic strikes, that people find ways of doing things. It was not official. I don't think it was an organization like **HIAS** or anything like that. Be – was that somebody had re – a relative in – in **New York**, and – who had money, or was willing to help this person living in **Vienna** who had no money. So they would say if – if the official exchange of marks – used to be shillings and then it became German marks, was five marks to the d – 10 marks to the dollar – I've forgotten what the exchange rate was, the black market would pay 20 marks to a person in – in **Vienna**, instead of 10. So it paid for the relative to deal to that black market, or whatever it was called, to that conduit. And so if you had money and you lived in **Vienna**, and you – there were Jewish people who had no money, and they need to buy groceries. And they had relatives that would give – who would contribute some money. So that's why I think – where the money flow went, back and forth.

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December 2, 2011

Q: So you – you're – you're suspecting that perhaps there were some family members in the **United States** that were helping?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Not much – some stuck and some didn't. So it's – our parents lost quite a bit of – my parents lost quite a bit of money in the transactions, I guess. So, where was I?

Q: So the – the uncle of your friend –

A: Oh yeah.

Q: – made an appointment for you.

A: Oh, she made appointment, and he sold three sh – steamship tickets, so that's how he made money, to my mother to go to **China**, once my dad was – and then we had to get a visa from a Chinese embassy, and I don't know if that was done or not. It was almost a way of, you know, paying off the guy. So she went through the **Hotel Metropole**. I went with her, but I stayed outside, I remember that. And there was a big line-up outside of people waiting. They had people in – in prison and tortured at that building, down in the basement. The building, last time I was in **Vienna** it no longer existed, but they did put a monument there, just historically, what – that the Gestapo headquarters was there. And my mom was ushered in, after waiting in line for a couple hours or more, and she always described this, she was

very – she had a wonderful memory, and one of – my lawyer here in town is a fellow named **David Bellon**(ph) **[indecipherable]** he was also on the **Warren** Commission, and very – became very prominent nationally, you know **[indecipherable]**. Unfortunately, he died, but was also a close friend of mine. And he heard my mother's story and – and he wanted to record – record that part where she told the details of her visit at the Gestapo, with the black uniform, and the **heil Hitlers** and the – and everybody was throwing out their arm, and you know, **heil Hitler**, and it – and clicking their heels, and she went to – so finally met the guy, and the guy interviewed for about two hours, and then asked her to come back, she came – we went back, same old thing and he said to her, he would release my father. There was no money exchanged at all, and it was on the – really on the push of my friend's uncle, who was a friend of this Gestapo guy. And he would come out in about two weeks, three weeks. And he – she has to bring him to meet – to meet – he wanted to meet my dad.

Q: The –

A: Mother – my mother said –

Q: The uncle of your friend, or –

A: Yeah – no, the Gestapo.

Q: The Gestapo.

A: Yeah. And she says to Gestapo officer, why do you want to meet my husband? He sees enough of black uniforms in **Dachau**. And he – he said, I want to know what kind of a man marries such a woman like you. So she always told that story, what the Gestapo officer – you know, she was a gutsy lady and she was very articulate and was able to convince this guy. So, sure enough, my dad come out –

Q: What month is this?

A: It had to be, I would guess July, August, maybe later, September. I can't remember, I have to go really –

Q: But we're in 19 –

A: – and find – I have papers like that, it was sometimes in 1939.

Q: But this was before the war broke out?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: The war started September first. And he was really – I don't think he was ever the same. He never wanted to talk about it. He had – never wanted to go on vacation, he never wanted – he wanted to work. He had guilt feelings, survivor's kind of why was he had the privilege of getting out of **Dachau**, and other people died there. That bothered him a great, great deal. So he had these – which was not uncommon type of

guilt feelings, of been able to have got out, wh-when he – people that he knew never made it out of there.

Q: But he never talked about it?

A: Yeah, but at that time – as a matter of fact, one of my other closest friend that I went to school with, to – Jewish – his father was the concertmaster for the **Des Moines –** excuse me, I'm si – **Des Moines**, but the **Vienna** Philharmonic and also a professor of vi – violin, you see, well-known violinist.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: Yes, **Geringer**, **Josef –** you – **Josef Geringer** then became concertmaster at the Metropolitan Opera in **New York**. Hake – he was in there with my dad. And **Irving** was one of my very closest friends, he went to si – he was one class – he was one class higher in the same gymnasium I went to, and his brother was in my class, I think **[indecipherable]** two classes or one class, I don't quite remember. And he – I'm just gonna give you a sideline. I was taking basic – infantry basic training in Camp **Croft** in 1943. And I was assigned to a group of people they didn't know what to do with. I think our **I**.**Q**. had something to do with it, and not being a citizen, I was just in this country four years, and I was in there with people that were much smarter than me, that – some of them older, substantial, were all born not in the

United States. And people in the music business who escaped out of **Germany** and **Austria**. **Zero Mostel** was in my barracks, you remember him?

Q: Sure.

A: Who he was?

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay. And so I'm sitting outside one day after whatever training I went through that day, and I became an infantry – I became a machine gun – what the – rifleman and machine gun. That was my **spec**. I see this guy looks familiar walking across the common and I recognize, oh my God, that's **Irving Geringer**. I si – hollered at him, **Irving**, **Irving**, is that you? Sure enough he turns around, it's him. He – he was a brilliant guy; I think his **I**.**Q**. must have been 160 or so, and they put him as the historical section for the Fifth Army. So we landed – we move – when we are shipped overseas into **North Africa** and then into **Italy**, he also got shipped over, and he ran the historic section for the Fifth Army, so he wrote a book about the campaign. So everywhere I was, he showed up. He had that freedom. And we were almost inseparable during our army days. No matter where we went, he always found me.

Q: An-And you have said that **Irving** had been incarcerated?

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A: **Irving**, unfortunately he died. He later became editor of the "**Saturday Review of Literature**," and his father was the concertmaster for the orchestra at the Metropolitan Opera.

Q: And had they both been incarcerated in **Dachau**?

A: No, no, no, just his dad.

Q: Just his father.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did – ha –

A: And when they – they lur – moved – I don't know if you know much about **New York City**, but when they came to the **United States**, he immediately, you know, he was well-known; didn't have a pr – his father. And they lived on **Gramercy Park**, which is like **23rd Street** and **Fifth Ave**. – **23rd – Second Avenue** in **New York City**. And I spent a lot of time with them when I came out of the army. He had a sister who lives in **Washington**, and I think a brother in **Saint Louis**. He died, unfortunately, my friend. And he wrote the book about the campaign in **Italy**. So, the – and his dad – well, why do I mention it? Because his dad also was arrested and was – spent time, and they got him out also. Somebody in the music business, and famous within the – in the ar – with the – I think with the administration that time,

the **[indecipherable]** administration in **Vienna**, because he was well-known as a musician, you know, and the executive – okay, where were we?

Q: Well, you said that your father then had been incarcerated for about 10 months, right?

A: Yes, right.

Q: This would have been early November through the summer.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Was there –

A: Or maybe 10 – nine months.

Q: Nine, 10 months. Was there any communication from him, aside from that one postcard?

A: There wa – there was what?

Q: Was there any communication with him aside from that one postcard?

A: No. There was po – a repetition of the postcards.

Q: How frequently, how many?

A: That I can't reve – I can't tell you. I don't remember.

Q: Okay, then let's go back to – to th-the – the chronology of the story. So this Gestapo man told your mother that he would like to see her husband once he is out, and then – then what happens?

A: Yes. Well, then we received – now, I think it was afore we received that we're supposed to go to **China**. And we received a police permit to – and I don't know was four weeks or six weeks to prepare us to leave.

Q: But did they release your father immediately?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Did they release your father immediately? How –

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, yeah, my father came out.

Q: Was it only a few days between the meeting, or weeks, or –

A: A few days between – no –

Q: Between your mother's meeting with the Gestapo officer.

A: Yeah. Well, he came out. It took several weeks, I think, or – maybe several weeks, maybe two weeks for my father to – to come out from **Dachau**. And she took him up to meet that officer. So she made three visits to this **SS** guy at the **Metropole Hotel**. And we received – we told – we were told that we had to leave within four weeks. And we had those steamship tickets and permits to go to **Shanghai**. We didn't want to go to **Shanghai** – it's just not me, but my parents. And she – my father went every four weeks to get an extension of this permit to stay. Waiting for –

my mother knew – pretty much guessed when we possibly – our visa number would come up to go to **United States**. So we didn't use those tickets to – steamship tickets. I don't think we did anything with it. I'm not sure whether we bought them or didn't buy them, and I u – I-I just can't remember. I wish my mother were alive, and she would probably really tell the story much better than I can.

Q: You're telling it very well.

A: **[indecipherable]** pretty – pretty much out of – you're out of – you know, out of si – you know, she – there was a lot of things happening that I – you know, 15 years old, I didn't – I was a little bit out of sync.

Q: Sure.

A: And so we – we lived from month to month, getting a permit from the police department, and – which I remember the police department, or the police station, because I went back there as a soldier, I looked them up. And it was until – we stayed there – the war started September first, and we're still in **Vienna**, and things got to be worse. I think they began to issue us permits to buy food. Now what would I call it, I forgot now, I can't get – put my name on it. Oh, ration cards. And so – oh, and we got an order to – we must leave our apartment.

Q: When was that?

A: It had to be in September or October. Things were really heating up, they ge- getting worse. The Nazi takeover of Jewish businesses was going on and – much, much more ra-rapidly. Less and less Jewish business existed, you know, with graffiti on their windows, they were all taken over. People lost their fortunes. Rich people were able to get out very early, the **Rothschilds**, and whoever they all – the other people were, the **Blochs**(ph) and so on. And they took over their palaces and their facilities and confiscated most of their wealth and paintings, and I – really got tough. And in the meantime my dad would go out to the police, get an extension. And we would go pretty often to – not I, but mom and dad – to the American embassy to find out where we were on that list. It looked more and more that we had a chance to really go to **America**. And finally, our visa came – not visa, but our number came up, and we were able to get the visa in November to departure in that wa – I think it came up in October, for us to leave in November. We packed up one container with personal things. I took my three-speed bike, my so-soccer ball, and my skis.

Q: And this was already from another location, cause you had to – had to leave your home, is that correct?

A: Yes, everything – oh, yes, we were moved out to where we li – from our apartment, somebody else took it over, a Nazi member. And we moved –

Q: Was there any compensation?

A: – in with – yes, into a – which they had planned to make it a ghetto in second district, and we moved in – now I don't quite remember, I think one family or two families which – whom we – Jewish families. And one of the families – so everybody had a bedroom, we shared a living room and a kitchen. And one of them, I found out with the lady, because she was beautiful, and she was an actress, with her husband with her. And she was a – on the cover of "**Die Bühne**," the stage, a famous theatrical magazine.

Q: Do you remember her name?

A: No. I wish I did. You know, it's so – as I look back, our – psychologically and – and I would guess no matter what, it was so important that our lives, you know, were at constant danger. And si – never did I ever have the desire to start – we put together – some people did, I just didn't, and my parents did – didn't. We want to get rid of this whole history, and we should have really kept so many things that would have been very valuable today, to create my story. And it really – I just want to get out, and the less I had – I was more interested in my soccer ball and my bicycle and my skis than anything else.

Q: Now it – it's interesting that your – your – describing this as –

A: We had one – they let us take out one container.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yes.

Q: You're describing this as a – as a – as a period where the priority was to get out. But it's interesting to me that you're saying that your parents pretty much turned down the opportunity to go to **Shanghai**. So it was – they wanted to get out, but it was still a priority to get out –

A: Yes.

Q: – to the **United States**.

A: But you know, nobody knew what was going to ha – nobody could have imagined, or perceived the – what the Nazis were going to do.

Q: Certainly.

A: It wa – it just – you know, your mind did not grasp the evil, or grasp this – these people would have gas chambers and put thousands of people to death. It – your mind and your culture and your upbringing did not perceive that kind of crime. It was just not – it – it – it just couldn't happen.

Q: Was your fam –

A: Until it happened.

Q: Was your family offered any kind of monetary compensation for the seizure of the apartment?

A: I don't know. I don't think so. I –

Q: So you had to – you had to move into this other location.

A: Right.

Q: Can you tell me again where that was?

A: Second district, **Leopold** str – **Leopold** something. **Leopoldsdorf**(ph)? Second dist – there are 21 districts in **Vienna**, this was the second district, not far from where we lived before.

Q: Mm-hm. And – and you had to share this –

A: Was not very far from where my an – aunt and uncle lived.

Q: And you had to share these quarters with two other families, is that right?

A: Yeah, that was their plan, to build a ghetto in –

Q: And how long – how long did you stay there?

A: Not very long. Two months? A month, six weeks. And I'm guessing at the time frame.

Q: And then what happened?

A: And then we got – the visas showed up, and we packed a – we got a – a shipping agent company that would ship our stuff out. And what – they let us take one container out, a big container. And that's what I put my stuff in, and some of my parents' dishes, and whatever they – you know, they felt was valuable, and – to start a new life. And we left – I – it had to be the first week in November, 1939. The war

started September first, so the Nazis or the Germans, Austrians were happy with all the conquests they were making at that particular time. So they didn't have time for us at that si – I don't think, to worry about what we took out, or who we were. They were – they were glorifying themselves and you know, they were chasing the British through the English channel, to **Dunkirk**. And taken over at that time **Belgium** and – and **Holland**.

Q: So how – I – can you – can you tell me a bit how you got out of **Austria** and **Germany**, did you take a train first?

A: Yes, we took a train to **Trieste**.

Q: Okay.

A: And we took a ship, was a luxury ship called **Saturnia**, was an Italian ship. It was all lit up because of all the **U-**boats. And **Italy** at that time was not in the war. It declared – they went on the side of **Germany**, I think, three or four months later, or whatever it was, I don't remember. And we went on this very beautiful ship, I – it was very luxurious, except that they put – I stayed with my dad in a cabin, and my mom was with other women. And there were – there are other, one or two other women, and they overburdened the ship. In other words, to try to put the – put as many people on it as they could, many of whom were refugees like us. And we landed in **New York** in November, I don't remember the date. And my – our

relatives were at the dock. I never forgotten, never, that in – I was always thankful that the ship did not dock. It stayed outside the harbor in **New York City**. And **Europe** at that time was in **[indecipherable]** blacked out. Couldn't think of it. There were no lights at night. Cars had no headlights, they had slits on their headlights, and it was – there were no public, no streetlights, no nothing. The war was on, they were always afraid of bombings, so every light at night at – wherever it was, whether it was **Berlin** or **Vienna** or anyplace else, were totally, totally blacked out. And a ship docked, came there in the evening of whatever that date was in November, and it docked on the other side that later became the **Verrazano** bridge. And you saw the tip of **Manhattan**, the skyscrapers or the tip, the **Woolworth** buildings and – all lit up. It was totally disbelief. I stood out there on the dock and it was cold, and seeing **New York City** all lit up; it was unbelievable. And next morning we passed the **Statue of Liberty**, I shall never forget that. It was the most glorifying day of my life, and I became an American overnight, emotionally, at that particular time. I – so we landed in **New York**, and we moved in with our friends who were – lived in the same building in **Vienna**, who got and had many relatives, cousins and brothers and sisters lived in **New York**. And **Schultzenberg**(ph) the name was, in **Brooklyn**. We lived with them for about a month or two, and I think maybe six weeks. I immediately went into high school. I went to boys – in **Brooklyn**, there was boys'

school called – what was it called? He – **Alexander Hamilton** High. And I think – I don't quite remember if I went in as a sophomore, I think, or as junior.

Q: Now, you didn't speak any English before you arrived, is that right?

A: Very little. I took two years of English in gymnasium, but my – th-the most complicated book I read was "My Bonnie Flies Over the Ocean."

Q: Was that a book?

A: Yes, was a book, a children's book. And – and really my English was no, no – unbelievably limited, and I was, as I – I never forget, they introduced in in assembly at – at the **Alexander Hamilton** High, who – which was later – now it's called **Paul Robeson** High. And at – at the – in the auditorium, on the stage, I think I wore knickers. And they'd never seen somebody like me. And I had a teacher, a English teacher I shall never forget, Miss **Rossman**(ph), who stayed with me after school, taught me how to pronounce the **H**s.

Q: The **H**s.

A: Yeah, the **H**s. The. It is a foreign sound in German. And also, I was determined to be an American. Three – I went there for just one term, and then my parents got an apartment on the **Lower East Side** of **New York**. My father started – took the **[indecipherable]** my mom took two – two – do you know anything about **New York City**?

Q: A little.

A: A little, okay. So we were – got an apartment. And I don't remember the name of the – I – I va – I think I'll think of the name of the street. And my dad decided he's – we need to make money, we need to make a living, we need to be in business, so we need to do something. We don't want to depend upon anybody, this is no unemployment, this was nothing. We had no ways of getting any help from anyone. And what little money they – we were able to transport out at these exchanges, you know, that took place over a couple of years, so we had some money in a bank account. He went to **Orchard Street** which is kind of – used to be a wholesale places, it's right, but now it's kind of a san – it's kind of a bargain street in new ye – in the **Lower East Side** of **New York**, and they found a wholesaler of socks, men's socks, and he filled up a suitcase, my parents **[indecipherable]** black and brown and white and by men's socks, on one suitcase. And then my dad found sections in **New York**, the **Lower East Side** where people spoke either German or Yiddish, and could understand him. And he knocked on doors and he peddled. And he never came home until – until the suitcase was empty. And peddled those socks. He would ask him, do s – you know, **yeveten**(ph) Yiddish, you can speak Yiddish, as he knocked on the door. Most people could, you know, a lot of Jewish sections in the **Lower East Side** of **New York**. A lot of places in **Brooklyn**, and he would sell those socks.

And then, first money they were able to accumulate, they opened up a little grocery store on **East Church Street** at **Avenue C**.

Q: When was that?

A: Had to be 1940 – 40. I went – transferred to **Seward Park** High School, and I had a cousin there, my mother's brother, who had – they lived in **United States** for long time, and she grew up. And my cousin at that time is a freshman at **CCNY**, City College. And he introduced me to all his friends: girlfriends and boyfriends and students and freshmen, and that's how I learned. They took me in like I was their brother. And I went to **Seward Park High School**, and I finished high school in a couple of years, went to **CCNY**.

Q: Was this a mixed group of friends, Jews, non-Jews?

A: Yes, they were all Jewish, they were all Jewish.

Q: They were all Jewish, mm-hm.

A: All Jews. Yeah, they lived on the **Lower East Side**. We used to hang out in back of a place called **Hamilton Fish Library**, and they were bright, they were undemanding, totally unprejudiced. I learned English very rapidly. I did well in high school.

Q: Did you ever have to use your German?

A: No. I got rid of ger – I lost my German, totally. I mean, I spoke it a little bit, but I – I could probably speak it again, but I just have not used it, and I don't want to use it. I have no desire to do that. So I wanted to be an American so bad, and wanted to be part of, that for a whole while people never do. When I came to **Des Moines** – trying to remember what I had when I finished school. I got a job in the textile industry, after I came home from the army, in – in **New York City**. And I never, ever let people know that I was born in – I really had a – I had a fixation that I wanted to be an American and I don't want to talk about my past in **Europe**, and I – and it was very unpleasant for me, and I tried everything possible to lose my accent. I had learned English very rapidly. And it was really a psychological jump to at – my – it's – if I wouldn't tell you today, people here in **Des Moines** thing well, oh **Fred Lorber**, yeah, he's got that **New York** accent. So I go back to **New York City**, which quite often I used to, either five, six times a year, they all even think oh, it's **Fred**, now got a – got a Midwestern accent. So, it's neither. And so e – I had this – this anks – was it – not anxiety, but somehow I wouldn't tell people I was born in **Europe**, for a long time. And one of the greatest thing happened to me, that I got drafted. And I, it turn out, was in the army for close to three years. And it was the best thing that happened to me, and it really – it established my self-worth and – and I became an American.

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Q: Let me stop you again right now.

A: So in – in that –

Q: Yeah?

A: – transition, you know, I got to be very active here in **Des Moines**: I was president of the temple; I was president of the all in one campaign; I was president of the Jewish Federation; I was president of the **Iowa** Sales Executive Club, and I been involved in many of the – I don't say this with – trying to impress you, but I'm just saying that my transition into the culture of **America** was total. And so unless I tell people, oh, I was born – oh, what, you were born in **Vienna**? Yeah. So, that took me a long time to do that, to tell people I really wasn't born in **America**.

Q: Let me start – let me stop you right here, because I see that –

A: **[indecipherable]**

Q: – we've – we've just done two hours, and I'm also aware of the fact that you might have to leave. So I'm – I'm – I'm gonna pause this recording right now.

A: Yeah.

End of File One

Interview with Fred Lorber
December 8, 2011

Beginning File Two

Q: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Fred Lorber**, on December 8th, 2011. The interview is conducted by **Noemi Szekely-Popescu**, in **Washington**, **D**.**C**. **Fred Lorber** is in **Des Moines**, **Iowa**. This conversation is being taped over the phone, and this is the second part of the interview that was started December 2nd, 2011. **Fred**, you were talking about getting drafted.

A: Yes.

Q: What was your first thought when you saw that? Did you welcome it? Were you apprehensive?

A: Yes, I was – the letter started out, you know, usually everybody was called – it was greetings from President **Roosevelt**. I mean, these were all, you know, pre-printed letters, so that's how you were drafted. But that's when your notice came that you had to report to your local draft board. And I was absolutely delighted, because many of my friends had left, already been in basic training and went to an **SA – ASDP** training session, where college students primarily were sent to learn a language, or a – some kind of specialty. So, many of my friends had been – already been gone, and I was one of the youngest in the group, so – and I think they were also pretty bis – much undecided, the draft board, whether they can draft non-

citizens. Previously, I think maybe a year before or two years before, the post office used to have kind of posters as you walked in to mail your letters, so got a mail – mail order, a la – excuse me, a money order, or anything like that, had a sign up: beware of enemy aliens. And being born in **Vienna**, **Austria**, I was, at that time, really considered an enemy alien. That was kind of –

Q: Did you feel like that applied to you? Did you have any –

A: Well, I didn't, you know, emotionally, or really, but still, I had to go and find out, you know, how do I get that stigma off. And they said it wa – it wasn't me, was people, you know, who were German, and they were afraid of, or **[indecipherable]** nationality.

Q: And when you say – when you say they said that it wasn't you, who are you referring to?

A: I went to the post office.

Q: Okay.

A: And they sent me to the local federal office –

Q: I see.

A: – which I questioned on, so at that particular time.

Q: Now, can –

A: So the –

Q: – can you give me the approximate date when this happened, the draft?

A: It had to be ninet – I could give you the year, but I couldn't – this – we'll disregard, somebody's trying to get on – on the line.

Q: Sure.

A: Let me just think, 1940 – had to be 1941 or '40 – had to be in 1942. The attack on **Pearl Harbor** came in December of '41. So, it had to be 1942 when those things appeared in the post offices, and other federal offices in **New York City**. It was creating a little bit of a shock to me, because I wasn't – I no longer considered myself an Austrian ail – an Austrian citizen, because, you know, we were disenfranchised; a very early part of the annexation of **Austria** to **Germany**.

Q: Sure.

A: So anyways – hm, I'm looking out the window and there's some dogs chasing deers.

Q: Do you – do you remember hearing about **Pearl Harbor**?

A: Yes, of course, I remember where I was.

Q: Oh, can you describe that day to me and what –

A: Sure.

Q: – what you were thinking?

A: I was outside, listening to a football – I was out with friends of mine, and I could tell you exactly who it – where it was, it was av – in **New York City**, in the **Lower East Side**, on **Avenue C**, between **Second** and **Third Street**, on the north side of aven – on the north side of **Avenue C**, and that was in front of a candy store. At that time the hangouts of young people were outside of candy stores. I didn't know if you knew about that or not, but –

Q: I didn't, I didn't. My grandparents owned a candy store, but I did not know that.

A: Okay. So – and then something came across the radio of an attack on **Pearl Harbor**. Well, **Pearl**, we – there used to be some – number of women and young girls, they were in the **Lower East Side**, they were called **Pearl**. And we just didn't know, as I talked to some of my friends, where was pe – who was **Pearl Harbor**? Where – or – there was very little knowledge about it. And came as such a surprise. And what happened that the broadcast of the **New York Giants** football game, which was played at the **Polo Grounds** at that time, was a ballpark in **New York City**, and it was interrupted with the news of Japanese bombarding **Pearl Harbor**, in **Hawaii**. So that kind of – I remember that very distinctly, but what happened afterwards, I don't quite remember.

Q: Now you were saying that when you – when you first got the notice of the draft you weren't sure as a non-citizen whether this applied to you? Did I understand that correctly?

A: No, no, no, no, that came – this was before I got the letter.

Q: Okay.

A: Then I received – then I was so delighted about maybe – must have been '42 – '41? Two years later. I want to s – that time, I had finished high school, '42? – 40 thr – yeah, in '40 – yeah, in 1942 I finished **Seward Park** High School, and I went down to s – to the free college called **CCNY**. It's now, you know, **City College of New York**.

Q: Sure.

A: And – and also got a job after school.

Q: What were you doing?

A: As a mail clerk, just came usually at three o'clock in the afternoon until six, and it's 125 **Park Avenue** in **New York City**. I was – it was an insurance compensation office that was supported by many of the life insurance companies, and they set the rates, and I was a mail clerk.

Q: And what were you studying at **CCNY**?

A: Beg your pardon?

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Q: What were you studying in college?

A: Well, I worked at – wasn't quite sure. It was just the beginning. First, you know, freshman year. And so I was just going into looking maybe be an accountant or some other kind of – I really was looking forward maybe to go to graduate school after I got through with four years of college. I was re – very undecided, wasn't quite sure. I just wanted to go to school.

Q: Now, at this time, your – your family –

A: Yes, yes?

Q: – what – what was their circumstances like?

A: I'm sorry? Oh, my family's circumstance, yes.

Q: Wh-What were the circumstances like, mm-hm?

A: I don't know if I told you how we f – my parents or my dad first made the living, about selling socks out of a suitcase, did you –

Q: Yes, yes, you told us about that.

A: Okay. So, they bought a little grocery store –

Q: Okay.

A: – on **East Church Street**, right off the corner of **Avenue C**, one – maybe just one, maybe a half a building. Was on the south side of the street, on **East Church Street**, and **Avenue C**, at the corner. And, small store, and no help. It was my dad,

my mom and I. But I just worked there part time after school. I would help out, or deliver orders into the tenements, there were no elevators at all **[indecipherable]** steps, you know. Second or third or fourth floor. And –

Q: Did they have to work very long hours?

A: Yes, we sa – opened up usually 6:30 in the morning, and closed about 10. No help.

Q: Any days off?

A: No. There was just my mom – excuse me, my dad, my mother and I. Well, I had a very small part, it was just them, those two. But the store was very small. It was – I don't think he could have put another employee in there, it was kind of a – elongated and narrow. And we sold all – it's kind of a delicatessen –

Q: Do I –

A: – **[indecipherable]** and things like that.

Q: Do I remember correctly that your – your mother had basically been at home in **Austria**, she had not –

A: Yes, yeah –

Q: – needed to work?

A: Never worked.

Q: How did she handle the transition to working, and working very long hours?

A: That's a good question. I never really even thought about that, because we came, you know, we were immigrants. We were – we had to reestablish ourselves. So it was either we did it and everybody worked, or you just – you became a dependent – or even that not being citizen, I don't know whether or not there was money available, like unemployment or things like that, and I don't think so. So if you were going to have your self-respect, and made a livi – you know, knew that you had to make an honest living, you had to go to work. And to get a job, I think my dad or my mom would not been able to do that, because they're very limited on their English language at that time. And they picked it up, you know, as they start working in the store. And many of their customers were – were Jewish, and they spoke Yiddish. And, it was a very Jewish neighborhood.

Q: So, does that mean that it was relatively easy for them to start their lives here, because there were so many people they could interact with?

A: No, I think it was very difficult. You worked long hours, which my mother never worked in **Vienna**, you know, we had a very – well, kind of a comfortable life, and middle-class. She didn't – never had a job. She – all she did, you know, she was cooking and taking care of the house, and took care of me s – when I was a small child. And my father had a very good job. Worked five days a week. We went away

every summer, took a place out in the country. So that you – the quality of life was quite substantially better.

Q: And you don't – you don't –

A: But the key issue though, coming to the **United States** was the freedom. The acceptance of us being foreigners, being Jewish, having just escaped this den of anti-Semitism, you know, it – th-the dilemma of not being a citizen any more, and our lives being very, very vulnerable. You know, my dad being – having been in a concentration camp. So every little thing that we saw in **America** was a blessing.

Q: And their loss of socio-economic status did not upset them in any way that you could –

A: No.

Q: – detect?

A: None whatsoever. The – tha – but it's a very good question, because I felt that very strongly.

Q: Can you talk about that a little?

A: Yes, I – and I'm – I'm kind of an embarrassen – embarrassed to tell you that.

Q: Oh no.

A: Because I wanted to be an American so bad, and I had all American friends, I really lost contact – I knew a few people from **Vienna**, friends, you know, or people

I went to school with, but somehow I lost all contacts, because all my friends were American. And I decided I wanted to be an American and I began hiding my identity. In other words, I didn't tell peop – once my English got – is like it is today, very shortly, I really – I should tell you my first book report in high school, where my English was absolutely almost nonexistent. And it was "**A Tale of Two Cities**," by **Dickens**. And I read it in German, I cut it out of the – I found the book at the library in German and also in English, and I translated it, and I know no English, I used an American English dictionary, and an English and a German English dictionary and – to do the book report. At that kind of got – convinced me, in order for me to forget about that I came from **Vienna**, that I came from **Austria**, and to be an American, just like everybody else, I had to learn English. And before I transferred to **Seward Park High School**, I went to **Alexander Hamilton High** in **Brooklyn** for just one semester.

Q: Why did you transfer?

A: When I first – we first came. I think it was one semester, maybe two, but really think it was one. And I had an English teacher, a – a – a woman, it's just her name escapes me right now, but sh – it'll come back to me, cause she was indelible in my mind, who stayed with me after school maybe two times a week. Made me – and taught me how to pronounce English words that – particularly if you're a foreigner,

you had trouble with the **T-H**. There's – because it's a new sound that you don't have in other languages, the th – th.

Q: Right, right.

A: So, that had tremendous impact upon me, and I was determined the only way I can truly be accepted like everybody else, and not be called a refugee, a **[indecipherable]** and they had all kinds of names for people that – it – I don't think that new immigrants were very welcome at that time, even though there were many in – new immigrants, you know, living – your grandparents or whoever it was, had come from another country.

Q: Sure. Did you –

A: And – and they assimilated, but then again, there was a – there was a resistance of the Jewish community, I think, to new people coming in from the occupied territories in **Europe**.

Q: Did it – did you feel like it mattered that you had come from **Austria**, and was – was that an issue for the Jewish community, and had you come from **Poland**, it would have been different?

A: No. I think – that's a good question. I think Austrian – Austrian Jews were more assimilated than the Jews that came from **Poland**. You know, they came from the little shtetls, small villages, and that – we were well educated in Jewish history and

language and – and probably – and maybe have learned a lot of language, Polish or German, particularly where – it was – if it was worse than **Poland**, which was part of the **Hapsburg** empire at one time. Still, the American Jews looked down on the immigrants at that particular time. That changed –

Q: Yourself included, you feel.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: So –

Q: Were there any incidents that you can recall?

A: Yeah, but I think that – that the – I come – come from – more from a western part of **Europe**, that I was a little different. Many of people who came from **Germany**, Jews who came from **Germany**, and from **Austria** and some of the western countries, settled in upper bra – on upper **Broadway**. You know, **68th Street** and up. And that was – became a very strong Jewish immigrant community, and they even had their own newspaper called the auf – I think it was called the "**Aufbau**," meaning building, again, or you know, building in new community. And lot of German speaking businesses existed there. So I had a cousin who was a physician, who could not get into medical school in the **United States**, and when

the war ended, he went to **Italy** to get his medical training. And he later became **Isaac Bashevis Singer [indecipherable]**

Q: Wonderful.

A: And they lived up in that area. He lived in **Yorkville**, like off **Lexington Avenue**. I don't know if you know much about **New York**.

Q: A little.

A: Yeah, so – and when – I se – a little side story, I'll – when **Isaac Bashevis** su – **Singer** received the **Nobel** prize for literature in **Stockholm**, he was going to go with him. And so he found out that he had to wear a – a formal – formal clothes, not just a tuxedo, but tails, when the prize was given. And if he was going to be shiv – **Singer's** guest at that ceremony. So he rented some – a tail, you know, to take with him to **Sweden**, and his wife, and go with the **Singers**. I think he was married – **Singer** was married at that time. As he crossed **Lexington Avenue**, got hit by a taxi.

Q: Oh wow.

A: So they broke his leg and he couldn't go. Yeah, that was really a big tragedy in his life. He was invited to go to **Nobel** prize, you know, for literature, and being there as a guest of **[indecipherable]**

Q: And this was your cousin?

A: Yeah, that was my cousin.

Q: And even though your cousin –

A: **[indecipherable]** I'm afraid no longer lives.

Q: E-Even though your cousin was in that circles, am I assuming correctly that you weren't really interacting with German speaking Jews because you wanted to shed that identity?

A: I wanted – yes, I want – i-i-in other words, if I understand you correctly, I wanted to be an American so badly, so – I interacted all with Americans, young people. They became my friends, I became their friend.

Q: When did you change your name?

A: From **Fritz** to **Fred**?

Q: Yes.

A: I think immediately, when – soon as I got – I was absolutely very vulnerable. When I moved war – I took a job in **Des Moines**. At that time my English – which was in 19 – January – early December of 1949, or fift – no, it's really January of 1950 – no one knew, including the people who hired me – that I was just going to stay in **Des Moines** for – for a couple years. We are – we were – we were married to an American girl. We had one child, and my wife was pregnant with the second one, and we moved here, and I never, ever let on that I came from **Vienna**, **Austria**.

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To this very day, I think 90 percent people here – because I became very active in the community, knew that I came from a foreign country. It wasn't until about 25 years ago, or 30 years ago that it – that it all of a sudden it didn't matter to me ata – again. I was enough self-confidence that apparently I built. I mean, it's just like a self-analysis, but – that I felt I – my ego really wasn't vulnerable any more. You know, I've been here, I've received national – what would you call – National Conference of Christian Jews award as being an outstanding Jewish citizen in **Des Moines**. It used to be given every year, and I got another – I became president of children's or families' services, which is the largest social agency in **Iowa**. And I was very – I was – became president of the temple, and I headed the – the fund drive for the National Jewish Fund, and other things. I was president of the temple and other things, I got very active in – within the –

Q: What – what inspired you to – to serve and to be active like that?

A: I think it's a good question, I think probably my – my – if I really ask you, it is my ego, I think. I don't tell this to anybody, I'll tell you.

Q: Oh, it's just you and me here.

A: But they're not going to say this – yeah. Or it was my feeling that I wanted to be like every – I think if really, if I had some sub – subconscious motivations, I think that's probably what it was, to be recognized, and that was just **[indecipherable]**

like everybody else. I was no longer, you know, a – a refugee, an immigrant, a second – second class citizen. I had this – that this community here gave me that unbelievable opportunity to really actualize my life. So, I think that's what it was, and to this very day, you know, I'm – I'm pres – excuse me, I'm – I'm on – I'm the only Jewish member of a Methodist college called **Citizen College**. I'm trying to find somebody else that's Jewish that would serve on the board here. And I – and I was pretty participatory in many other organizations. So I think all that may have been, if you really cut it deep into my – my own emotional, I guess deeds or inadequacies, I think that helped me a great deal.

Q: Thank you for sharing that.

A: Yeah, but I – you know, maybe I should have gone for therapy sometimes.

Q: No, I don't think you need it.

A: I know – no, I've figured out you know, I had the – a couple of friends of mine who were psychiatrists and – and I always remember one time we were at a dinner and I was sitting next to one of the – one of the physicians who was very quiet, but he was a – a therapist. And he turns to me, he says – and – and I'm – I'm kind of, very social, and he turns to me, he says, you really are – **Fred**, you rece – you're so social because you're really an introvert.

Q: What an insight.

A: It shocked me, oh, it sho – it shocked me.

Q: Do you think he was onto something?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Do you think he was onto something?

A: I think probably I'm overcompensating. I think so. I think that's what motivated me. You know, I took this job and I became president, it was a very – what do I say, a very American company, and I became president of the company. Never planned it to me. I went to – then I also bought – I left the company after I was president and bought an interest in another company, and I s-started another company with a couple of immigrants, Russian immigrants, which they still work – still running here in – in I – in **Des Moines**, now owned by a large syndicate, and has about 300 employees. And two Russians were started in business, because I was, at that time I think, president of the Jewish Federation, and I went to the airport to greet two im – when we took at – every community at that time, took it upon themselves to resettle some Russian Jews that were able to get out of **Russia** where there was a lot of anti-Semitism at that time in the **Soviet Union**.

Q: So what – what years were these?

A: Ah, it has – it had to be 1940 – I'm sorry, 1970 – '73 or '74. So what happened was, I went to the airport to greet them, in – on behalf of the Jewish community,

two couples. Should I share that with you?

Q: Of course.

A: Okay. One couple was **Steralzeslsky**(ph), the other was **Ruchstein**(ph), they were both engineers. One wife was a physician and the other wife a concert pianist. And I was taken with them immediately, because I somehow superimposed myself into their situation, I guess: new immigrants, well-educated, talented. And I got them jobs, and – at a engineering company, they were both engineers, the men. One wife was a physician, the other wife a pianist, a – played at the **Kir-Kirov-Kirov** – **Kirov Opera Company** in **Leningrad**, at that time, now **St. Petersburg**. And – and I got to be very close to them, because these were the first immigrants we – that the Jewish community took on upon themselves to settle them. We got them an apartment, we – I got them English teachers, and found jobs for them. A friend of mine that was president of a steel company here and also was Jewish, I called him up and I says, you got – you know, got to help me. I have these two Russians, they very – look like very smart engineers, they don't speak much English, I need jobs for them. So he gave them the jobs. And I got fairly close to them, and my associates at the business that I just was buying in, there's a father and son who owned that company, it's a company that was making quilted nylon fabrics in **Des Moines** and had another plant in **Arkansas**, **Magnolia**, **Arkansas**. And about six

months later, my friend who owned – excuse me, who was president of steel company called **Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel** called me up, he says, I'm not doing these two Russians any favors. I said, why? He said, well, they're to – two sophisticated engineers, and I should find them other jobs. So I met with them, and they showed me patents, but I couldn't read them as done in Cyrillic Russian, and – but I could make out their names. So I went to my two partners and I said, why don't we each put in some money and il – and – would – enough to kind of get a lawyer and get – get their – get their patents that they had in **Russia** registered in the **United States [indecipherable]** on controlling any kind of liquid going through pipelines, and through compressors and things like that, and they had figured out a system that would automatically control those compressors. So one thing that they moved into my office, so I learned a little Russian, I listened to Russian music **[indecipherable]** little – little radios tuned into a Russian – I don't know how they heck they got the Russian station. So we became very good friends and we got them their patents and then my three – two partners and I put in each 25,000 dollars to get them rolling. And that's when they moved into my office, I kind of forgot about that. So that's – after 10 or 12 years of this –

Q: Of them in your office?

A: – and it caused a lot of problems and it was a really – it was a – it turned out if I succeeded, it was sold, the first company was sold the first time for – oh, a investment company in **Minneapolis** bought 60 percent and I – I don't quite remember the numbers, but they were like six million dollars –

Q: Wow.

A: – that they invested, and then – and I didn't want to sell the company, but my two other partners and – and now Mr. **Ruzelski**(ph) then became president, and he wanted to buy – he wanted – he had gotten a condo in **[indecipherable]** they had the beautiful home in **Palisades** in **New York**, and – and **Kahn**(ph) was the other one, in par – I mean, in – in **France**. So we sold the company the first time at I think about 25 million dollars.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: So then it was – we got it back – it was a whole nars – it – it deserves another book.

Q: Okay. Did the Russians stay in your office for 10 years?

A: So – yeah, anyways – anyways, yeah, the company is owned by a conglomerate, and we still – I think we still employ about 250 or 300 people here in **Des Moines**.

Q: Oh, goodness.

A: So, it was really a – the Russians are out.

Q: The Russians are out?

A: They're all sold out, yes. Even – I'll tell you who was our sales manager for a while, **Shevalski**(ph).

Q: Oh, wow.

A: You know who sh – sh – you know who the **Shevalskis**(ph) are, that's the brother of the Israeli **Shevanksi**(ph) **– Shevanski**(ph). So I got involved with the Russian community. We brought a lot of Russians into **Des Moines** at that time. Now the company may have three or four Russians left, that's about it.

Q: Now when – when – when –

A: That's another story we could probably write.

Q: When you – when you helped those two families come here in the early 70s, was – was that the first time you were helping refugees from **Europe** after the war, or –

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So in the immediate postwar period, you were not – you were not part of any kind of communities who were – who were either placing refugees, or –

A: Well, no, we were busy establishing ourselves.

Q: Sure.

A: And both, you know, commercially, or financially, or emotionally or psychologically.

Q: Sure.

A: And I don't think my parents ever really assimilated, and they sold – they – they got into a bigger store, and then another bigger store and they finally sold out, and they retired, and moved into **Brooklyn**, on eastern – not **Eastern Parkway**, **Ocean Parkway**. I used to go and go visit them. And my father couldn't stand retiring, so they bought a little business in kind of a market on – selling haberdashery. And it got held up one time, and the guy left him bloody and unconscious on the floor. I flew into **New York** at that time. I used to go to **New York** about four or five times on business every year. And – and then I flew in for that, and my dad was in the hospital, and at that time I sold up – I went and sold th-their business, I would not let him go back.

Q: What – what year was this –

A: So he retired –

Q: – how old was he at the time?

A: That had to be, I don't know, 60s, or 70s, late 60s.

Q: So he would have been around 70 by then?

A: Well, let's see. I just celebrated my 88th birthday, so that had to be – I was in my 60s, probably. Had to be, yeah, yeah, I was still young. I was still flying all over the country. So I – and you know – and I'm trying to remember whether I was still

working for ya – my other company, was president, or was my new company. So I g – I have to go back and talk to my wife about that.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Now, let's go back to the years '41 and '42. When – when did you get your citizenship?

A: Four – exactly? 1940 – I was drafted 19 – the war started 1941 - '42. I went in the army in '43. Okay, 1943.

Q: That is when you got your citizenship?

A: Yes, I wa – I was in – I was finish basic training in Camp **Croft**, **South Carolina**.

Q: In basic training, did you – I – I – I – I'd like to get a – a better picture of you as a young man. Were you – were you a – a sporty type? Wa-Was this a hard thing for you to go through, basic training?

A: Yes. It wasn't hard, no, I hated it.

Q: Why did you hate it?

A: I hated bayonet training, I hated sleeping in a ditch. I – I trained as an infantry, I had a **[indecipherable]** 745, which was my **[indecipherable]** rifleman and machine gunner. **Zero Mostel**, you know, who he was?

Q: Yes.

A: He was in my barracks.

Q: Oh.

A: He hated it worse than I did. I used to do his field packs and help him, because he really was like – there's a Jewish expression, like a **laymach**(ph). That was he was very – not very coordinated, believe it or not, at that time. He was heavy overweight, and everything was a joke with him. So, we remained friends, I mean, somewhat, I didn't see him very often. I – every time I – when I go to **New York** I would look him up if he was in a play. So, it was a – but the basic training that I took was in vi – but it – many of the people in my company were foreign born. They had – they didn't know what to do with us. So, we all took basic training, and many of the – many of the people were older than I was. I was, you know, I was fairly young, and had a great education, or had special talents. And I remember doing **KP**.

Q: What is that?

A: Kitchen – kitchen duty, you know. Every so often you had to help out in the kitchen. Hated it. You know, peel potatoes and things like that for the rest of the –

Q: So what – what did you hate about it? Was it the discomfort? Did you feel that it was pointless –

A: I didn't hate it, I loved the army.

Q: Oh you – but you hated the basic training.

A: Yeah, it was, you know, being that I was tired all the time, and I slept in – in foxholes. They taught us – and I was in the infantry, which is – that's the one they do all the fighting. So there – you know, these are the people that are in combat positions. So I tell you, one day I'm sitting outside after a hard day of training, and I was sitting in a common disc – ara – area which is called the common. You know, in front of the barracks, and it must have been summer. And I look up and I see a guy, boy that looks familiar. Oh my God, can it be? Someone that was in the same gymnasium or the same school in **Vienna –**

Q: Really?

A: – that I was. Name was **Irving Geringer**, and I holler, **Irving**, **Irving**. He turns around, it was him. And he and his brother were – didn't live far from us. His father was a first violinist at the **Vienna Philharmonic** before the Nazis came, and **Irving** was extremely smart, I remember him in gymnasium. He was born a year ahead of me and – but he was a very smart student, like, you know, like a four point. And – and I saw – I was so startled, you know, to meet someone from my gymnasium, my high school in **Vienna**, same company. And we spent men – much of our army time together. He – he had a very high **I.Q.**, and he became **[indecipherable]** he was –

really did the job, did most of the work. He worked with one major, it's an officer, to write the story of the campaign, of the Italian campaign, because he and I both landed up in **North Africa**, and then on in **Italy**. And I spent all my – year of my – the war years in **Italy**. And he wrote a b – he wrote the official book of the campaign, which is in Library of Congress, and I looked it up one day. And he and I – wherever I was, **Irving** had this freedom to travel throughout the – the war area, because he was doing all this – this all historic writing –

Q: He – he – he was doing that during what time?

A: – and he would look and hound me everyplace I went.

Q: Th-This was after the war ended, is that right?

A: No, that was during the war.

Q: It was during the war?

A: Yeah.

Q: And so – so he had been recruited for his – his writing talents, into a special – he had some sort of special position?

A: Yes, yes, but he was much smarter, he had a high – much higher **I**.**Q**. than I did.

Q: Did you get an **I**.**Q**. test?

A: Yeah, I did.

Q: Did they give you one at the – in the army?

A: Yes, I've got an **I**.**Q**. test. I – there wasn't as – I thought I was much smarter than what the test **[indecipherable]**

Q: Did you and **Irving** speak German or English to each other?

A: No, we talked English only.

Q: So **Irving** was –

A: And we kept our friendship right through the war, and we were very close while we lived in **New York**. His father became the concertmaster at the – which is the first chair in the orchestra – at the Metropolitan Opera Company. And so we went to the opera very often, for free. And became kind of a steady guy at the Metropolitan Opera – that's when they were still down on **1407**, which is **1407 Broadway**, and then they moved uptown to **Lincoln Center**, and we did – I still remember going, how amazed we were **[indecipherable]** opera company, **Irving** and I did. We were – became very good fre – I gotta tell you a quick anec – ac – anecdote. Not anecdote, thing that happened to him and me. When the war ended, I moved up from **Italy** into – of – **U-USF – US – US** force – **USFA**. **US** Forces in **Austria**. They apparently went through my – through, you know, my – every **G**.**I**. had that **IBM** card. I didn't have it, but they had it. We traveled with trucks in the wors – in worse environments, that had the first machines, **IBM** cards, they were – had holes in them. And they had these machines in the trucks, they're big, big – they were

very big semis. And – and you – all your – your record and who you are, your names, your schooling, your **I**.**Q**., whatever you did, was on that one card, it had holes in it. So if they want to pull the – that the army wanted to pull you up, because looking for certain specialties that people may have, they would somehow run these cards through these machines, and it'll come up. So, when the war ended, my outfit was moved – was going to be moved back to the **States**, but then they redirected it to **Japan** – not to **Japan**, but to the **Pacific**. So, I got pulled out, and I always wondered how – why didn't I go with my outfit? So apparently my Viennese birth and my German knowledge, I landed up in **US** Forces in **Austria**, on the mar – on the **[indecipherable]**. Then, he was the commanding general of the campaign in – in **Italy**, that went from the bottom of the boot all the way up to the **Po River**, where I served all my military overseas. So then my friend **Irving** wrote the book about the campaign, the Italian campaign. So, I-I find myself pulled out and sent to a staging area and then I get orders that I am now part of **USFA** ma – **US** Forces in **Austria**. So I am the only really Viennese person in a contingent of about 200 - 300 **G**.**I**.s that will make the invasion back in – not invasion, but because the Russians got there before us, but reoccupation of **Vienna**. I – did I tell you that yet?

Q: I'm not sure whether it was part of the recording, but I certainly knew that as a part of your story –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and I do want to hear more about that, but I think we're ahead of ourselves. So –

A: Okay, I'll go back.

Q: So let's go back to 1943, and your basic training and your time, before you get shipped out; did you ever feel any hostility because you were foreign born?

A: No.

Q: Did you ever feel –

A: In fact, one day –

Q: Yeah?

A: – I got called to the orderly room. And the first sergeant is tell me that recent telegram to me. He said he has a request from – order from **Hapsburg [indecipherable]** of K-Kaiser **Franz Joseph** from **Austria**, that they starting an Austrian battalion, part of the **US** Army, or the – their allies, that they want me to join to go to become part of the Austrian – I was Austrian battalion, you know, combat battalion. I was so shocked when they read that to me and asked me if I want to go, and I said absolutely not, I'm an American and I want to stay here and I want to train here and I want to stay in the American army. I have no desire to fight for the Austrians.

Q: You were already a citizen when you got that – when you got that –

A: No, no –

Q: Not yet, okay.

A: – I was not a citizen. I was just here four years.

Q: Mm-hm, I see.

A: So, you want to hear what happened?

Q: Definitely.

A: So I'm getting sh – now we get orders to ship out. I now get assigned to overseas replacement, no outfit, but the – I was called a – a replacement, going to a repo depot. That was like where you waited, and then, for example, the third division, or the 45th or 36th, that was – is a fighting position in **Italy**. When they had casualties they would put in a request for replacements. So that's what I was trained to be, a replacement. So, on the way, to figure out that we're going overseas, from **Hampton Roads**, **Virginia**, they find out I'm not a citizen, the army. So they take me in **Pennsylvania** – we were a staging area, Camp **Shenango**, I still remember that. And they find a federal judge – I'm only in this country four years and to be a citizen you have to be here five years, to be naturalized. And they convince a judge that I have to ship overseas, and they need me overseas and I've been trained, to

make me a citizen. So, I think I'm the only citizen in the **United States** that kind of did it in four years, rather than this is required five years.

Q: It was advanced placement.

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: It was advanced placement.

A: Yeah, whatever it was. So, I can't – I became a citizen. I looked – you know, if you look at my naturalization paper, I'm there – you know, it's a picture of me in a uniform. So – and I was so proud of myself, I mean, my God, finally, four years in this country and I'm now a citizen. I'm speaking English, I'm part of the American army, I'm going oversea, I'm going to fight the Nazis. My God, I was so happy, you can't believe it.

Q: And there wasn't any apprehensiveness about danger?

A: No, I didn't care. I just couldn't wait. What a way to get even. What was what – you know, what an opportunity, to become part of the American milieu and the American army, finally, you know, nobody's going to question my citizenship, so nobody's going to question who I am, because now I'm serving in the American army, and I'm fighting for – for our existence and to bring democracy back.

Q: Was there ever any hostility because you were Jewish?

A: Did I what?

Q: Was there ever any hostility in the army, or any kind of differentiation because you were Jewish?

A: I never, ever – maybe once, and I know it was just some guy from the **Ozarks** or someplace, wasn't a very smart guy, made one remark. No, I never, ever had any kind of ant – any anti-Semitic remark made to me. My three closest friends are; one from **Kansas**; one from the state of **Washington**; and one from **Kentucky**. We're very close. We really for a while were – were able to stay together, and never has there ever been a question of my religion, or of being Jewish or not, for some reason. Maybe I assimilated well, I don't know, but I think that maybe had something to do with it. I found two of my cousins that came from **Vienna**. This is my cell phone. That's my granddaughter.

Q: Do – do you need me to pause the recording? Do you want to ge –

A: Yeah, would you hold on? No-Now, hold on, don't get off –

Q: I won't.

A: – I'll tell her that I'm talking to you, yeah.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: Okay?

Q: All right.

A: Hold on. Hi **Laura**. How are you sweetie? Yeah, listen, I'm on the phone on an interview with the Holocaust Museum. What time would that be? So that's – that's about three to four on my time. That'd be great, terrific. I really, really miss talking to you, and you know, it's like I'm half alive. All right. All right, so I'll talk to you in a couple – few hours. Thank you. Love you. Bye. I have the most remarkable granddaughter you could think of. There are two.

Q: Yes.

A: This is one of the two. My grands – my son-in-law is dean of the law school at the – at the ci – in – in **California**, I forget the school now. Ha, most obvious things, yeah. And she is – this is one of my granddaughters and she's not going into graduate school over there, she just found out. But in the meantime, she's teaching all these smart kids, she says, kindergarten. And that she – they all either work for **Google** or they work for **[indecipherable]** also, so they're at – at **Stanford**, or they all at one or the other high tech companies, she says, and their kids are spoiled as – unbelievable. Anyways, she'll call back, okay.

Q: Sure.

A: All right, where were we?

Q: Well, you were saying that you never felt any bad feelings towards you –

A: No, never.

Q: – either because you were foreign born, or because you were Jewish.

A: No, never.

Q: And you couldn't wait to get into the European theater.

A: Yes.

Q: And –

A: It was a – like homecoming.

Q: Mm-hm. The other people who were in your unit who were foreign born, where there many who were from **Germany** or **Austria**?

A: My friend **Irving** is the one I – you know –

Q: Right.

A: – that I traveled with a lot. And no, I don't think, in my out – but once I got assigned to the headquarters of the Fifth Army, in adjutant general's office, I got pulled out while I was in **North Africa**. I was waiting to replace – to replace – I was – the lowest form of army life was being an – a infantry replacement. They used to call it cannon fodder, cause we came there totally inexperienced, and the people who – who still were the 45th or 36th, or third divisions, which would have three divisions that were const – by the Fifth Army, cons – were part of the – I mean, they were the Fifth Army, where all the people that survived, you know, combat wounds or death were extraordinary lucky, or they were skillful. And so,

because it's casualty rate was pretty high at that time. So – and we didn't know very much. There was – I got stuck in that river, called **Rapido** River, and **Cassino**, I don't know if you ever heard of that.

Q: Oh, sure. But at that point were – you're already in **Italy**, is that right?

A: Yeah, that's when I –

Q: But –

A: – I wasn't in **Africa** very long. I took a long train ride that they assigned me to go – what happened, I was pulled out. Apparently they looked at my service records and I was – I went over there as an infantry replacement.

Q: Right.

A: And I turned out that I got orders to go to – to fly into southern **Italy**, south of **Naples**. **Cassera**(ph) I think was the name of the town, who – we had made the invasion a very short time ago.

Q: But when –

A: And **[indecipherable]** comes. So anyways, I never really got right into a combat situation at that time.

Q: I see. But when – where – where did you first – I'm guessing you were on a boat, is that right?

A: Yes, I was –

Q: Okay.

A: – on a – on a – on the **Normandie**.

Q: And where did it touch ground first in **North Africa**? Where did you get off –

A: **Casablanca**.

Q: **Casablanca**. And did you take a train from **Casablanca**?

A: No, I stayed in **Casablanca** for a while.

Q: Okay.

A: A staging area, and then I took a train. Then I moved – I don't quite remember, I took a train. Then I moved – I don't quite remember. I took a train – that was the end of my vis – my stay in **Africa**, when I took that train. And that train took seven days to arrive at its destination. All of **North Africa** I think I travel – traveled, from **Morocco** to – to – I landed up in **Tunis**. Not in **Tunis**, I'm sorry, I landed up in **Azures**(ph). I was in **Tunis** all at a – on a – a **G**.**I**. train, run by American railroad pe – I mean army guys, but they were railroad battalion. And it was one of the most ex – one of the – to me, it was one of the outstanding adventures that I had in my life.

Q: Being on the train?

A: Yes, because I went and saw **Bedouins**, and remarkable, and I – it wasn't that I **[indecipherable]** passenger, I was a fo – in a 40 and eight. You know what a 40 and eight is?

Q: No.

A: It's a – a – that's how they transported, unfortunately, people into **Dachau** and to other concentration camps. They were baggage cars, you know, where they transported –

Q: Yeah.

A: – things, not people. But that's how the army traveled.

Q: Yeah.

A: So I got there, I got orders and I – they – I took the train, that took us six or seven days, and I landed up in als – the city of **Algiers**.

Q: Okay.

A: Which was, at that time, very French. It was like being in **Paris**. I was there for about like two or three days, and maybe longer, and I was put into a **B17**.

Q: What is that?

A: A plane that's – that was **B17 [inaudible]** and then it went upward, higher numbers until **B29**, so th-the big four – this was a two – two motors, I think, if I

remember. And they pulled out the machine guns out of the front of there. First time I've ever been on an airplane. And flew and flew –

Q: How did that feel?

A: Fantastic. I didn't sit and – I sat there in the bubble, you know the bubble?

Q: No, what's the bubble?

A: The bubble is where the guns stick out, and it's Plexiglas.

Q: Oh, so you had a great aerial view?

A: Oh, my God, it was – yes. I've never been in an airplane in my life, and I'm sitting in this bubble, going over the **Mediterranean**, out of the coast of **North Africa** into **Italy –**

Q: And this is day – daylight?

A: Daylight.

Q: It was – it was in the daytime that you were so –

A: Yes, yes, yes. And it was fantastic. We had just finished and one – chased the Germans out of **Sicily**, and now we're getting ready to march up, or to – to chase them out of **Italy**, you know, the boot, we're at the bottom of the boot. So I –

Q: Okay. So you get to **Italy** and what happens?

A: **Italy**, I get assigned to the adjutant general's office and I get with a fellow from **Atlanta**, **Georgia** who had requested me, was a sergeant, to be – to open up **APOs**,

army post offices, which I knew nothing about. And I was part of the adjutant general's division of the Fifth Army, so instead of being up on the firing line with the 33rd – 34th or 45th division, which that time ran a cam – ran a campaign, I land up – opening up army post office, which I did not –

Q: Was that a disappointment?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Was that a disappointment?

A: Well, kind of a mixed feeling. Number one, I – you know, I did experience a little bit of combat, but not as much as I should have. I got – we got stuck before, at the **Rapido** River, which was in southern **Italy**, and at a place called **Cassino**, which was an abbey on top of a mountain, that the Germans has put big guns on it and we couldn't get across the **Rapido** River. I got in too late into **Anzio**, which is a beach, was an attack trying to circumvent the uk – the **[indecipherable]** way because it was muddy and – and very difficult, and Germans had really great positions on it. So, it was great, I had – I was – I went from **Naples**, as we conquered territories up to **Rome**, from **Rome** to **Venice –** not, sorry, from **Rome** to **Florence**, and from **Florence** to the heck – over on the **Adriatic**, I've forgotten the name of the town. It was fi – it was a fantastic adventure. I –

Q: Did you ever – did you ever interact with Italians?

A: With what?

Q: With – with the locals, the – the Italians?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: How did they react to you?

A: They were extremely friendly and I – one of the things that the **G**.**I**.**s** did, they – they used to bi – have – always there's someplace that somebody always was cooking spaghetti. And for very little, so very little, few liras, you cou – would go to their homes and they would have a great meals of spaghetti –

Q: Had you had –

A: – true Italian spaghetti, and I always remember that very well.

Q: Had you ever had Italian food back in **New York** before?

A: Good question. Well, I can't remember was after the war, before the war, probably after the war that we could – became a little bit – my friends and I, we – when we first married, we were going to good restaurants upstate – uh, I mean, further uptown in **New York**. No, I don't think – I don't think – it wasn't until I came out of the army and I got married that I really began to enjoy the – the culture that **America** provided me.

Q: And these Italians who had – you would cook spaghetti for a few lira, would you –

A: I didn't cook, they cooked.

Q: Th-They cooked, they cooked.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Were they inviting you into their living rooms –

A: Yes, it's in their homes, their homes, yes. It was not unus – it was pretty com – it was very common. They had no money. They, you know, they were very poor, you know, the war devastated much of their surroundings, and there was – you know, I lived in **Florence** for six months, I –

Q: That must have been nice.

A: Yes, on top of the mount – on top of the **Vomaro**(ph) **nord**(ph) – I think that's what it was called. It was – I didn't know I was going to get there, but I, maybe 15 years ago, 20 years ago, a group of us from **Des Moines** were biking from **Venice** to **Florence** on our bikes.

Q: That's quite something.

A: About six or seven days, yeah, along the beach, along the – the **Adriatic**. And I got to – to – I can't remember the suburb of **Florence**, where I stayed for six months in a – almost a castle, a – a wonderful, beautiful palace. And when I – we took this – friends of mine and I from **Des Moines**, there was a whole group of us, did this bike ride, we landed up at that place. This must be maybe 15 - 20 years ago.

And I stood there and I couldn't believe – I mean, was so beautiful. And I asked myself, did I really appreciate the beauty of this when I was there in 1944 – '43 - '44? I don't know.

Q: When – when you would – I – I suppose you and many other **G**.**I**.**s** were eating the spaghetti, how did that – how did that work? Did the locals come over and say, are you hungry, do you have a few lira, or –

A: No, no, no, no, no, you found – there were – **G**.**I**.**s** had a fantastic system of communications. One guy tells another, hey, we're eating at the mayor's house. His – his wife cooked the spaghetti, cost you like **X** amount of liras, like two dollars, or something like that, but it was all liras, occupation money. It was – so you found it, you went and found and other guys knew. It traveled – it traveled very easily. It was a very – the communication system was unbelievable, you know, everybody told everybody else.

Q: And this was – this was common practice throughout the places you stayed in **Italy**?

A: I don't know – not all places, no.

Q: Okay.

A: It happened in – it much happened in **Naples**.

Q: Okay.

A: A little place called **Bagnoli** – I think it was called **Bagnoli**, and it was a suburb of **Naples**. And the mayor, his wife, would cook this – she was a great spaghetti cook. Good, wonderful sauce. You know, there wasn't much meat around, so – and we got tired of our rations.

Q: Sure.

A: And our own cooks. So –

Q: Where – where did the lira come from? How did you have spending money?

A: What the what came?

Q: The lira, where did it come from? How did you have spending money?

A: Lira was printed in the **United States**. It was all occupation money. The original lira became – where it was – I think if I'm – I'm not so – don't quite remember how it was handled, but I think that was turned in, it was in **France**. It was all occupation money that was printed by the Americans.

Q: Now you were in **Italy** between when and when? What are the dates?

A: 1943, September, October, and until 1940 – until May, June – May or June 1944.

Q: And during this period, you didn't see much fighting?

A: No. I saw some, but not much.

Q: And there – there weren't any incidents where – where there was some sort of attack on your unit, a hostile environment, anything like that?

A: No, just some bombings. Some planes got through, German planes. That wasn't – you ran. There were – we always had some protection, some bomb shelters.

Q: Were there any friendships between the **G**.**I**.**s** and the locals, or were you moving too fast for anything?

A: Yes. There were friendships – not friendships, no. And that's what bothered me somewhat, and I think maybe I had an extraordinary sensitivity to that. The Germans – the – the – the Italians were – the **G**.**I**.**s** called them guineas or wops. They called the Germans krauts, they called the French, the frogs, and I – bothered me a great deal. It was insulting. And I always wondered – that was the one minus that I always felt that we did not do a good job to – in other words, the American **G**.**I**. had a great sense of superiority, emotionally, and looked down on almost anybody that wasn't American. And I was sensitive to that.

Q: And you were not partaking in that?

A: No. I – I felt I could not call an Italian with any kind of a name but Italian. Same thing I didn't call any German a kraut. It was – I'll give you an example. My son-in-law, married to our youngest daughter, who is dean of this law school in – they're Californian, and his father, my son-in-law's dad, was a major or colonel in the tank corps. And he divorced – they divorced – in other words, my – had five children and he divorced his wife, in **California**, and married a German woman.

And we used to see them occasionally, you know, when we went to **California** we'd see the mother, and then we'd see the father, you know. I don't know if I make myself clear.

Q: Oh, sure.

A: And he used to call his wife the kraut. She was born in **Germany**, and she was a war bride. It always bothered me and I once – I'd never really – I was going to talk to him about this, but I never really felt I wanted to get into that kind of involvement. So, I felt the same way, that I didn't want to diminish people's – what – cultural background, even though they were the enemies, I didn't – they were Germans.

Q: Sure.

A: And kraut does – somehow did not really fit their ch – in my opinion, they were – they were – they were Germans. They were – I – the concentration camps were – guards were Germans, the Nazis were Germans. And if would call them krauts, I would somehow diminish their – even their evil –

Q: I understand.

A: – of what they did.

Q: I understand.

A: I don't know if I make myself clear.

Q: Absolutely. Absolutely.

A: So I looked at them as who they were. I interrogated some, when they needed someone to speak to a prisoner or two. And everybody told me they weren't Nazis. I never found a Nazi. But they all lied. They were always very **[indecipherable]** but I did the – later on, toward – when I was in **Austria** I did interrogate some **SS** people. So that's **[indecipherable]**

Q: And I do want – I do want to talk about that more, but let's just – let's just finish the Italian chapter then.

A: Yes.

Q: In **Italy**, you're there until May or June of '44, and – okay, so what happens in May or June?

A: In what? May or June?

Q: Yes. Wha – how do you leave **[indecipherable]**

A: You mean when the war ended? When?

Q: Well, at wh-wha – when – when do you leave **Italy**, and for what reason?

A: Oh. I was in northern **Italy**, I moved up from **Naples**, from – into some other town, two little towns, I don't even remember their names. And when the war ended, I was much in northern **Italy**, not far from the **Po** River, and I forget the little town that we were in. I wish I'd remember, and I didn't keep records of these

things. And I remember **[indecipherable]** for some reason I – we – I landed up before that at – at the **Adriatic**, and I have to look at the map to see what the name of the town was that I was in, because most of the time I was over of the **Mediterranean** part of **Italy**. So I get pulled out of my outfit, and get into a – and I don't quite remember all that, how – where I landed up, it's someplace that I disliked the master sergeant that seemed to have no combat experience or any else, had just come from the u – from the **States**. He was a regular army guy, never really participated in any of the combat situations **[indecipherable]** it all back, and he just had come to northern **Italy**. And he tried to tell all these guys that had been there for two years or more how they should behave, you know, like back in the **States**, very **G**.**I**.

Q: Now was it – was it a behavior – was it a discipline, or was it fraternizing –

A: Discipline, you know –

Q: Discipline?

A: – get up in the morning and stand at attention and count off numbers and things he didn't do any more, things that were done in basic training. And this guy, this master sergeant insisted on it. So it was a lot of – a lot of complaints about it, and they finally stopped it and they kind of got rid of this guy. And I waited there for –

and I wasn't quite sure what my assignment was going to be, when I heard I was now part of **US** forces in **Austria**.

Q: Now, prior –

A: But before that my –

Q: – prior to that, you had never been asked to used your German for the arm –

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Prior to that –

A: They never used – they never, ever – this is the first time that my **IBM** card came up –

Q: Okay.

A: – with that information apparently, because otherwise I would have gone with my outfit and left **Italy** when the war ended. So I land up, and they tell me I am now part of General **Mark Clark**, who was the commanding general, of whom I knew his aides because I traveled with them most of the time in **Italy**, the headquarters of the Fifth Army. That's where I was ass – really originally assigned to. So it was kind of surprising to me. And once I get an order and tell that I'm – we're going into – travel into **Salzburg**, which is a beautiful place.

Q: Had you ever been there as a child?

A: No. My friend **Irving** was – has been there.

Q: And he was with you during that time?

A: No, no, but he came – he – he wou – he would come for two hours, or three hours, or four hours. And he tells me, here's what you're going to do in **Salzburg**, you know, boom, boom, boom, because every – the **Salzburg** Festival are held every summer, and the **Vienna Philharmonic** goes there and plays.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they have opera, you know, it's the birthplace of **Mozart**.

Q: Yeah.

A: So he tells me, oh, you're going to **Salzburg**. Why am I going to **Salzburg**? Because we're negotiating with the Russians, and according to the **Potsdam** treaty, the **United States** and **Great Britain** and **France** and **Russia's** supposed to administer and be the occupation forces for two cities: **Berlin** and **Vienna**. And the Russians were not going to let – they were playing possum with us, and possum, and they would not let us in, and from what I understood at that time, that they had not paid their troops for three years, four years. And they –

Q: They would not let you in where?

A: That was in nine – in May of 1944.

Q: And they would not let you in where, exactly?

A: That was in – that was, at that time, in **Salzburg**.

Q: So – but they were not letting you go to –

A: No, they were at a place called **Enz**, on the **Enz** River, and **Linz** and –

Q: Okay, and they weren't letting you go towards **Vienna**?

A: No, they was – the – **Austria** was occ – it was separated, it was – I'm sorry, it was divided between – I'm trying to remember the British – I think the British had a piece of it, we had a piece of it. We were – north of **Linz** into **Salzburg**, was all American.

Q: Okay.

A: Other parts were British, and little parts were French and most – and **Vienna** was all under the Russians. And if – from what I understand, it's never been publicized that we gave – you see, everything at that time in **Europe** had printed money – had money printed in **Baltimore**, occupational money. Th-The local money was withdrawn and not worth anything, or – and occupation money became the – the a – is what you traded in. So we apparently gave them a truckload of printed money –

Q: Them being –

A: – occupation money, and they let it, and –

Q: Who is them?

A: – we – I – I mean, I love **Salzburg**, I – for a short time I stayed at this unbelievable chateau **[indecipherable]** we almost got kicked out, the **G.I.s** did,

cause **Mark Clark** took it over. And it's now a si – it used – **Arthur Miller**, you know, the playwright –

Q: Sure.

A: – used to have a school there of a dramat – drama and it's now owned by some American foundation. And a friend of mine's wife was a professor here at **Drake University** and now retired, went there for six months.

Q: Do you know the name of the chateau?

A: No. It wasn't **Mirabell**(ph), which is a **Mozart** thing, and I don't know what it's called now, and I – I have to really go into my computer to figure out the name of it.

Q: Okay.

A: Absolutely gorgeous. I didn't stay there long, about a couple weeks –

Q: So, you – you get into **Austria**, you get to **Salzburg**, you get to that chateau, what is going through your mind that you're back in **Austria**, what – what are you thinking?

A: Unbelievable. Yes, I – I mean, it's almost indescribable. I mean, the emotional – never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that that – that was – that would happen to me. That where I got – I couldn't sit in a – in a park bench in **Vienna**, I could not ride the tr – the trolley, I couldn't go to a movie, and here all of a sudden I'm the conquering hero in **Austria**, walking around like I own the joint.

Q: What – what – what were you and your unit doing, by the way, during the days?

A: Nothing.

Q: You were waiting for orders?

A: Waiting for orders to see –

Q: And wer – did you have a lot of freedom to move around?

A: Yes, yes. I gave you a – I'll give you a little anecdote, happened. So my – who shows up? My friend **Irving**. So he knows – he knows the surrounding. He – they used to come every summer they – they have rented a place because his father played at the orchestra. And so I get this whole history about **Mozart** and everything that really was important and what house he lived in, and the **Mozarteum**, and we go to the library, and we see things I've never expected to see, you know, going back 500 years. And – and one day we go into a little shop to send – get some postcards to send home. And he pulls out of – we look at these postcards, quite old, and he pulls out one postcard, and it's **Toscanini**. You know who he is?

Q: Yes.

A: You – you know who he was.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Hello?

Q: Yes, yes, mm-hm.

A: Yeah. He was probably the most famous conductor in the world at one time. He conducted the **NBCs** Philharmonic, the symphony. He was the – if you go and look up – go to **Google** and look up a **Toscanini**, you'll be – there wasn't – nobody's ever been **suppersed**(ph) – sup – really has got the fame that he had as a conductor, Italian fellow. So he is conducting – no, he's rehearsing – on this postcard, he's rehearsing the **Vienna Philharmonic**. And there are people in shirtsleeves, and there are people standing around on the periphery of this orchestra. And my friend **Irving** pulls it out and he shows me one of the peoples – boys, he was like 14 years old, or 13 years old, was him.

Q: Wow.

A: Is that **[indecipherable]**? So, when I was

Q: Did he buy the postcard?

A: Yes, he bought it. I looked for others, but it's the only one where he had. So I went – I was a – three years ago I was with two friends, I was in **Munich** and **Berlin** and I stopped over in – in – in **Salzburg**. I went to that little shop, and this little old lady, and this little old guy, still in that same shi – same people.

Q: Really?

A: And I went through again, trying to find another postcard like that, but I couldn't. I spent about a half hour going through their inventory. So, it was a very fascinating, to me, you know? So here we are, and finally get orders to drive with another guy, we had our own **Jeep**, to drive into **Vienna**.

Q: One more question before – before we get to the part where you get back to **Vienna**.

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Wa – I do have one more question before we get to the part where you get to **Vienna**.

A: Yes, sure.

Q: In **Salzburg**, I'm guessing you are interacting with the locals cause you have the freedom to move around and you speak the language.

A: Right.

Q: What is your sense from them? How are they reacting to you as an American, and how are you react – reacting to them as Austrians?

A: I acted like an American. I didn't speak German, I wouldn't speak German.

Q: I see.

A: Unless I had to. I had this – and I'm ashamed to tell you this, because things change, that I truly – I was a – I'd lorded it over them. I'm a conqueror. They

kicked me out. You know, this is a terrible, hurtful thing for us. My father was in **Dachau**.

Q: Yes.

A: We took – you know, we saw what happened to **Austria**, we see how the Austrians responded and what they did to the Jewish people.

Q: And when you say you –

A: So I had this, you know, this feeling, and it translated itself, I think, in my behavior.

Q: How – how did it translate itself? What did you do?

A: Well, I – you know, I never told people that I'm Austrian.

Q: Yes.

A: I was an American, period. That's how far it went.

Q: But was there anything else that you did that was – where you used your position?

A: No, I – I just – I'm like an observer. Really, you know, I was a – I wasn't even officer, I was a s – you know, I was a sergeant. And so I didn't have much authority. I had enough authority because of my uniform, and it was – you know, it – that was enough. So you had to be pretty careful about yourself, that it didn't run away with – with – with it. It wa – it's very difficult, I think, to describe what it

feels like to be a conqueror, or to be in a foreign country, even though to me it wasn't – **Salzburg** was no longer my country, it was – I'm an American. And that was very important to me, to make this distinction. And I looked at it like an observer. I didn't have a feeling any more for being a native of **Austria**, or have a sense of pride.

Q: Did the Austrians –

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Did the Austri – did the Austrians fear the Americans? Was this – was there any kind of sense that they were worried about what was coming?

A: No? You mean, the Americans, or the – the Germans?

Q: The – the – the Austrians, the locals around **Salzburg**. Was there any feeling –

A: Well, there was **[indecipherable]** yes, they were very – I think they were very vulnerable. The ec – the economics were pretty bad. Food was not easily available. The – the natives kind of did not really have a high profile, they kind of stuck to their homes. And you know, they saw the Nazis behavior. And I think there was a certain amount of submerged – whatever they tell you that they didn't know what was going on with the concentration camps and the gassing and all this, they knew it. So, I think in their own psyche, they felt this basic sense of insecurity, because the German army, and the Austrian army, though it really was really part of the

German army – and you know, if you go back in the history, more Austrians were associated with the concentration camps than Germans. They were probably the worst anti-Semites. So you felt very, very – I think they were – they themselves knew what they did, and kept a low, low profile. And so, I really – my opportunity to talk to local people was really not that big.

Q: Mm-hm. Were there any American **G.I.s** who were somehow using their status or their power for nefarious goals?

A: Oh, I don't know. The – there – there was no questioning about the occupation. The **United States** moved in there very – with lock, stock and barrel. I mean, we had everything. We had food, we had – you know, had **PXs**, we had – we took over the best hotels. We were – we were the conquerors. And we had strong feelings of superiority, subconsciously and consciously.

Q: And di –

A: So we made these people feel pretty small, you know, that's – and they if – and the worse they behaved during the war, I think the more afraid they were.

Q: Was there any fraternization with Austrian women?

A: Yes, some. Wer – I never had any. I'm trying to think why I never had any. I hand a girlfriend at home, and I was corresponding with her almost on a daily basis. You know **[indecipherable] V – V**-letters. She's – my wife is a very wonderful

writer. She has a fantastic ability. She really should have been an author. She never really pursued it, but she wrote the most beautiful letters. So I really was very much in love with her. And so really I had no – ever had any kind of relationship with any woman. I'm trying to think – not even, you know, I spoke the language.

Q: Right.

A: And I never – I never – never occurred to me. And the other thing, I think – okay, I will tell you a story that – well, I don't know if I should really – okay. The – the – somehow, I had a sense of – was it discipline or morals or ethics, or whatever you may want to call it, instilled to me by my parents. There was no deviation. I never messed around with any woman. And – except one time. And that later came, before going home, that I had to get up on ship – I mean, I had no – no relationships, but I got involved into a situation in **Marseilles**, **France**, which was very strange. Now, if we have time I'll tell you about it –

Q: Oh, we have plenty of time.

A: – and promise not to put it into my biography.

Q: Oh, no.

A: Because it was so unusual, yeah, yes.

Q: Sure.

A: And – and my wife, you know, everybody, all of my friends know that story, my wife knows the story. But anyways, up to that time, there wasn't anything that – that really I felt was – somehow it never appeared, I – I can't remember. I can remember why I never had any attraction to any of the German or Austrian women, or Italian women. I did make the acquaintances of one Jewish woman in **Naples**, and she was a violinist, and the only thing that we had was my love for music and her talent. And I went to her – with her a few – she was Jewish and she was a violinist and she gave recitals, and I went with her while I stayed in **Naples**, up to a few of her recitals. And that was a f – one woman that I met and I helped her out a little bit with food, what they were very short on at that particular time, with her mother.

Q: In **Salzburg**, were there **G**.**I**.**s** helping out the local Austrians with food, or was that –

A: Oh yeah, I think so. The – the women in **Austria**, particularly in **Vienna**. **Vienna** was starved for men, because they either were in prisons, they were in stalags, or they were in – killed. And it was a shortage of male people when I got into **Vienna**. The **G**.**I**.**s** were just having a ball.

Q: So let's talk about getting into **Vienna**. How did that happen?

A: So, the Russians finally said okay, you come in. So that time was springtime, and my – one of my – and I can't – a-all I remember, this guy and I were assigned

to this **Jeep**, or this **Jeep** was assigned to us. And we were in **Linz** at that time, which was the border between – we were waiting for the opportunity to get into – across the Russian zone. And they finally – th – we negotiated that – I didn't, but you know, the army did, and got the signal to drive into **Vienna** and to take over certain da – I got places, and a list of places that we should take over, at which hotel we should stay, and some apartments that were at one time held by some Nazi functionaries, to take over for our incoming troops. And only about 200 Americans to be – that were going into the first occupation. I think that's what the number was, but don't pin me down on it, but I don't quite remember. So we got into our **Jeep** and got our stuff in the back. And I remember picking up a – a Russian officer, and we offered him some cognac, and he – I think he drank that whole bottle, we just couldn't believe it. And we got into **Vienna** at about – oh, must have been after lunch, something like one o'clock or so, and the place was very few people. What happened as we drove through the – from the suburbs in, that every time there was some people walking and they saw us, they would duck into the closest building, where the doors were open maybe, you know, the gates.

Q: Right.

A: Apparently, they thought we – we didn't have much – I don't think we had any American flag painted on our **Jeep**, or our uniforms didn't – weren't very

recognizable. I wore fatigues, so did my buddy. And I had my helmet packed in a bag, in my barracks bag, and – and on our way in I say to this fellow in the camp, he was from – near **Cincinnati – Covington –** coving – **Covington**, **Kentucky**. I says, I want to take you to my old neighborhood where I grew up. Want to do that? He says, absolutely. So we – we – we kind of turned the **Jeep** into that direction. It's like the suburb – not suburb, but next to the first district was where our district was, not far walking distance to where the opera is, and the **Ringstrasse –** you ever been in **Vienna**?

Q: Yes.

A: Have you?

Q: Yeah. Yes, yes.

A: You did? So, not far. Even though it's the 20th district, it was very close to the first district. We drive up on our street where our buil – where we sh – we s – lived in an apartment house, and didn't see a soul. And there's certain – several buildings had been shelled. There were holes in them, big ones, and probably nobody living in them. But my – our building was not damaged, and – and the buildings across the street were not damaged. And we pulled our **Jeep** up, and it – when places have been shelled, that – kind of a funny silence, there's no birds singing, or things like that, and it was spring – it was late spring, the beginning of summer, I think. And

we pulled up, and I showed this guy, my buddy what – second floor up here, he look up and that's where our apartment was. I wonder if we can go in there, in the building, then – maybe the front – the gate was open, and see who lives there, who took over our apartment, and – and what it looks like. And just about when we're discussing this, and no people, this place is empty, a woman comes out of the building that we lived in, and she's carrying a pail. And there's, across the street from the building, an – a lot of cobblestones in **Vienna**, and – it's an old city. And she keeps her head down, because she sees these two soldiers sitting in this open **Jeep**, and there have been a lot of rapes before we got there, by the Russians **[indecipherable]**. But she's an elderly woman. And keeps her head down, but she looks – turns it and looks at us, and I had my – I don't have my hat on. I recognize her, who she was. She was a neighbor of ours. And she looks, and all of a sudden, she drops the pail **[music – phone ringing]** who is this? That's my wife, hold on a second.

Q: Sure.

A: Yeah, **Mickie**(ph)? Hello? Yes, I'm still on the ph – yes, I'm – we're getting close, okay? All right. Yes, so be – I know, okay, all right. She's telling me I'm tying up the phone. Okay, I know. Anyways, we get this – wrong part for her to do it. Well, we're going to conclude. So anyways, she looks and recognizes me – and I

have curly hair – and she drops the pail and screams my name. And all of a sudden – and she comes rushing over to me, and starts hugging and kissing me, and – and all of a sudden the street fills up with, I don't know, hundreds – hundred – I don't know, lots of people. They all kissing me and hugging me and my God, then where is my mom and my dad, and where are the **Schtolzenbergs**(ph), which is another Jewish family lived in that building, and they knew they were – they left for the **United States** much before us. And – oh, and **Walter** is here. That's a guy I used to play with when I was very young, his grandmother lived in that same building, he used to come and visit. He had just come out of a prison camp. American stalag. And – and so he came down, and I didn't know what to say to him, and vice versa. I gave away everything I had, like rations and – **K**-rations, or whatever I had, and said, I'll be back. I never went back. I went back many years later, s – not – maybe 10 years later, and my mother sent me a bunch of money, I should give – she gave me a bunch of names, and I should give out money to some neighbors that were very supportive of us. Which I didn't know. And I found them, and I start – I gave them like hundred dollar bills. They really were very sup – most appreciative with us. So I –

Q: So this – this welcome, if – if I understand correctly, this shocked you? Or you weren't quite sure how to react?

A: Yes, correct. It's kind of a love-hate, or hate-love, or whatever. I don't know, maybe that's the wrong term, but it was things that, you know, where were you? Where were they when we needed them? But they couldn't help themselves. So, they always wanted to know how are my dad, and how is my mom, and what's going on, and so – how did I come, and I'm an American soldier. And they treated me like I was, you know, the Prince of **Wales**, or President **Roosevelt**, or whoever. It was – and then I said, I'll be back, I'll be – but I never gone. And I went, did some foolish things. I remember that I used to hang out in a place called the **Augarten** – **Ausarten**(ph) – **Augarten**, which was next to my gymnasium, and where kids would hang out. And then when the Nazis took over, they put the graffiti on every bench, no Jews allowed, you know, **Juden verboten**. Couldn't sit on a park bench. So I went back there, I think I sat on 20 different benches.

Q: Yeah.

A: My God, the people thought I was nuts.

Q: But this was much later, right?

A: Yes, much later.

Q: Okay.

A: So that's kind of – I really wanted to come – go home, I had enough.

Q: How long – how – how – how many months are we talking about right now in **Vienna**?

A: Maybe three to four months.

Q: Three, four? And do you know di – can you tell me approximately which months those were?

A: Yes, it's – I think it started like June, May or June, and I came home at Christmastime.

Q: Okay. So y-you were a whole half a year in **Vienna**?

A: But I didn't come home – in other words, I didn't stay in **Vienna** all this time. I was – I f – I went to **France**, I went to **Belgium** and **France**, and I – staging area, and embar – port of embarkation waiting for a ship, and I landed up in **Marseilles**. I found my mother's sister in **Brussels**. I –

Q: Goodness.

A: – and another sister-in-law of my mother in **Brussels**, whose husband got incarcerated and died in one of the con – in **Dachau** – no ca – not in **Dachau**, in buch – in – forgotten which camp it was now. And so, it wasn't until after the war that I – my mother and I, I went – I made a few trips to **Israel**, my mother mi – I think she got an award from **El Al** for all the trips she made to **Israel**. She had a sister lived in **Israel**. And I was – I think I made five to six trips to **Israel**. And I

found some people there, my **[indecipherable]** girlfriend. She was 16 and I was 16. So then I finally got home. In **Marseilles** I had some experience that were somewhat funny. And if you promise not to put it into my biography, I'll tell you.

Q: Sure.

A: It was – I was waiting in **Marseilles**, and just actually waiting for – I don't know for how long, because there was so many people going home, and so few ships. So we had what's called a s – they had cigarette camps. They were – camps were called **Pall Mall**, **Chesterfield**, **Lucky Strike**, all after cigarettes. And they were big camps, were all staging areas, you know. We had several million **G.I.s** in **Europe**, they had all – they had – all had to come home. And one day a few guys came in, and they said they want to go to **Marseilles**, and I said I have no interest. And they said well, we want to check out a weapons' carrier, and a **Jeep**, then we can't check it out with you. Without me. So I succumbed to the things, and I didn't realize that the jees – well, I knew that the – three of those guys were made – had to – made the invasion of **Marseilles** with the 42nd division, and they knew the town. And I said, I'll go to go in, but what are you guys – I'm going to go and find – if I find some museum, or find a synagogue or something that I – I was always interested in art, and see what the town looked like, and always remember **Charles Boyer**, about **France** and **Marseilles**, and anyways, he was a big movie star at one

time, and so – French – so I went, and the first thing, that was in the morning, early, they want to go to the house of prostitution. Well, not me. I said, I'm not going, I'll drop you guys off, and I'll pick you up in an hour, an hour and a half, whatever. So, this is nine o'clock in the morning, and they're knocking on our door, and it's – that time, prostitution was legalized in **France** until we came, the Americans, and made it illegal. But – so this place was one of the legalized places, and they had signs outside, off-limits, and out of bounds for the British, that's what they said. We said off-limits, you couldn't go in, and **[indecipherable]**

Q: Who – who said that it was off-limits?

A: Huh?

Q: Which authority said it was off-limits, who put the signs out?

A: The – the British put down – we put on off-limits, and the British put down out of bounds. That's what they call it, we call it –

Q: I see. So which – which sign was it, was if off-limits or out of bounds?

A: Both, both signs, both **[indecipherable]**

Q: Both. So American **G.I.s** were not supposed to frequent the house, okay.

A: Right. And neither do – neither were the – neither were –

Q: British.

A: – British.

Q: I see.

A: But they're banging on the door, and I'm sitting in that weapons carrier, and waiting to see what time they want me to come back, there's – coming across the street, they say – you gotta come. Why? We need 10 people like a million. But i – what do you need 10 people? Well, they got a show. And we – they don't want to put it on unless they have 10 and you're the number 10. So I go in and they put on a porno sh – girls – they wake up the girls and they – they all lived there. It was like **Marlene Dietrich** was in that place, you know, the – the lampshades had little strings around them, and – and they had an old **Victrola** that you had to wind up, and they had these couches. And I had a sat – I had not sat on a couch for two years. So I sat there, you know, the girls come over and they try to entice you, and so it was all a si – to make a long story short, I decided I behaved myself for two years, I'm not gonna go get a venereal disease or get **[indecipherable]** and how will I explain it to my – which I hope will be my fiancée, and tell the story? Finally, they start drinking, they were selling cognac, and – and I'm ready to go and one of – one of the guys gets drunk. Big fellow, and – but that time he sees no evil, and I finally convince him to get out of there. Some girls – some guys check – you know, shacked up with these girls. Didn't take very long, and we're carrying out this one guy who had – so drunk he couldn't walk. And we went back to camp, okay? End

of story. Not the real end of story. Twenty-five or 30 years later, I'm in – in – I live in **Des Moines**, and maybe was longer than that, and this is a group that I have never known – never heard of **Des Moines** when I was in **Marseilles**, I never heard of **Iowa**. I lived in **New York City**, right? And you know, I came to **New York**, I lived in **New York**, I went to school in **New York**, I had hoped to stay in **New York**, and never heard of **Iowa**. So I'm in – back in – maybe 34 years – 30 years later, maybe more. And I'm in charge – I think I was president of the federation, or something, or – anyways, I'm in charge of the Holocaust Memorial Service. I think I was somehow either vice president or president of the federation. And – Jewish federation. So somebody says to me, I should guy – call a guy – oh, no, wait a minute. I'm sorry, I got the story wrong. I'm going to a – a national convention, **Saint Louis**, representing **Des Moines**, I was president of the federation here, of the **GA**, general – it's called the General Assembly of all the Jewish communities that meet once a year, the officers. And this is in **Saint Louis**. And I had some good customers in **Saint Louis**, who – whose owner – one of the owners of this manufacturing company was also president of the Jewish Federation of **Saint Louis**, and I was of the Jewish Federation in **Des Moines**. So we're business colleagues, and they were my customers and he calls me up and he says, I want you **[indecipherable]** and I'm there, you know, at the convention. We're having a

Friday night Shabbat dinner, and I want you to come, and I want you to meet some other people. Okay, there were about 12 people there, one of which was – this is before the Holocaust Museum was – they were just planning it. I think the government had just given land to it. And one of the persons there – there were some well-known Jewish people there at the dinner, and one of the persons there was – and I can't remember his name, and he says to me – we're talking, and he was in charge of the – I think this was during **Carter's** administration, that the land was given by the government to the Jewish community to build the Holocaust Museum on the mall. And he was, at the time, the person responsible for getting the planning done and everything else. Not the – okay.

Q: Okay.

A: He's a well-known – and I can't remember his name, but a well-known person in the Jewish commun – in Jewish national affairs. And we talking, and having this conversation, and he says to me, oh, you're from **Des Moines**? He says oh, you know, we have done – we have a project. This is gonna be part of the museum, that we have con – trying to contact every **G**.**I**. that had something to do with the liberation – not **G**.**I**., but every soldier had something to do with the liberation of the concentration camps. And one fellow was one of the first pers – into **Dachau**, the liberation, and he's never forgotten it, is from **Iowa**. And he is – his story is so

powerful, we brought him to **Washington** to record it. And he's gotten on televi – on **NBC**, and – and he's – that his – now has – he's in insurance – he's in insurance business. But he was so impacted by what he saw of **Dachau** that he spends all his time making speeches about it. It is just – it's his most important thing of his life right now. He lives in **Cedar Rapids**, **Iowa**, and he gave me his name. And he says, if you ever have something, you know, about the Holocaust, in the memorial, or you do it once a year, remembrance day, call him up and get him to speak. You'll have a – a speaker you will not forget, because he tells about the first few moments when he got into **Dachau**.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: Yes. It'll come to me as I talk.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: My memory's not very bad. I have to go ask my wife. So, I called the guy up in **Cedar Rapids**. It'll come to me as I talk, maybe.

Q: Sure.

A: Yeah, you'll – and he says to me – what the hell is it? **Hank** – **Hank** – his first name was **Hank**. He just died about a year ago, **Hank**. How we became friends. My name retention is horrible. And he says to me, **Fred Lorber**, **Lorber**, **Lorber**, he says, were you in the **Pacific**? I said no, I was in **Europe**. In the army? Yeah. He –

one leads to another, he says, you know, your name is very familiar. **Hank**. Ah shoot, why can't I remember? And I said, oh yeah, I was in **Europe**. He says, oh, you lived in **New York**? I said yeah. And you were – and he gives me the outfit. He was with the 42nd division. And then he says to me, do you remember me? I said no. He says, you're the guy that carried me out of the whorehouse in **Marseilles**.

Q: No way.

A: Yes. I couldn't – I couldn't believe it. Oh my God, and then when he starts talking, I remember it. He says, I'm the guy that got so drunk, and you know, he said, but don't tell my wife. **Hank – Hank** – I'll ask **Mickie**(ph), I'll go before this is over, and I'll give you the name.

Q: Sure.

A: He died a year ago, they had an article in the paper. So he and I became friends again. He came to one of the affairs, and spoke at the temple. And then we had a thing on nonec – ecumenical, and for the whole community, for the whole state. And he and his wife came, and we entertain them. And we were in contact for as – **Hank**. I'll come up with his name.

Q: Okay.

A: I'll call you back.

Q: Sure.

A: If I get it, yeah.

Q: I feel like – I feel like –

A: Well, that was a – you talk about a small world.

Q: Yeah.

A: Here I am, **New York** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – **Marseilles**, being in this house of prostitution with him, at the same place and un – it's just unreal how fate works. And carrying him and – out and taking him back to camp.

Q: Incredible.

A: It's incredible, right.

Q: Incredible.

A: Yes. Okay, so here I was in **France** with the –

Q: But I think we – we skipped through **Vienna** a little quickly, because I didn't get to hear about what you were actually doing at –

A: Okay, that was the out – that was pretty my – that was – I felt very uncomfortable in **Vienna**.

Q: Okay.

A: I just wanted to get out. It somehow reproduced memories, and I knew how – how bad the Nazis were. I tried to find some Jewish people when I was in **Vienna**. I think there may have been maybe 10 or 12, or maybe 20, but –

Q: How did you find it, did you –

A: – they were just trying to get a community going, and they were this – they weren't even from **Vienna**. I did meet one – I was back there a few years later. I was skiing in – in **Innsbruck**, in the mountains, and I – then somehow, I don't know why, we did go to **Vienna** for a few days, couple of days, I think, and I ran into a Jewish ski instructor, young man. And he told me at that time that there wasn't hardly any Jews, he stay – he was hidden during the war, or not hidden **[indecipherable]** didn't know – people didn't know he was Jewish. And there hardly – I don't think there were any hard – hardly any Jews left, out of the 245,000. So we got out just in time.

Q: Right.

A: And I – from then on it was mass transportation out of there, into concentration camps.

Q: Actually, when – when do you recall hearing about this first? When do you recall realizing the enormity of what had happened to the community?

A: Yes, yes, I – I – trying to think. It had to be – I lived with it, because of my relatives. But we never knew – never knew the en – well, we knew the enormity because the people all disappeared. I had a grandfather that disap – that I don't – never met, I never saw, or a couple of uncles. And I found my mother's sister, who per – was supposed to – said she was the housekeeper, but I think she may have been the mistress of the – one of the – the Supreme Court Justices at – in – in **Belgium**, who left her this palatial home, right smack on the – what was it, **Rue de Justice** in **Brussels**. And I met my other, and I found my other co – I found a cousin who lived through it. I ran into my first girlfriend, I – I mean, I never ran into her, I found her in – in **Canada**, and she told me how she was s-smuggled over the mountains, the **Alps**, into **Italy**.

Q: But – but I'm guessing these people surfaced a little bit later, so this is –

A: Yes, all later, yes.

Q: – we're talking about '46 - '47, possibly even to the 50s.

A: Yes, well, later than that, probably in the 1950s.

Q: So – so when – so in – in '45, when you're – you're still in – in **Vienna**, how much of this is really sinking in?

A: '44.

Q: '44?

A: Quite a bit, because I wanted out of there. I couldn't wait to get out. I just hated every moment I lived there.

Q: But you hated every moment because – because of what you had gone through?

A: The history, and what I heard, and what was going on, there were no Jews left, and I could not inter – I could not interact very much with the Viennese.

Q: Mm-hm. Did they try to interact with you?

A: I found it very – I found it very difficult, yes, emotionally.

Q: Did they try to interact with you?

A: Yes, well, I had a powerful posi – not powerful, I had a – an important position, and I was in charge of the – the post office, and the **PX**. Officer came to me one day and he said, you know, you do – you do – you – you the only guy here that – that people could send money through. Which is true, was true. And there was a lot of black market going on, big time. You buy s – carton of cigarettes for 50 cents, and you sold it for t – for a hundred dollars, or 200 dollars, in all occupation money. I just give you an idea of that. So all of this was such an unnatural situation; things that I didn't want to be involved with. And – and I had these responsibilities, and I wanted out, and I want to go home, I had a girlfriend. I just couldn't wait to go back to the **States**. And I saw – I saw **Vienna** naked.

Q: What does that mean?

A: Meaning that I saw its real character.

Q: What – what was it like?

A: Anti-Semitic, hated Jews. They worst – I think they were worse than the Germans. I have a good friend, he always jokes to me about it, he says **Vienna** is a beautiful city, there's only one thing wrong. What's that? Vien – the Viennese. And to this very dear – very day I think there is – anti-Semitism is still very strong in **Austria**.

Q: Were you – were you seeing any instances of this in – in the immediate post-war?

A: Yes. I didn't see it, but I felt it.

Q: Why? What – what – what kind of –

A: I – I had been – I had been in **Vienna** a few times and I'd taken two by – I had ridden my bikes twice, from **Germany** into **Vienna** on a bike path along the **Danube**. And I've taken a group of people from **Des Moines** twice. And somehow – it's maybe me, it may not be them, that I have this oversensitivity, the amount of – of vulnerability, and I don't feel – I just don't – I feel so – I, you know, I live in a community of 450,000 - 500,000 people, and about 1200 Jewish families here. I feel comfortable, I feel secure. I feel part of the community, and it's – and when I go to **Vienna**, I feel the opposite. There is that vulnerability that they somehow

were able to trans – trans – transfer to them s – to me, yeah. I – I was – in one of my ski trips, I left my group, and – and I was going to go to **Dachau**. And I went to **Munich**, and I never been in **Dachau**. That's where my father was incarcerated.

Q: Of course.

A: And as I was walking in – in one of the streets in **Munich**, and I was going to take this – there's a suburban train that goes to **Dachau** from **Munich**. I went, I bought a ticket in the – the automatic kiosk, and I couldn't get on the train. I just couldn't make it, I just couldn't get on. And I went out to get lunch, and I saw these people with the tyr – **Tyrolean**, or alpine outfits, and laughing, and sitting by themselves. I felt so terribly vulnerable and insecure and said, what in the world am I doing here. And that's the kind of feeling that I've never been able to lose when I – and I've been in **Vienna**, I don't know, four, five, six times. And I go there, it's like some people go to – you know, they go to **[indecipherable]** they kind of have a holiday where they – they whip each other, they whip themselves. And I go **[indecipherable]** get my whipping. It's – I have no any more, any traditional feelings about it.

Q: And why do you go back though?

A: It's a good question. I don't have any desire to go back there now.

Q: But for the four or five times that you –

A: I – I got it out of – I got it out of –

Q: You got it out of your system.

A: I got it out of my system. I belong to a hundred year old discussion club, and – and once every si – there's – there are 47 – 42 members, and once a month somebody presents a paper. And it can't have anything to do with your profession, or the **[indecipherable]** gotta hide the content of the paper, because after discussion, you know, they don't want to shoot you down. And it's – it's a kind of a hard club to get into. So, my paper last – my turn came up, and I decided to do a paper on – I have an 11th – this 11 minute film about **Hitler** coming to **Vienna**. I got it from the Holocaust Museum. I think I'm their best customer for –

Q: And we appreciate it.

A: Yeah, well, I don't pay to see, they sent it to me.

Q: Okay.

A: And I'm – I go and advertise with it, you know. And I speak – I made a lot of talks, I don't have to – for example, this next Wednesday I'm speaking to a congregational youth group, at a – you know, I spoke last week to – to the histor – historical museum that I speak. So I am on a kind of a speaking circuit, and – and I showed this film, 11 minutes. You could see it, they – get it out of your library. It's **Hitler's** coming into **Vienna** and one, two weeks after the – or three weeks after the

takeover of **Germany** – of **Austria**. And the town in this movie – it's done, the movie is silent. It was done by an American professor who were visiting there, who had a little **Kodak** camera. And he was just – he had this unbelievable ability to be at the right time, to take pictures of **Hitler** coming to **Vienna**, and the – the beez – and the enthusiasm with which the Viennese greeted the Nazis. And also there's a little episodes in there about his wife trying to go into a Jewish shop, and the **SA** guy wouldn't let her in, you know, because he said, this is a Jewish merchant, you shouldn't buy here. It's an 11 minute film. Let me tell you what – I have, someplace here in my office – I'll – before I – we hang up, I'll – I'll give you – oh, here it is. So you may want to take a look at it, all right?

Q: Sure.

A: It's a – here what is, it's Holocaust Museum, **Baker** family collection, **USHMM**, tape 2828. **Vienna**, **Austria**, 1937 -1938, street scenes, **anschluss**, boycott of Jewish shops, Nazi propaganda. And I – in my talks that I make, I show this film. It knocks them out. So, take a look at it.

Q: I will. It – you were saying at one point that you were translating while there were some interrogations?

A: Of prisoners?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah **[indecipherable]**

Q: So – so, but you were working at the post office, so how – how did you come to –

A: I ran the the pri – yeah, I – I was insh – I had the post office, was one of my responsibility –

Q: Okay.

A: – **APO**. So I – in other words, this, the – an **APO**, no matter where it was, was extremely important. That was the only kind of communication the **G**.**I**.**s** had, of re – you know, sending home letters, of receiving letters, or sending home packages, or may – sending home money and money orders. So, it was an army post office, which was very – part of the adjutant general's thing. So I got into that field, which – no experience, so anyways, I think of my honesty, integrity, or whatever. Okay, so we're close to occupation, I want to get out of here, I want to go home. I want to go home so badly. Finally my number came up, my points I had – you had to have so many points to get discharged. I wrote to you – I did mention that I found my mother's sister.

Q: In **Brussels**?

A: In **Brussels**. We convinced her to sell the house and move to **New York**, which she did. My cousin still, my cousin, I met her, she's like four or five years younger

than me, and never married, and she lives in **Brussels**, but I'm not very much in touch with her. And most of my relatives who – we didn't have that much of a big family – landed up in **Israel**.

Q: Mm-hm. Did they – were there an – were they in **Europe** during the war, or had they gotten out?

A: Couple of second cousins were in the war, like me. And most of them, the – my two closest cousins were on a **Kindertransport** to **Israel**. They were illegally –

Q: Smuggled?

A: – sneaked into the British lines. I mean, past the British. Who – one was, I think 15 and one 16, they're two brothers, and they were on the first – they were **Hashomer** or **Hatzair**, which is kind of a –

Q: Right.

A: Yeah. And they were the first – I think they left in 1938. They both since have died. I was close with them, I visit them. They came here, they were our guests in **Des Moines**, with their wives. One married a girl from **Berlin**, and the other one married a Sabra. And one of their children is an eminent professor at **Technion**, in basic chemistry. And the other one, one of the children, their ch – their son is an entrepreneur, very successful, also in **Israel**. So, I am in contact with them.

Q: Mm-hm. But I – I still don't recall how you got into the translating situation, being at the post office – was this before the post office?

A: Yes, before. I was called to – because they couldn't – they had very few German speakers.

Q: Right.

A: So, I got called into that before – it wasn't – it was when we were – twice. Once when we were waiting the – for the Russians to let us in, I interrogated German prisoners.

Q: This was still in **Salzburg**, or –

A: Not in **Salzburg**, that was in – near **Linz**.

Q: Okay.

A: There's a prisoner camp near – on the **Enz** River.

Q: Okay.

A: And then again, coming home from when I left **Vienna** to go home.

Q: Now what kind of things were the Americans trying to find out from the first group?

A: Not much. The – who were they, Nazis, weren't they Nazis? What information that they have, what was their background. I just filled out certain questionnaires that the – the army prepared.

Q: And what kind of **[indecipherable]**

A: And most of them weren't really Nazis –

Q: Okay.

A: – that they really did not come across like many people that were part of the **SA** or the **SS**. The only ones that I really had, were really amer – were German soldiers. Nobody – you know, they all were innocent, there never were any Nazis, they never knew war was going. That's what they claim. And it was just – it was not very pleasant.

Q: Well, wa –

A: I felt very uncomfortable.

Q: Did you feel like you could communicate with them at all, or that would have been –

A: I could communicate with them, yeah.

Q: Mm-hm. Did – did you ever make them aware of the fact that this was a very –

A: I tried to – not to – yes, yes, a good point. I never told them that I was from **Austria**, or **Vienna**. I think I wanted to lord it over them as an American. I wasn't really fair to them.

Q: And you certainly were not communicating that you were Jewish.

A: No. I didn't make a big deal out of it.

Q: So – so basically, you were, during those months in **Austria**, you were uncomfortable for a variety of reasons, one was the – kind of the shadiness of – of being in the post office situation, where you were put in a situation that – that was not conform with your – with your –

A: No, it was fine. I – you know, what – it was a very responsible job, and I felt okay about it, and I had some experience about it before, you know, clerical part. So I didn't feel bad about it, no. I was really –

Q: But you did want to go home.

A: – it – it was a key – I want to go home. I been there two years.

Q: Okay. Had you – aside from that first situation where you had gone back to the street where you had lived, did you ever run into other people that you had known before the war?

A: No, no.

Q: And then when you –

A: They weren't there, there wasn't anybody left. There were no Jews, I had been looking. I was looking for Jewish people, couldn't find any.

Q: And there's no one moment that you can think of where – where the f –

A: There was one – there's a synagogue that the Germans – that the Germans did not – that they left it, for historic reasons. It's called the **Seitenstetten**. It's in the

first district and it's in a building. You can't know it's a synagogue unless – unless you've been there before. You walk through a regular apartment building and inside is another – almost another building, and that's a synagogue. And that was a synagogue in the first district, and that's the only one remained. Every you – other synagogue in **Vienna** was burned down on November the 10th, 1938. And there I found some Jewish people, and they were – but mostly they were **DPs**, displaced persons. They were Russians from eastern **Europe**, or **Poland**, or someplace. They weren't Viennese.

Q: Right.

A: So, I don't know if the Viennese had all been transported out. I don't know where – or they were in hiding. So the people that now are Jewish in **Germany**, or in **Austria**, in my opinion, are primarily –

Q: Immigrants.

A: From – yes. Displaced person from other places, and mostly from eastern **Europe**.

Q: And when – when do you get back – when – when in time do you get back to the **United States**?

A: When did I get back?

Q: Yeah.

A: In December of 1944.

Q: And why –

A: ’44 or ’45 – ’46 – ’45.

Q: ’45?

A: When was the war over? I forgot.

Q: The war was over in ’45.

A: Okay, ’45.

Q: So you ba – you’re back in the **States** in December of ’45.

A: Yes.

Q: And while you’re in **Austria**, are you corresponding with your parents?

A: Yes.

Q: How are they reacting to the fact that you’re back in **Vienna**?

A: Never – that didn’t faze – were just startled that I was back there. But there wasn’t any – I don’t remember, I just don’t remember that they mention it, or that they felt – I had no choice, and they knew that. In other words, that’s what the army did, and you didn’t argue with the army, you just followed orders.

Q: Did they ask you to try to look anyone up in that first, immediate time?

A: Yes, yes. I had a whole list of people. I never found any of them.

Q: These were Jewish people?

A: All got killed. Jewish people, yes. I went looking for them in northern **Italy**.

Q: Did – did your experience going back to **Europe** at the end of the war, did that change you?

A: Did it change me?

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't know, but I think it probably did, yes. It's very mu-much – very part of me – very much part of me, and I think it had – it's – i – it had to do a lot who I am, and what really my life is like. It – absolutely yes. Almost everything in my past, my first fi – 15 years, or 14 year – 15 years in **Europe**; in **Austria**; my becoming an immigrant into **United States**; my army experiences; landing up back in **Austria** and **Europe**. All these ha-had tremendous impact upon who I am. Moving to the strange city of **Des Moines**, **Iowa**, that maybe had what, 15 or 1200 Jewish families.

Q: When – when did you move to **Des Moines**?

A: In 1950, of – December, 1949. 1950 really. January '50.

Q: And you – you had said earlier during this conversation that in the – in the first years after the war you were – you were intent on making a life for yourself, starting a family, and – and being part of the – the American dream, and the

American society. So you weren't – you weren't really interacting with any of the refugees who were starting to come into the country.

A: No.

Q: The – the Holocaust survivors.

A: No.

Q: Okay. Was – was there a moment before – before your interaction with the refugees in the early 70s where you would have been in that sort of situation?

A: No, I don't think that I was aware when I came back from the army, I was focused upon my education, I was focused on my relationships with my wife – well, that time my girlfriend, getting married, and having a family and having a career and all that. And it just – it just – all this later – came much later when I was moderately successful and was able to assume responsibilities in my community.

Q: And your – your wife was – is American born?

A: Yes. **Oakland**.

Q: Where did you meet her?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Where did you meet her?

A: I'm sorry?

Q: Where did you meet?

A: I met her when I was – just before shipping overseas. I went to a Jewish **USO** and – in **Manhattan**, and somebody stopped me, I was leaving cause a fellow, a friend of mind that was going to meet me there, was the same outfit that I was, never showed up. And they stopped me and introduced me to this girl, and she looked good, was very nice, and that's – that was the end of me.

Q: And you were married in what year?

A: Married in 1947.

Q: '47. And then your children were born in '49, or –

A: Well, I had four children.

Q: Okay.

A: So, they were born '47 – '49, '51 and on. We lost one child who was – when he passed away he was 40 – yeah, I'm sorry, he was 38. And he contracted a brain tumor when he had the measles when he was four years old. And turned out to be we had him – it were – had a surgery, and he had radiation and turned out to be a wonderful young man, and – but it came back, because of excessive radiation in 1930 – in 19 – well, easier for me to say when he was 38 and married and lived in apple – and lived – lived in **Appleton**, **Wisconsin**. So we lost one child. I have one daughter that's in medical field here in **Des Moines**. I have another daughter that's married to the – to an academic, and I have another s – son who is a lawyer in **San**

Diego. I have a grandson that's a – also a journalist in **New York City**, covers city hall, who's getting married next year, and also to someone who is with public television in **New York**, channel 13, and I have – so one son a lawyer, and I have a grandson – and I have a granddaughter that – two granddaughters: one is a senior at – at **Colorado**, and the other one is going – is about ready to go into graduate school. She's been a nanny in **Boston** for two years.

Q: And when did you start talking about your background, and the fact that you were from **Austria**, and what you had gone through?

A: Very late, probably in my 50s.

Q: Did you start talking to your family first?

A: No.

Q: Who did you talk to?

A: I think when I got active in the community in **Des Moines**, and also, you know, which kind of dragged me into other places, and I became president of the temple, and I became president of the federation, and I bet – and I chaired the fund drive, the All-In-One campaign. Also received – there's an outstanding citizen at **Des Moines**, that – non-Jewish. It's called the – what the hell is it called? The office of Christians and Jews, once a year they would select a Catholic or a Protestant, a Jewish person, to give an award. So it was at that time when I got busy into – and

you know, sir – I got somewhat – moderately successful in my business – oh, and before that, I worked for another company, and I became president of it. And then I left, and I bought interest in another business, and we had started another business. So I got busy, and I was able to – able to get involved with the community, and mostly with the Jewish community, to begin with. And then I really got involved also with the non-Jewish community. And I felt that was my res-responsibility, living in **America**, somewhat, to pay back. I pay my taxes. Pretty high. And I do that, so I – I feel, you know, I – I'm paying – I think paying my – my – my – what – my fuf – to be able to have lived here, to be able to have been part of this American milieu. I bi – feel myself very humbly **[indecipherable]** fortunate.

Q: **Fred**, thank you so much. It's been a very moving and – and – and wonderful discussion. Is there something that you feel we haven't discussed that you still would like to talk about?

A: You have been wonderful.

Q: Oh, thank you **Fred**.

A: Yes, I don't know why, I – unbelievably, I think of all the people who've always questioned me, you've been the best interviewer –

Q: Oh –

A: – I ever had, no question about it, you know.

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Q: I am tickled pink.

A: Because I really felt you understood me, and you were – you're gentle and you were inquisitive, and you showed a great deal of – of compassion and – and humanity, or whatever. Yeah, I felt very comfortable with you.

Q: Thank you **Fred**, I'm –

A: And it's – yes, really, and I think you've done an outstanding job.

Q: Thank you, I'm really touched. Thank you.

A: So, what happens to this now?

Q: Well, I am – I'm just –

End of File Two

Conclusion of Interview