

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Norman Miller
April 15, 2013
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PREFACE

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NORMAN MILLER

April 15, 2013

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. **Norman Miller**, on April 15th, 2013, here at the Holocaust Museum in **Washington, D.C.** Good morning, Mr. **Miller**.

Answer: Good morning to you.

Q: Thank you so much for agreeing to meet with us and share with us some of your story and your experience of the war, the Holocaust, and the toll it took on your own family. I'd like to start the interview by – by being introduced to the world that you were born into. So, if you could tell me when you were born, the date; where you were born; then your name, if it was different from now. And I want to know about your family too, but we start with this, okay?

A: Okay, I – I – my name is **Norman Miller** and my given name was **Norbert Müller**. Later on, when – when I was about 20 years old, I joined the British army, and they advised you to change your name, so I changed it to **Norman Albert Miller**, s-so I'd have my **nor** and **bert** within the name.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because you're in the war, they didn't naturalize people, and when you go overseas in the – in the army and y-you should get captured, ye – the name **Müller** would stand out, and you know, they advise you to change it, it was just right –

Q: It's a dead giveaway, yeah.

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A: Right. It was very easy, you just filled out a form and you had a new name.

Q: So tell us, where were you born?

A: I was born in **Tann in der Rhön** in **Germany**.

Q: And where is that in the –

A: That's in **Hessen**. It's a small town. My mother's f-family had – you know, lived there for hundreds of years, and my father was a teacher there.

Q: What are their names, and their – do you remember their dates of birth – or at least their names.

A: Well, my mother's name was **Laura Yungster**(ph).

Q: **Yungster**(ph).

A: Yes. I found out that around 1700, three Jewish families came to town, and at that time they had that Jewish name, like **Moshe, Ben, Jakob**, or – and one of the families there was six or seven sons. And at the emanici – emancipation, each one picked a different family name.

Q: Which emancipation is this?

A: You know, where the Jews were fr – you know, somewhat more accepted.

Q: Are [**indecipherable**] given rights?

A: I – I – I – I – pardon?

Q: This – was this –

A: Well, yes, right. And – and the youngest took the name of **Yungster**(ph).

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Q: **Yungster**(ph).

A: And my mother's maiden name was **Yungster**(ph).

Q: So that means the youngest one.

A: Yeah, right, so – so the family has been there for – you know, a few hundred years. My father was teacher there. It's a rural area.

Q: What was his first name?

A: **Sabald**(ph).

Q: **Sabald**(ph).

A: **Sabald**(ph) **Müeller**.

Q: **Sabald**(ph) **Müeller**, uh-huh.

A: And he was a teacher there, also the **shochet**, which is the ritual sl-sl-slaughter of animals. And I had a sister **Suza**(ph), you know –

Q: **Suza**(ph).

A: – she wa – a year – little – or a year younger than I – I was.

Q: What did you want to explain about the ritual slaughter of animals? Was your father involved in that?

A: Yes, right, he – he – you know, he did that in – you know –

Q: As a sideline?

A: Yeah, th – part of his job. Really, it's a small town, he was a teacher. He also led the religious service, and that was part of his job, you know.

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Q: When you say teacher, was he a teacher in a Jewish school?

A: Yes, right. So, when I was about five or six, I think it was 19 – six – 1930, we moved to **Nuremberg**. My father accepted a job with the main congregation in **Nuremberg**, they had a – a huge, beautiful synagogue. And his job was – was, so I said, as a teacher, he was teaching Jewish subjects to Jewish people in the public schools. He –

Q: Oh, so he was a – he was then in – in **Germany**, I believe teachers are civil servants. Were they civil servants in those days too?

A: I'm not sure if he was. They – he – being – being employed at that time, at – by this congregation, it was a big congregation, probably quite wealthy.

Q: Do you remember how many people about to –

A: No, that I wouldn't know.

Q: Okay.

A: And it – and considered a really secure job, just like if you were employed by the government.

Q: I want to, before we get to **Nuremberg** –

A: Yes?

Q: I want to stay with – what was the town again?

A: **Tann. Tann.**

Q: **Tann.**

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A: Yeah.

Q: **Tann unden**(ph) **Rhön**?

A: Yes, in a **Rhön**.

Q: Okay, in **der Rhön**.

A: It's a sort of a mountainous – not really mountainous, **mi** – more like the **Berkshires** here, hilly region.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Must have been pretty.

A: Yes, it is, and an – when we lived in **Nuremberg**, we visited the grandparents quite often, you know, in **Tann**, you know [**indecipherable**]

Q: Was the distance great?

A: Not only. I would say both places you would consider as southern **Germany**.

Q: Yeah. I usually think of **Hessen** – as the northern part of **Germany**, and –

A: No, no, no, no, no, no.

Q: No, no.

A: It's in the back of **Frankfurt**.

Q: Got it, got it. I wanted to find out a little bit more about this town though. Do you have any memories of it. I'd like to know, do you remem – what would you – be your earliest memories?

A: I remember the building of my grandparents. My gr-grandfather had a small store like shoemakers' supplies and my wi – my – my mother had two sisters and one

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brother, and you know, the brother was in the business also. And being a rural area, they – I remember they also collected the ski – ca –

Q: Cowhides.

A: Cowhides. They don – I don't believe they turned it into leather, but you know, as maybe somebody else did that. But I remember where they stored them, you know, they salted them or something like that.

Q: That was your mother's side of the family?

A: That – mother's side of the family. I also had a gra – a great-grandmother living there.

Q: Also on her side of the family?

A: Yes, my – my gr-grandfather's mother.

Q: Wow.

A: Yeah.

Q: You remember her?

A: Yes, I do, and I have pictures of her, and the – you know, of the whole family.

Q: So she –

A: My father was a fo – you know, liked photography in the very early years. I remember he had a si – a square, or rectangular type of camera, and had to put in a glass cassette, so – and he developed his own pictures. So, we have quite a few pictures of the family at – of that time.

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Q: Well, what I was sent, I remember y – your son sent us some pictures; they're of wonderful quality.

A: Yeah, well –

Q: They're – they're very well done, you know. Returning to **Tann** – **[technical directions]** In – yes, earliest memories; how large was the town? Do you remember?

I mean, were there many Jewish people, were there –

A: There were – there were quite a few Jewish, I – I – I don't know any numbers, but like I mentioned before that the one – the ancestor, th-the sons of the ancestors, they changed their names.

Q: Yes.

A: And there were people called **Ravenstein**(ph) and **Heilbraun**(ph), and these were the names they – these sons had ex – you know, accepted early – in earlier years.

Q: So there – in some ways you were all interrelated.

A: Right, right, you know, the same fa-family. And th – there – as a matter of fact there were a couple of families that later had rabbis – there was a Rabbi

Heilbraun(ph) and a Rabbi **Froidenthal**(ph). **Heilbraun**(ph) was here in the united – he came to **United States**. I don't think **Froidenthal**(ph), maybe he was in **Nuremberg**, I'm not sure.

Q: Were you very religious at home?

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A: We were Orthodox, you know. Not fanatically religious. We had – for Passover we – two se – you know, we had two sets of plates, and for Passover, another two sets that, you know, the – according to the law, and whatever, you know.

Q: Do you – and let's talk a little bit about your father's side of the family. He was a teacher.

A: Right.

Q: What about his parents, siblings, grandparents and so on?

A: He was born in **Moritzfeld**, which is in **Thüringen**, you know, eastern **Germany**. He went – well he – he had – he had al-also a number of siblings. I remember him often visited one in – in **Thüringen** on vacation time. He – he – his education was on the religious side. He went to seminary. And then – this is – this – ah – I don't remember, and it's a kind of mystery to me; I have a number of papers of – from – from his educati – about his e-education. And I was born in '24. They got married in 1922. And it seems that he went to **Frankfurt** in '27 and '28 to study music. And I – I – you know –

Q: You have no memory of this?

A: – I have no – no memory of that, and it's very strange, I'm telling you.

Q: Was it spoken about at home?

A: No, no, no, no, no.

Q: So – yeah –

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A: No, he – I mean, he had spoken about having been at the conservatory in – in **Frankfurt**, but I found out – I – I thought maybe that just a – a short visit, but I found out to – he has a – papers from –

Q: Certificates and diplomas and things, yeah.

A: [**indecipherable**] certificates upon – in '27 and '28, I think.

Q: Tell me a little bit about what kind of people your parents were. What were their personalities like, your mother and your father?

A: Well, my – my – my father was a strong person. Strict – more with me than my sister, I – I felt at that time. But you know, if you do – if you came home with a good report cards, or – you know, you could get anything from him, sort of.

[**indecipherable**] you know, why – my mother was a very warm person.

Q: Who were you closer to?

A: It's hard to say, you know. Probably my mother, somewhat. What else is there to say about them?

Q: Well, are there any – any – any memories you have of – of spending time with them? I – I'm – I'm trying to get a sense of what your childhood was like before you moved to **Nuremberg**. What kind of home life was there, what kind of – what memories you have of those things.

A: Well, it – it – I consider it a pretty good youth.

Q: Oh?

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A: I – I thought, you know, th-the – I – I – there's certain things I don't remember, but you felt good, you had the – your – your na – your la – you had the – your – your grandparents around you, vi-visited uncles and aunts that were not too far, not – not living too far away.

Q: Did you live in an apartment, or a house?

A: We live in – we lived – we had an apartment. I don't remember – I – I – I don't remember the apartment, but I have pictures of the house, and us looking out the window. And –

Q: Did you have friends your own age at that time?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't remember.

Q: And did your parents – was your mother – did she work outside the home, or –

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No, no, no.

Q: Okay.

A: Th – it was also a pretty close-knit community, Jewish community. Like – and I – my mother's name was **Yungster**(ph), there were other **Yungsters**(ph) at the – at the

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– at the entrance of the town, and other **Yungsters**(ph) somewhere else, and like I said, it was a pretty close-knit community.

Q: Did you ever meet with any non-Jewish Germans? Any Gentiles?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't – I'm ni – I have no memory of tha – of the –

Q: Of that.

A: – you know, of the –

Q: Okay.

A: – no, no.

Q: Okay. And did you ha – you mentioned your sister **Suza**(ph), was she your a – only sibling, or –

A: Right, the only one, right.

Q: Uh-huh. And she was born when?

A: In October '26, I think.

Q: In 1926 –

A: Or '25.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And in '25 – I was born 94 – yeah, I was born June '24, and she, I think, October '25.

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Q: Well, as you're so close in age, did you have much in common with each other, or did you keep each other company, or was it she's a girl, you're a boy, different worlds?

A: No, no, good relationship, good relationship.

Q: Okay. Let's go to – let's go to **Nuremberg**, you know, and what are your earliest memories of **Nuremberg**?

A: Well, I – I started school there. Well, I was – I must have been six, maybe I – I'm – I don't ha – have exact memories or – maybe I went to school or s – school in **Tann** over there, or started in **Tann**. Then in **Nuremberg** I went to school that was associated with an Orthodox synagogue. I b – and then later on – all right, I se – I think the – the arrangements, or the – the setup for schooling in – in – in **Nuremberg** was you go four years in el-elementary, and then five years in high school. Or it used to – I think it used to be six years, but under **Hitler** they cut it short to five years. And I – I – I believe later on Jewish children couldn't stay – go to public school as I'm – anymore, so that I – a Jewish larger school was formed, and my ti – and my father was teaching there. So, if I remember colle – correctly, I probably stayed in the Orthodox school for about four years. And I remember I was in my father's class for one year.

Q: Oh my. What was that like?

A: So – pardon?

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Q: What was that like, having your father be –

A: He was very strict with me. But he was a very good teacher, and so I think after the fifth year, I went to high school for four years in – in **Fürth**. Yeah, there was a real – a – a Jewish high school in **Fürth**.

Q: What did he teach? Remind me again, what was it – what subjects –

A: The whole curriculum for a fifth g-grade.

Q: Oh, so everything from math, to history, to science, to –

A: Ri-Ri-Right, right.

Q: I see. Okay.

A: In the – when I was in the Orthodox school, I also was in the choir in the synagogue; we had a boys and men choir. I still remember s-something o-o – you know, I still reme – I still wish – see it, you –

Q: Did you enjoy that, being in the choir?

A: Yeah, I liked to sing. I enjoyed it, I enjoyed it. And then later on in the schooling in – in **Fürth**, in the high school, we used to take a streetcar from **Nuremberg** to **Fürth** every day.

Q: And how long would that take?

A: Oh, I don't – maybe a half an hour, o-or y – maybe even less.

Q: Now, when you were in high school, **Hitler** was already in power.

A: Oh yes, right, right.

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Q: So were there any incidents on the streetcars?

A: No, I – I don't re – I was thinking about that the other day, I don't remember any. I don't remember any.

Q: Do – do you remember – do you remember when **Hitler** came to power? You would have been eight years old, or seven years old. Do you remember whether it was talked about at home?

A: I don't remember what ta – we talked about at home. I remember, you know, the – my parents, they were really aware of – you know, they – they kept up to date with the newspapers and I remember **Hindenburg** and **Hitler** taking over, but n-no details, you know –

Q: No incidents stick out in your mind?

A: No, no, no, no, no, no. You see, su – in – in some way my – my father was not too much involved in it, by being employed by the – a main synagogue. While others, who had businesses in other – boycotts, and smashed windows, and that k-kind of stuff. So –

Q: When was the first time that you felt perhaps a bit of danger, a bit of insecurity out in public? Or did you?

A: I didn't – I – I – I really didn't. You know, **Nuremberg** was the – the big **[indecipherable]** you know, every year they had a huge –

Q: Rally.

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A: – a – a rallies, and even there, we-we even went to watch them marching through the towns.

Q: Really?

A: I mean, the – we didn't pu – you know, from the distance, at least.

Q: What did you – what is an image in your mind of what you saw?

A: Well, hu-huge crowds, and – you know, marching and cheering and I mean, I wasn't – I wasn't really thinking about it. I don't think I really was threatened – felt threatened at that time.

Q: Mm-hm. And what about **Suza(ph)**? **[technical interruption]** Do you remember how she reacted to all these sorts of things?

A: No, no, no.

Q: No. Yeah.

A: No.

Q: What kind of personality did **Suza(ph)** have?

A: She has a – a very, very fr-friendly person. The s – the – she was ver-very nice looking, very outg – and you kn – ou – very outgoing. As a matter of fact, they – the – somebody nowad – and for – for many years now here in the **States**, he collected names of people that came from **Nuremberg** and **Fürth**, and he had the newsletter every year. And in the latest one, somebody wrote in who was also in a – in the camp in **Latvia**, me – s – mentioning my father and his vivacious daughter.

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Q: Oh. Even there.

A: Yeah, right, right.

Q: Even there.

A: Right.

Q: How did – okay, so you live in **Nuremberg**, where in many ways it sounds like you're isolated from these monumental events, you know –

A: Right, right.

Q: – that are – that are taking place, these very unsettling developments.

A: Right, right, right.

Q: And be – your father being employed by the larger synagogue, in some ways has one, I guess, shield –

A: Right.

Q: – that others did not. And you start going to high school in **Fürth**, and there is the annual Nazi –

A: Party –

Q: – party rallies –

A: Right.

Q: – to take place, and –

A: Right.

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Q: – you see those, kind of from a distance. Tell me, how did life in the 30s develop then, for you and for your family?

A: In – well, the – th-the really big restrictions came after I left **Germany**, you know, I – a-at the – close to the war – you know, at – when – when the war started, we – you know, my – my parents, they liked the outdoors. We had bicycles, we went on bicycle rides. We went on hikes, we went to vacations in the – in the **Alps** and we had – we had a pleasant, middle class type of life.

Q: Even here, in **Nuremberg**, was there any interaction with non-Jews?

A: I was thinking about that the other day and, not on my part. We had a cleaning woman who wasn't Jewish. My – my father was also a musician, he loved music. We'll find that out la-later. And he had a – they had musical evenings in the house, quartets, quintets.

Q: Oh, nice.

A: And I – one of the members, I don't know if they were non-Jewish or not, then he also was, for a part of his job in **Nuremberg** was also leading the choir in the synagogue, and that – that was a mixed choir, you know, men and women. And I think they had some non-Jewish people i-in the choir. But otherwise – I was thinking about that the other day, that I – I couldn't think of any re –

Q: Any close acquaintances or –

A: No, no.

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Q: No. Did your – did the attitude – did you live in – tell me – okay, tell me what – if you lived in an apartment in –

A: We lived in an apartment house on the second floor. There was a bakery on the ground floor. We – we had music, instruments, a piano – a grand piano my father had.

Q: Was it a Jewish neighborhood, or did you have –

A: There were – there were – you couldn't say they're Jewish – they're non-Jewish. The neighborhood – there was not a Jewish neighborhood, though – you know, Jews lived all over the town.

Q: Okay.

A: I – I – I – I learned to play the cello, and my sister learned to play the harmonica – you know, the accordion?

Q: Yeah, yeah, accordion, uh-huh.

A: And you know, my – they had – my father had them – you know, a quintet, or you know, somebody else sitting in, and the piano player and the wives were there, I don't know, drinking coffee, or knitting, or I – I – I don't remember what – that closely.

Q: Did he spend – did your parents ever spend time with you one on one? Because what you've described up to now, like the family outings –

A: Right.

Q: – community activities –

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A: Right.

Q: – things like that.

A: Well, you know, th – his being a – very involved in music, he sort of closely supervised my practicing, and – but otherwise – or I was a – I – more – what I remember also, I also played soccer, and I remember my mother coming to the game, not my father.

Q: Well, did she spend time with you one on one? What – what took up her days?

A: I – I – I – I don't know. You know, the household, cooking or shopping.

Q: I see, okay. Just running the place.

A: Right, right, right, right.

Q: Okay.

A: And then I had the Bar Mitzvah when I was 13, in – in the congrega – in the synagogue where my father, you know, was active, and we had some relatives. You know, it's just a few uncles and aunts and cousins coming to the house, and – and a celebration in the house. I don't remember too much about that. I am – my memory is not that great. It's – there's a certain instance – incidents I have on paper, I don't remember.

Q: Oh. It happens.

A: Yeah.

Q: It happens.

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A: Mm-hm.

Q: I wanted to go back to something I was trying to establish before. Did you have any non-Jewish neighbors? When I asked if it was a Jewish –

A: Yeah, well – and, yes, I would say we were the only Jews in the hou – in the building, you know.

Q: Okay. Did – how did – did you have any interaction with them?

A: Well, with the bake – bakeries –

Q: Whe-When you said that I thought, gee, that's convenient, to have the bakery downstairs.

A: Yeah, sure, we got fresh –

Q: Yeah.

A: – the – we had a little bag on the outside of – of the do-door, every morning a fresh –

Q: Fresh –

A: – rolls were in there. No, I think there was a good relationship at your – in – in the story later on, I might come up with something, yeah.

Q: Okay. All right. So, when you're – when you're now in **Nuremberg** and growing up, again you still don't – like you said, you don't feel particularly threatened, correct?

A: No, I don't. You mean now?

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Q: No, I meant, at that time.

A: At that time. Not real – may-maybe you – well, you know, in the – in the street, there were the kids, so you ha – you – you might have – I think ab – I – I – I had some problems with, you know, in the street kids, and – sometimes.

Q: And they were **[indecipherable]**

A: But in – in – in nothing – I thought – I thi – I might have had a fight with – with somebody, because I remember I – I broke a finger, or sa – or you know, in – in one of these incidents. But I – I don't know any details, I just remember I – you know **[indecipherable]**

Q: You just remember the broken finger.

A: Yeah, right, right, and – well, also later in the story, in – in – at – something might cu – you know, something comes up.

Q: When did – did – did your parents ever start talking about the larger world out there, and the f – the events that are taking place in di – as things develop? I mean, when did that become part of, let's say, home life discussion?

A: I don't know any details about that, but I – I – you – like I mentioned before, they were pretty worldly, you know, read new-newspapers and all that.

Q: Right.

A: And I remember they used to listen to the – the radio from **Luxembourg**, and you know, our – from tiffin – you know, from abroad. So, you know, the – they were

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inquisitive enough to – to find out what’s going on in the world, you know, a-apart from what’s fed to you within **Germany**.

Q: Yeah. Well, what I’m trying to – what I’m trying to establish is the beginnings of their decision to get you out of the country. It must have – something must have happened to make them say, I want to get –

A: Well, the – there was the **Kristallnacht** –

Q: Okay.

A: – you know.

Q: So tell us about that –

A: Okay.

Q: – how that – yeah.

A: There was a lot of – very early in the mornings, a lot – or maybe it was still partially in nighttime, a lot of this tumult in – in the street. So we all got up, everybody got dressed except me, I stayed in my pajamas. We looked out the window. And this is what we heard a-afterwards, th-that somebody came to the bakery and asked if there are Jews in the house, and they said no. So they went away. And apparently one of the kids I tangled with at one time mentioned, on the second floor, Jews living. So they ca – so th-they came in the house, went onto the second – the second floor. On each floor there were two apar – uni – each landing,

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you know, there were two apartments. So the other party on our floor – we were the **Müellers**, and they were the **Meyers**(ph), not je – not Jewish.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, these people went to the **Meyers**, assuming they were the Jews.

Q: The Jews, yeah.

A: They made them in – in the – in the house, everybody in the ba – had in the basement a little compartment where you keep your coal and your wood, and you chop your wood. So they asked them to get the ga – an ax from the basement. So they came up, and just before they went into their apartment, they said, are you Jews? And they said no, we are not Jews, they are the Jews. S-So they came into our apartment, and they chased us out. So we went one floor up, in the – you know, the next floor up, so up the stairs. And they started smashing furniture, musical instruments, split open the feather beds. The mur – mur – we had a – a – sort of a big cupboard where my mother had made jams and you know, pickled stuff, they smashed that. So you can imagine the feathers, and the pickles, and a real mess. But fortunately, they didn't arrest my father. Because a lot of men were arrested. As a matter of fact, even people my age were arrested. I don't know, it may come up later in the story, a fre – friends of ours, the son was arrested wi – and the father. But the son was released right – right away. So after that we had to move into a house where only Jews lived. So we –

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Q: What kind of a shock – that must have been a huge shock.

A: Sure, it came – you know – you know –

Q: Do you remember how your parents reacted?

A: They were pre – no, not really, but thinking back that nu – they were pretty calm.

Q: Maybe for the children.

A: Yeah, yeah. You know, I'm a – probably they realized what – you know, they – they realized the – I got – I said before, we were not involved in having windows smashed and that sort of stuff. But this really – at that time it sinks in that – you know, that you're threatened, you know. So we had to move into a house where only Jewish people lived. Yeah?

Q: Before that happens – excuse me – were you able – able to salvage anything from your old apartment?

A: Sal – I guess some – some of it, I – I – I – I – I don't remember.

Q: And then, did you ever – did the **Meyers**(ph) ever come to speak with you?

A: No, no, no.

Q: Yeah.

A: I – I don't remember – I don't remember that. I don't –

Q: And what about the bakery downstairs?

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A: Well, they were kind of re-reprimanded, but they – I think they had a son who was a Nazi judge or something, you know, it's a sort of a safety for them. No, I mean, we – we knew them for many years where – you know, for a num – a bunch of years. That was the only apartment we had in **Nuremberg**, you know, prior to moving to that house wa – in **Sunstrasse**(ph). And there we had [**indecipherable**] apartment with a – a very Orthodox, elderly couple.

Q: Okay. How – what was it like, that apartment? Explain first your – your first one, how large was it, how many rooms, and then the second one.

A: There again, one, t – there was my parents' bedroom, then there was another bedroom, and there was a, like a living room and it was a fairly large apartment, you know.

Q: The first one.

A: The first one. Th-The second one I don't remember too much either. You know, we had combined kitchen and pa-parents' bedroom, I think. My grand – or later my grandmother joined us.

Q: Your mother's mother?

A: Yes. Well, wh-what happened, I don't know, sh – da – whether th-they had to move, or they moved from **Tann**, and they – well, at that time there was only my grandmother and my – my uncle; he was not married. So my grandmother moved to

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another of her daughters in **Würzburg**, who later came to the **United States**, and then my grandmother came to us.

Q: I see.

A: It was kind of – kind of close living, you know, changing – you know, having the same apartment with a – with another party.

Q: That's right.

A: Especially as they were really, strictly Orthodox.

Q: Hang on just a second. Did your parents – excuse me – did your – did your parents behavior or demeanor change after **Kristallnacht**? Because to me, it sounds from your telling, that that was the most significant event up until that time.

A: Right, right, right, right, right.

Q: Is that right?

A: Well, we – we all got passports – well, that was in '38, 1938.

Q: Right.

A: We all got passports, and my parents must have **regist**(ph) me and my sister for the – you know, the **Kindertransport**. I'm not sure. We – the – the people we shared the apartment with, their name was **Munk, m-u-n-k**. And they had, like I said, very religious family, and they had a number of rabbis in the – as relatives. And one of them was in **London**, and I have some letters that – that came from **Berlin**

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and from – from – I think **Berlin**, and from **London**, that soon I wou – I would be going to **England**.

Q: So, can I assume then your parents started talking to them about their feeling of – of lack of safety, and wanting to get you out? Was that it?

A: Ri-Right. And you know, other acquaintances, or relatives had moved on, you know. Either they had to, you know, they were pushed or – or they were forced to evacuate – to em-emigrate, or voluntarily emig-emigrated. And, you know, they received reports from them.

Q: Was there talk about the whole family leaving?

A: You know – yes. The – it's a – it so happened that people started to learn English, people like – people tried to te – learn a tre – maybe some – some trade. My mother learned how – how to make pr-pr – in German it's praline, and pra –

Q: Oh, praline. They're sort of like candies, right?

A: Yeah, but you know, the – the –

Q: With the marzipan?

A: – the pedit –

Q: Yeah.

A: – you know, the pe – chocolate –

Q: A hard quality, yes.

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A: – yes. And – and my father tried to learn different instruments, you know, the –
the – in preparation for eventually moving.

Q: What happened with – I'm so – oh, I'm sorry, I'm interrupting you. Did you want
to say something? **[interruption]** So, what did I want to say? So they're in
preparation for moo – what happened with school now, after **Kristallnacht**?

A: Oh, I – well, I – I cont – I continued, and I think I finished high – high school in –

Q: So the clu – it wasn't closed down?

A: I don't know – no, it wasn't closed down. It came up in wa – one of th-the letters
I later received from my – my father.

Q: Okay.

A: I finished high school, and my father and another fre – family friend, somehow
found a place for me and –

Q: Excuse me for a second **[crowd noise]**

A: – my father and the other –

Q: Excuse me. Tell me when. Okay, so we were at high school.

A: Right, we finished high school, and my father and a friend, they found someone
to teach me and this friend **[indecipherable]** my friend, to learn how to weld,
welder.

Q: Really, weld? Mm-hm.

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A: Yes, and I assumed that he pay – they're paid, this man. He used to be an ex-communist, and he had a little shop on – on **Canal**. And so we, you know, we learned, and people came in, **heil Hitler**, and you had to mumble something, you know [**indecipherable**]

Q: Were you – were – were you ready to go? That is, were you thinking it's only a matter of months til I'm out of here? Or did you have no idea of what was going on behind the scenes, as far as the rabbis being contacted in **London** and so –

A: No, you know, the – it – it was planned to, you know, to – to get the – get me and my sister, you know, before – where – my fr – no, my parents already registered with the American consulate, you know, for a quota number.

Q: Okay.

A: You know, there were the – there was a long line of people who wanted to go to the **States**, so we had a – we had a quota number, so the eventual goal was to go to the **United States**. Now comes the interesting part. This other fe – the – the – the oth – the – the family who son with me learned swa – welding, th-the father was – at the **Kristallnacht**, was arrested and was in **Dachau**. And he was supposed to – he was al – a – go-going to be freed, if he leaves the country. So one day they were leaving – you know, they made arrangements, they were leaving for **England** to wait out their quo-quota number, to be called at a later date. And my father s – I don't know ho – I – I don't know what go-got in his mind. He said to me, you want to go with

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them? And I said, if you come along. I think he re – tried to smuggle me – you know, we had those letters that – th-th-these letters were August '39, and the war started September –

Q: September.

A: – '39

Q: That's right.

A: So, this was in – this was in Se-September, when these fre – when these – the fre – the friends were moving to **England**. On that day he asked me if I want to come, he s – he – I said, if he would come. So we went, and there's some things, like I said, I for – I forgot completely, but was aware of again, when I received – when I was re-recently reading my let – the letters. So what happened was, they were going on a – on the train to **Würzburg**, to m – get an express train that goes through **Holland**. And I had – didn't have papers. I – I – I don't know what was in his mind, I didn't have papers to go to **Holland**. In **Holland** we had a – a cousin living. Maybe he tried to smu-smuggle me over. I don – I really don't know what was in his mind. Okay, so we were supposed to take that train to **Würzburg**, took an express train. And according to the story in the letters, the – the train was delayed, which meant that we didn't get the express train. So when we go to **Würzburg**, we got another train, it stopped in **Cologne**. Wa – as we were in the station, a group of **Kindertransport** was going to **England**. My father asked them if I could travel with them, so they

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said okay, if – if – if you have papers. And it so happened that in **Cologne** was an English consulate. We go – he and I, we went there. It was closed. They told me to wait a block away. Somehow he got inside. He got a stamp in my passport. It was the last day of the co – the consul to be there. It's the last day. So he got in, got a stamp in my passport, with a notation, see letter. You know, the letter from **Berlin** and –

Q: Right.

A: – and then I traveled with that group to **England**. It – you know, this was like miracles, one fo – you know, if one – if one would have – if – if the train, the first train would have been on time, I would have been at the border and not go any further.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, there was this –

Q: So, but it was almost like a goodbye on the quick. A goodbye that was –

A: Right, and –

Q: – sort of –

A: And – and th – and it was like a puzzle where one piece fitted into the other. If – if – if there wouldn't have been a – a children transport in **Cologne**, I wouldn't have been – come to **England**. If there wouldn't have been a consul, an English consul, I wouldn't have got into **England**. This – th-this like I –

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Q: So one of my questions is, what about **Suza(ph)**? Why wasn't she part of –

A: Well, she was younger. We – and she was a girl. Maybe my parents hesitated to send her on in a – you know, in a strange world, and – and I don't know if they had any correspondence that she would be going to **England** or –

Q: I see.

A: You know. Later on they tried all kinds of things, you know.

Q: To get her out?

A: Yeah, yeah, right.

Q: So did you have time to say goodbye to **Suza(ph)**, to your mother, before you went?

A: I – probably. I don't – I – I – this is – I – I don't –

Q: You don't know.

A: There are certain things I – that I – I – I don't memor – I – you know, I don't remember.

Q: But your father saw you off in **Cologne**.

A: Right, right, right.

Q: Do you remember that goodbye?

A: Yeah, well, was kind of sad.

Q: Yeah.

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A: So when I got to **England**, the – the group went one way – well, we stayed overnight in – in – in a place, you know, everybody had a little cubical.

Q: Tell me a little bit about the journey. So, you – you have your papers, you have the stamp, you have the – the notation, see letter –

A: Yeah, so – so we traveled on to **H-Holland**.

Q: Was there any problem at the border?

A: No. **[technical interruption]**

Q: All right. So, when you're leaving **Cologne**, do you cro – do you have any memories of crossing the border from **Germany** into **Holland**?

A: No, not really. But I have a – I se – sort of ma – I kept a little bit of a diary, so I – I reme – I had it written down, and I slept on a – a – a – a – on a bo – on a boat, on – on – in the open on – o-on – o-on the – on a boat, you know, before the boat. Then left to **Ha-Harwich**, in **England**. So then, from there were traveled by train to **London**. And we li – on the – se – sta-stayed overnight there. And then the group went one way, and I was on my own. And this was the – the place where we stayed, it was in **Whitechapel**, which is a Jewish area in **London**. And I spoke to some of the pe – the people, and this directed me to that Rabbi **Munk**, a-and I stayed with him about three days, and after that, he arranged for me to be accepted – accepted in a place for refugee boys for – from **Austria** and **Germany** and you know –

Q: And you were 15, is that correct?

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A: Yeah, I was 15 then.

Q: Yeah.

A: And that was in **Croydon**. It was in a girls' school that had been evacuated to the countryside. And I stayed there for a while. And then they sent me to a school, I stayed there for t-two or three weeks, and then they send me to east **London**, to a rabbi whose family was e-evacuated, and he took in four or five boys, and we lived with him for a while. He find jobs for us. First, in some – some factory, knocking out pots and pans and stuff like that. And then –

Q: Did the welding have anything to help you –

A: Well, it – because of the welding, he found me some other j-job in a machine shop. And I had to do the welding, but I wasn't any good. But they took me anyway.

Q: I want to back up just a little bit, so I understand correctly. You were probably on one of the last **Kindertransports**.

A: I would say so.

Q: Because the war had already started. If the British consul was –

A: No, he was c – he was closed, he was probably going to leave.

Q: Yeah.

A: But it was still three days before the war.

Q: So it was late August, late August '39.

A: Right, right, right.

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Q: Okay, okay, so the war was imminent.

A: Right.

Q: Truly imminent.

A: Right.

Q: And when was the first time that you wrote to your parents and you got something from them? Where were you at the time?

A: Well –

Q: Cause if you're moving around from one place to another, did you have an address to which they could send letters to?

A: That's a good question. I think I must have sent – I – I think maybe as soon as I arrived, I probably sent them something.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And then we – we co – we corresponded, and eventually I had about 30 letters from – from them. At first they sent their letters to an uncle. Actu – we called him uncle, but he was my mother's uncle, in **Belgium**, and he then forward the letters to me. And after **Belgium** was occupied, my father sent them to **Sweden**, some acquaintance, or a – a friend, and they forwarded. And my mother's sister and family were already in the uni – **United States**, so they'd send it – you know, **United States** wasn't in – a-at war with germ –

Q: In the war yet.

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A: – at – at that time. And then the – they forwarded – so you know, so roundabout way.

Q: What did they describe in those letters?

A: Well, th-their – their life at the time. Like I said, they tried to prepare for the eventual emigration, you know, they tried the English, and e-even my mother tried to te – learn it, and she had some difficulties doing that.

Q: So even when the war starts, there is a possibility to leave?

A: Peop – yes, people left. He describes how ma – he mentions many people that left at certain times, oh this family is leaving, now this. And they – well, they were – they – they used to go maybe to **Spain** or **Portugal**, and to get a ship, or maybe even in the beginning to **Rotterdam** to – to get a ship the **States**. You know, there was no war between the **United States** and **Germany**. Th-They carried on. My father helped out many friends who left without having – without being able to take furniture or anything with them. But they called them lifts at that time, but he did a lot of footwork for them, you know, go to the off – get all the proper papers to have these things sent off. At the same time one of the musician friends was afraid for the – so he was able to have – well, in the very early time, when **Holland** was not invaded yet, he had a suitcase sent to **Holland** and then forwarded to me, with some clothing and papers and photos.

Q: So that's how you have the family photos?

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A: Right, right, right.

Q: I see. I see. Did they think – oh, okay –

A: Well, he – he hinted on the restrictions like, they had to be in – indoors by eight o'clock. My mother had her line out for fish, and – and they fished for quite a bit.

But they still – I wouldn't say normal life, but they still – he describes my sister going a ride on a – on a bike to a – with friends, and you know, described things.

They were – they're learning stenography, and –

Q: Did they have any – did they put all their hopes, do you think, on that quota number with the American embassy, or were they trying other ways to get out to other countries?

A: They – they – there is a mention, I think, in a letter, said they tried to go to **South America** somewhere. And my grandmother lived with us, and sh-she also only had a much, much later quota number, be – and my menti – my parents – my father mentioned many times in the – in the letters that he didn't know what to do, because he – he didn't want to just leave her on her own, if the family would move to **States**. He writes of trying to get my sister to go to – to **Palestine**. He tried many ways to, you know, to speed up getting out, without having to wait for the – you know, the quota number to be called.

Q: Do you think – this is a hindsight kind of question, but do you think that the danger, the sense of danger, came to him too late?

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A: We-Well, when you talk about danger, I – I – I would assume – you – you know, these killing camps were no – weren't existing at that time. So nobody had the faintest idea what the future would bring. I would say that in in their mind, they felt we had to get out; we were restricted, we were persecuted. But they figured, there is going to be a war, which eventually ends, and sooner or later we'll be out of here, you know? That's – that's – that's my feeling. I mean, they – they tried. They tried to get out. They had reports from friends in this – that emigrated to here, that was not too rosy, you know. I – I just translated one of letters, and the – the – the cantor of the synagogue, who was here, he writes he just lost his position. He's now selling canned goods. You know, it's –

Q: It's hard for – yeah.

A: It's **[indecipherable]** you know, it – it didn't pull him to – to ye – ye – and – and – and always grandma being left behind was on his mind, and so –

Q: Oh, and no – it sounds like a hellish position to be in.

A: Right, right.

Q: Because there's so many unknowables.

A: Right, right.

Q: How did – do you remember how you felt as you were receiving these letters, one after another? And what were you writing to them about this – should – were you

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urging them to leave, were you – were you in – did you menti – comment on that situation, or were you writing more about what was going on with you?

A: Well, mostly what was going on with me. They – they were in – you know, they were, of course, very interested in my life. I was happy to receive letters from them, and vice versa, they, you know, receiving the letters from me. And they wrote to me about their lives, and he was very active. And they still had cultural happenings.

Q: Had he lost his job?

A: No.

Q: So they're still with the school?

A: But later on –

Q: Yeah.

A: – later on – so, in this last letter I translated, the people, you know, in the ground fl – ground floor were just going – leaving, and he was – they were considering moving down into the ground floor, and they mentioned it's – it's cheaper and they had some reduction in the – in the income. And he was very active in these cultural performances he put together even before, you know, before the war, where we were restricted of attending cultural perform – you know, happenings. He formed orchestras and he had the musical events, concerts, and he was leading them. And he writes about the – the dep – having a – perform in the old age home, or in the **schwester haus**. I don't know what that means. **Schwester heim**, or something.

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Q: **Schwester haus. Schwester heim.** That's interesting.

A: I – I – I-I da – I don't – but he mentioned it many a times. And then at the – at these performances, he acted as **MC**, you know, and he had that quartet singing and my – my sister was playing the harmonica and all – you know, all these details he wrote to me, and –

Q: Did you feel –

A: – and – and then, a-at one ti – we were talking about the school –

Q: Yeah.

A: – in – in **Fürth**. He, in one of his letters, he mentioned that the – the – the school in **Fürth** was closed, and he – they got some pupils from there in their school.

Q: I see. I see. So the school still was operating, even children –

A: Yeah, they had – they – their school was operating, and even they had the service, religious service in the **turnhalle**, you know, in the gymnasium.

Q: Did you get letters from your mother and your sister?

A: Yeah, my mother's and grandmother's and you know, they included a few lines, or a whole page; sister, grandmother and my mother.

Q: What did they write about?

A: Well, you know, about they're happy that I'm fine and you know, my sister s – didn't come home in time, or they were stopped on – on a bicycle tour because she and her friend was riding to – you know, together and th-they were fined and you

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know, the day to day oc-occasi – happenings, which sh – sort of showed that they were, you know, still going on tours, and na – in a – nearby things, you know, for the day.

Q: Yeah.

A: But we were restricted in, your rights, you know, like in normal times I would still take the letter to the post office, but you know, you can't take – can't leave the house. He arranged some things – he invent – he could have invented something to – for the windows, for the lighters and shine, you know, at night, and probably they had the – they had pr – probably had air raids. I mean, he didn't – he didn't talk about that, because the letters were censored many a times.

Q: So did you get letters? I mean, did you get all the letters you think that he sent?

A: I would say so. But I have about 20 - 30 letters.

Q: That's a lot.

A: Oh yes.

Q: That's a lot.

A: And then also, a couple of times we – we ha – we cou – were able to send a Red Cross message, you know, like 20 words, or something like that. I sent it, and then he was allowed to have return with 20 words, you know the – on his side.

Q: Do – do you have the feeling that they didn't want to worry you too much, and so emphasized –

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A: Yes, right, right, right.

Q: – these sort of norm – the more normal things that were going on?

A: Probably. Right, right, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh. And nevertheless –

A: Well, then – then – and then – I – the – you know, like in the re – letters I must have written, you know, some – some – some things, that we were issued the gas masks in **England**, you know. And then he, you know, he had a good sense of humor and he wrote, don't – or keep your onion peeling instrument close, you know, so you – of – that's – you know, and –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and it – he tried to set some – the jokes, he was telling us [**indecipherable**], but usually it was a play on words which in German was funny, but when you're trying –

Q: In translation.

A: Right, right.

Q: What were you writing him about? What was going on in your life?

A: Well, you know, the – the – the – about the jobs, I – I got a little more money. I mean, you know, mentioned some friends I visited, you know. I had an uncle and aunt who also waiting out their quota number to go to the **States**, they lived in part of **London**. I qui – occasionally vi-visited them, the – the family, the – I traveled

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with re – you know, or traveled at the same time to **England**. I visited them occasionally, and some other people. My father gave me the address – sent me addresses of people he knew lived in **London** and they ca – at one time lived in **Tann**. There was – they had the butcher's shop in **Tann**, and they had started a butcher shop in – in **London**. I visited them.

Q: So you would tell him about those things.

A: Yeah, that's right. Right, right.

Q: When was – when did you – when did it all stop?

A: Well, I – I have to – I have to go back a little bit about my life in **London** also.

Q: Okay.

A: Could we stop for a moment?

Q: Of course. **[break]** This is a continuation of our interview with Mr. **Norman Miller**. And I wanted to dwell a little bit again on the letters that excha – that you exchanged with your parents, that would get to you in a roundabout way, that would get back to them –

A: Right.

Q: – in a roundabout way, and so on. The last letter that you received from them, when was this?

A: May '39 –

Q: '39?

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A: Four – '41.

Q: '41.

A: May '41, yeah, right.

Q: So it was the – it was not quite two years.

A: Right.

Q: It was more like a good year and a half.

A: Right.

Q: That you had had this correspondence.

A: Right, right, right.

Q: How long did it usually take, you know, because this was such a roundabout way, the intervals between letters. Would it be a month, two months, and – or less than that?

A: Less than that, they were quite frequently, every couple of weeks, especially in the beginning, you know, when the – when they went to **Belgium** and then from there on to **England**. Later on, it took a while the – for a letter to come to me, you know, it came to the **States** first. And – **[interruption]**

Q: Okay, all right. So, the last letter you receive is May '41. When do you start becoming worried bec – that you're not hearing from them?

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A: Well, I – I'm – there were a couple of Red Cross message – messages, and I think I sent one off, and I never got a reply. The ma – the – that probably was th-the – the last I got, you know, correspondence.

Q: What was going through your mind?

A: I – I can't recollect. I – I don't – I – I don't – I don't remember. I don – you know, the – there's certain things you sometimes shut out.

Q: Of course.

A: Yeah.

Q: Of course. Were you – were you making further attempts, beyond the Red Cross, as the months went on, to find out what was going on? Or was that not possib –

A: No, I have a copy of a letter where I made some inquiries about my parents, through the – when I was in the English army.

Q: But that's already later.

A: That's later.

Q: Yeah.

A: Right.

Q: During that – those first months, and let's say year, did you – yeah, did you wonder if they were still in their own home?

A: A-A-All along, you know, the feeling was that you know, we get togeth – we – we – we meet again, and we – you know, they – when th – either th-th-they leave –

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they are able to leave, or once the war is over, we'll get, you know, join each other again.

Q: So you didn't doubt that they were alive?

A: I didn't know. I – I – we – you know, we di – we – we didn't know about the camps a – you know, l-looking at it from what we n-now know – at that time, you couldn't even imagine th-these killing camps existed, or –

Q: So you didn't know, but you also didn't think the worst things –

A: No, I didn't – no, I didn't think the worst.

Q: Tell me – I mean, we'll – we'll go back to – to what your life was in – in –

A: In **England**.

Q: In **Britain**.

A: Yeah.

Q: But first I want to follow that – that s – that part of your story as to how you continued, when you did continue, to try and find out about them. And when was the first time you found out anything? So May '41, it all ends, the letters stop. And then when is – is it when you were in the army, truly, that the next time was that you were able to do something?

A: Ma-Made – made inquiries and went through the army, you know, that was in – but that was actually the – after the war, you know. The was s – ended May '45, and

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I have a letter, when I inquired in August, you know, about the whereabouts my fa – of my family.

Q: Did you get any response to that?

A: Later on, I think so. I – I'm – I believe I did get someth – something like they're sent to the – emigrated to the east, or something like that.

Q: A vague kind of response.

A: Right, right.

Q: And that was to that army letter?

A: Yeah, right, right [**indecipherable**] right.

Q: When did you find out more, and how did you find out more?

A: I da – I don't remember. I really d – you know, I –

Q: Do you recall when you found out they didn't survive?

A: No, I don't remember. I have no – no – I ha – I ha – I don't have – I don't remember the day – any dates or any –

Q: No, it doesn't have to be a date, but in – in – an instance or a – or a – a particular time period where, you know, you might have been in a certain place, or through a certain person, or – because that would be quite a mun – you know, significant moment to –

A: Oh, yes, after the war, I received a le – I don't know how they found me. I – I received a letter of somebody from **Nuremberg** of my age, who was – who – he and

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his parents were in the same camp as my parents, and he wrote that they died, and he gave me a date when they died, you know, for remember – for remembrance, lighting candles and that, you know, like **Yahrzeit**.

Q: What –

A: He gave to me the – the Jewish date, you know, th – in the – in the Hebrew year, and [**indecipherable**] goes by the – what is it, March the 28th, you know, when we light candles, you know.

Q: And what was the date? Was it March 28th?

A: I think it was March 28 or 26 of '40 – '42 wi – I think they were transported in no – November '41.

Q: Okay, so half a year.

A: I ha – to **Latva – Latvia, Jufenhof**(ph) I think it is the place where s –

Q: **Jungfernhof**, mm-hm.

A: – was called. And I read some books in – books – and people were writing th – their experiences. And there was one book and the people were marching, and they mentioned that somebody started the song that – that the **Millers** is the wanderlust, and I thought that's just like my father, but I – I – I don't know if that really is so.

Q: If it was him.

A: Yeah, yeah. And then later I – I got some other books with, you know, the terrible details and where – of the pla – different places or – where they were killed, and the

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details of – exact details; who was in command, and all – you know, the Germans and oh, there are a lot of books, so, were terrible to read.

Q: But it was from this one letter that you f –

A: This one letter – as a mat – I saw the man just a week ago. There was a – a commemorative memor-memor-memor – memorial. I went, and he happened to be there, too.

Q: And he lives in **New York** then?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: What is his name?

A: **Kimmersteele**(ph).

Q: **Kimmersteele**(ph)?

A: Yes.

Q: And his first name?

A: **Albert**.

Q: **Albert Kimmersteele**(ph)?

A: Yes.

Q: And –

A: He – he also lost his – his parents and he tha – there was a repri – he had a brother that he was somewhat handicapped, and he also died. And h-he himself, you know, he wa-was taken to – to work in the factory, or – or different places.

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Q: In **Latvia**?

A: Yeah, or – or somewhere near – near there. And there, he survived.

Q: And were – wa – how was he part of your life before the war? Was he an acquaintance, or was he a friend?

A: N-No, he wasn't a friend. He just – well, you know, they – he and his family were sent to the same camp, which proves that they lived in **Nuremberg** the same time my parents lived the early days of the war in **Nuremberg**. And everyone was restricted where – where to go, you know, and they went to the same events, and they knew the family. But I – I vaguely remember him from my childhood – you know, from my you – you know, youth.

Q: He was part of your community.

A: Right, right, part of the community.

Q: And do you remember, did you receive this letter in **England**?

A: Yes. Yeah, while I was still in **England**. I don't know – I don't know when.

Probably maybe soon after – maybe soon after the war. I – I – I do – don't remember when that happened. And I don't – I don't know how he – he found me, somehow.

Q: Do you still have that letter?

A: I believe it's somewhere.

Q: Okay, but it's not amongst this – the letters here?

A: No, I don't think so. Oh, I – I don't know.

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Q: And di –

A: I didn't come across it, so far.

Q: And do you – what did I want to ask? Did you continue a correspondence with him after that first letter that he sent to you?

A: Well, I – I – I must have written to him, but he then emigrated to – to the – to – to here.

Q: To the **United States**.

A: Right, and I moved. And I – you know, I'm – I – I was still in the army for, you know, military o-occupation, after the war in **Germany**.

Q: But you received the letter while you were in **England**?

A: It could have been while I was in the army.

Q: I see. I see.

A: Yeah.

Q: But I can't imagine what it must have been – I can't imagine getting a letter like this, with such certainty.

A: Maybe I shut out the – ho-how I felt at that – I – I don't know. I don't – I don't really re – there's certain things I – I have – you know, I s – I just shut out and -- out of my mind, or –

Q: Yeah. I mean, they're te – in some ways they're too big.

A: Yeah.

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Q: And – and so aside from this one letter, and this person, Mr. **Kimmersteele**(ph), **Albert**, you said **Kimmersteele**(ph) –

A: Mm-hm.

Q: – You never got any other per – information about your parents and sister personally.

A: No.

Q: So it's all what you have read about in other works that talk about **Jungfernhof** –

A: Right, right.

Q: – and talk about –

A: Right.

Q: – the deportations, and so on.

A: Right, right.

Q: What are some of the things that you read about what happened to people who were in **Jungfernhof**?

A: Well, the – well the very rough accommodations, and – well, actually, I didn't – didn't read much about it, it just – what I did read were, you know, th-the place, **Jungfernhof**, which I think was a – it used to be a farm, and it was outside **Riga**.

And the – the books I – I read was actually about the events in **Riga**, and there was a ghetto in **Riga** that was – a-and th-they killed the people in that ghetto in order to make room for more to – people to – to get there to be killed, and – and this

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Jungfernhof was outside and – and not too – too many details about the life, or existence of the people, their treatment.

Q: Did you want to know those things?

A: Vaguely va – I – maybe – maybe they – they – th-they si – even there, the set up – maybe the – it's in my mind, I'm – I don't know if it's a cre-creation of me – my mind, or th-the – maybe there were some items that I picked up somewhere, as if they maybe tried to set up some kind of normalcy, because to me it seems I have in my mind that's – I don't know where I picked that up, that my father was trying to teach, or something, kids or –

Q: But you don't know from where.

A: I don't know where I grabbed that.

Q: Yeah.

A: But – yeah.

Q: Did you – did you want to know the details of what was going on when they got to **Latvia**?

A: Well, yes and no. I – I was ef – wh-what – what really bothered me was in – in that one book that's very detailed, with all the names of Germans and officers and the happenings from day to day, they describe how they were killed, you know. The trenches were dug and they undress and – and they got shot and – and I very often, even nowadays, I – I think, what went on in – in my father's mind at that moment?

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Did he feel it's all his fault, or he did – he – he missed out on doing something to – or didn't he – he didn't push hard enough to get out earlier, or g-get different country, or send my si – the sis – my sister to **Israel**. Or did he, in the last moment, think of me? Being alone, I – I very often think about that. Yeah [**indecipherable**] my – my other son, he [**indecipherable**] I have a couple of very young grandchildren, two years and five years. [**break**]

Q: Okay. You were talking about your grandchild.

A: Yeah, y-you know, th-tha-tha – you read about description of how the **SS** and these – y-you know, in the – in these camps, how they killed little babies and that's – I get reminded about, you know, I re – I recall that, and I see my grandchildren, small kids. It's – it's – it's inco-comprehensive, that a human being can act that way.

Q: This – you know, this was your father, this was your sister, your mother.

A: Mm.

Q: What happened with your grandmother, the one that you were –

A: She – she was transported with my parents.

Q: I see. I see. Did you ever get any kind of death certificate, any list from the Red Cross, anything?

A: Well, I – I in-inquired at the – I inquired a-at **Yad Vashem** also, and I also – in **Nuremberg** they issued a memorial book, and I – I knew through some other friend that they were going to do it, and I sent them some pictures of my family,

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grandmother and – and father and mother and sister. And that gives details when they were deported, you know, November da – some date. And, well they declared them dead at the end of the war, you know, '45 sometime, the date o-of May '45 when – when the war was over. And they, you know, everybody – they had details of where everybody was sent to, you know, like my family **Jungfernhof**, some **Theresienstadt** in this book, and I – I have that at home with the pictures in it.

Q: Who published that?

A: In **Nuremberg**, the –

Q: City?

A: Yes.

Q: The municipality?

A: Right, right.

Q: Uh-huh. Did they publish it right after the war, or [**indecipherable**] later?

A: I think it was quite a bit – quite a bit later.

Q: Okay.

A: It's a heavy book, you know.

Q: So they must have had some sort of source material, lists from the archives.

A: Right, right, right, they had – they had the lists ... th-th-they had to – th-they had – you know, the Germans, they are precise, they had lists for everything. Also you – I – I don't know whether they were put – put in the jail before they were transported,

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or – I'm not sure about that. If they – if it wa – if that happened, I'm sure they have details of – names.

Q: Did you – is it – is – would it be fair to say then the last items you got from your family, sort of like th-the – a thing that proves that they lived, was the suitcase with the photographs and the clothes, and things like that were sent to you?

A: No, th-that was – that was earlier.

Q: Okay.

A: That was when hol – **Holland** was under cow – occupied by the Germans –

Q: Yeah.

A: – which was, you know, a ri – a – late '39, beginning '40. No, but in – then the le – then later on they – th-the letters arrived. These were the only co – later conta – real contact.

Q: I-I – yeah, I have to – I misspoke really then. The letters would be the last item –

A: The la-last connection between us.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: But as far as let's say for the re – for your life, you'd have the letters and the photographs that they had given to you.

A: Right, right, right.

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Q: And no other items that – say when you went back to **Germany**, and you went – did you go to **Nuremberg**?

A: Yes, re – orte – I went to **Nuremberg** just recently, couple of – maybe a year or two ago, pa – when I visited my son in **Italy**, we went there. O-Oh yes, and the reason we – this is an interesting point, the reason we went, they fou – apparently the Nazis in the – especially the – the head of the Nazis in **Nuremberg**, planned to have a museum of – a-a-after the war, of the s – the sou – those people, lost tribe th – of Jews. And he collected all kinds of Jewish articles, books. And they found books that belonged to my father. And we went to **Nuremberg** to the library. There was a whole section of hundreds of books that were supposed to be in that museum. And there were maybe – maybe eight or so that belonged to my father. And they traced me through **Yad Vashem**, and this – and not – not th – not directly to me, but I had – a cousin of mine made inquiries also, and they went – contacted her in **California** an-and they informed them that I'm – I exist in **New York**. So we went there to look at the books, and there's a Jewish librarian who is i-in – in charge of that, and we went there and we took a few of those books, I have them at home. It's mostly on the liturgy, you know, the – the synagogue services. A really big, heavy book that my father studied.

Q: And you remember it from before?

A: No, I don't remember that books.

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Q: From before, okay.

A: But tha-tha – one or two were – he – he had that were maybe his mother's, because there was an inscription in one of them about the **yahrzeit** of her mother ma – her father, or her husband? I don't –

Q: What is **yahrzeit**? So that people will know –

A: It's a co – a commem – commemorative date of when a person had died.

Q: I see.

A: And we light candles o-o-on that particular day, yah – **Yahrzeit**.

Q: And it's inscribed, let's say, in a book, or in a – in a certain kind of a book? Is it like in the Bible, or –

A: Well, that's – in the olden times maybe people used to do that, but no, we – we – we don't – we –

Q: But the book – I'm talking about the books that you got from that library.

A: Yeah, this wa – this was my grandmother's, my father's mother's. She had an inscription, you know, in memory of –

Q: I see.

A: – her husband, or maybe her father, I da – I don't remember. So we went there and we got – we – we – h-he sent us some books [**indecipherable**] they were big, heavy books. And eventually we probably donated them to – that's when we went to **Nuremberg**, but we went to look where we used to live in one – one place. Well,

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that was like a parking lot. Then we went to where we had to move to the house where only Jews lived. A dentist lived th-there. And sh –

Q: So the apartment still existed, the building still existed?

A: No, no, no, th-these were – this building in **Sunstrasse**(ph), where we used to live in that one ve-very [**indecipherable**] apartment, that was a new building. That – th – you know, it was the same number?

Q: Right.

A: But a new building. And around the corner was the Orthodox synagogue, and they just have a memorial. You know, it's not existing memorial in the street, it – that – the – th-the synagogue was there –

Q: Was there, yeah.

A: – years back. But otherwise, the [**indecipherable**] different, you know, it's a – they were bombed out, and you know, they – they have beautiful shops and traffic and you know, it's – it seemed the same.

Q: So, I mean, did – was the city recognizable to you?

A: Well, it still – you know, it – it – it was an old city, there was a wall around the city, and a – and a moat. You know, part of that still existed, there was a castle on the hill, and that existed. But otherwise, we didn't spend much time there. **Steven** brought a friend along, who – who lived near him in – in – in **Italy**, an Englishman.

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He was a photographer, he took a lot of pictures. And he sort of reported our meeting this librarian. I remember we took him out to lunch at –

Q: Was this the only time you were back to **Nuremberg**?

A: Yes.

Q: So, after the war, right immediately after, you didn't go?

A: No. No. I wa – there were people that we invited to **Nuremberg** by the – the municipality. Some people asked to be invited. I – I didn't – or somehow I didn't feel I wanted to go, really. After the war [**indecipherable**] but probably was the first vacation in **Europe**, went to **Switzerland** and we rented a car, my wife and I. My wife also came from **Germany**, but she came to the **States** earlier, with her parents. And we went into **Germany**, we went to a place called **Königheim**, where my wife ca – was born, and her – the family lived there. An aunt still corresponded with the non-Jewish family, we visited there. And we went to **Tann**. And in – in – in – in the – we went to **Tann**, and we went to **Kerolla**(ph), where my mother-in-law came from, and we went to the different cemeteries. It so happened that we made arra – **Steven** was traveling too – my son, and – in **France**, and we made an arrangement to meet him on the certain day at the railroad station in **Tauberbischofsheim**, and when we drove up, he was sitting there [**indecipherable**]. But he had come there on a previous occasion, and he said, you know, that he came to the cemetery in **Königheim**, and his wer – it was locked, and he climbed over the fence, and he said

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the **shema al**(ph), you know, Hebrew prayer. He – y-y – you know, he’s – he has a Master’s in history, b-besides his other degree, and he’s, you know, very much in – into history, al-also family history. And very much involved in the letters. And he already p-put that book together.

Q: Well, they’re very special.

A: Yeah.

Q: They’re very special in a personal way, and very special historically.

A: Right, right.

Q: So they have – they have a lot of significance. Your wife and yourself, what language did you speak with one another?

A: English mostly. And – and in – and wh-when we tra-traveled to **Germany**, I didn’t want to speak German. You know, I – we – we still – we spoke English. And l-later on, you know, I did quite a bit of traveling after my wife died, and you always came across Germans. I didn’t want to – I didn’t want to talk to them. And when I heard the German language, it – it – it – it sounded so stiff and I didn’t – I didn’t care for it. I d – I – I – I hated hearing it. But we didn’t spare – speak German, you know, just words, we spo – with her parents maybe, we spoke German. But after a while I – I – you know, I wasn’t fluent in German any more. I got a little more fluent by translating these letters, which, you know, with a – need a good dictionary, and go on the computer, get the translation.

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Q: Sometimes that's – yeah [**indecipherable**] that.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: But it's – it's important, you know, it's important – a person's relationship to the world they were born in, the country they were born in, through the experiences that you had.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: That's – that's part of –

A: Right.

Q: – what I wanted to ask you about, you know.

A: Well, I – I – I wasn't drawn to go back. We – you know, over the years you sort of mellowed, and you – you don't give it much thought, you know, you don't dwell on – o-o-on that, you ha – you have no problems. But I hope to – to visit **Latvia**.

Q: These – yeah, these are painful places.

A: Right, right, right.

Q: You know. I think maybe we stop now for lunch?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And we'll – [**break**]

End of File One

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Beginning File Two

Q: Okay, so this is a continuation of the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. Norman **Miller**. And I would like now to turn to another track. We talked earlier about the trajectory, the very tragic trajectory of your family; your mother, your father, your grandmother, your sister. And the last time you heard from them, and the unanswered Red Cross messages, or messages through the Red Cross. Tell me, from that time, from let's say mid-1941, what was your life like? What was going on with you in **England**?

A: Well, the – th-the – the **Bloomberg** – not **Bloomberg**, **Bloom** – the – the – some kind of **Bloomsbury**(ph) House, or –

Q: Yes.

A: – organization, they – they sort of supervised your life, so after I went to a Rabbi **Munk**(ph), who then sent me – well, he a-apparently contacted that organization. They sent me to a place in **Croydon** where there were other refuge – about maybe 40 re-refugee boys. And then, little while later, I was sent to a school in Swiss College part of **London**, a – a boarding school, but I only stayed there few – two – a few weeks, maybe a month, and then again there – was sent to a Rabbi ren – **refren** – **Ferdleman**(ph) in **Forest Gate**, that's in the east end of **London**, and he found us jobs. His wife, and family was evacuated during the war, and they were living in the countryside. And there was a Polish girl who did the cooking and house –

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housework. And he found jobs for us, and I worked in a factory, and then, having a fair knowledge, or a little knowledge of welding, I – I got a job in a machine shop, and I worked there for a while. You know, you – you – you had the – you start at the bottom, cleaning up and getting sandwiches and I didn't – my English wasn't that good, and I had to go by the sort of fo – phonetic – how it sounded, to order the –

Q: So you never used to – you never had proper English language lessons?

A: Well, I had in **Germany**, I had some in high school. So after a while, the – you know, this was the east end, and there was a lot of bombing, German air raids. It was near the wharfs. And so the company evacuated somewhere in the country, not too far, you know, one of the smaller towns outside. So I commuted there for a while, and then I stopped, and I got another job back in – in east end. I worked there – it was a scientific instrument company, machine shop type of work. And well, as I said, a lot of air raids. We – we watched – i-in **London** they had – they had a lot of balloons up, you know, to make it more difficult to get – for the planes to get lower, difficult to have a straight run.

Q: How would a balloo – I mean, this is just my lack of technical knowledge – how would a balloon hinder a plane? In what way?

A: Well, maybe they interfered with the – with their flight plans or – or something like that. And then we saw – we saw dogfights also, you know, the – the British planes

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attacking the German planes, and you s – sometimes you saw them sh – sh – being shot down, or y – or you – at times you didn't know where the – this was the English arm – a German plane was shot down. So, there was a program where they had what they called **Anderson** shelters in the backyards of the building – of – of the houses; in the garden, they d – they dug a hole in the ground. Then it had corrugated iron, and then some more soil on top. That's where we used to sleep at during the nights.

Q: Wow.

A: And I also was asked to sleep at our place of j – work, you know, under the benches a – a few times during the week, because they had these fire bo-bombs. These were sa – you know, th-they started a lot of fires, small. So we had sandbags and – in order to suffocate, you know, the flame.

Q: Did it actually happen?

A: Ye-Yeah.

Q: I mean, there was an anticipation, but did it actually **[indecipherable]**

A: No, no, sure, they had the fire, they had these – you know, th-they started th-the – the, you know, firebombs, and – by – by the hundreds as – they dropped these things. So I – I worked, and I lived in the – with that rabbi, and then he died, and then I was sent to another hostel for – for boys, for refugee boys in **[indecipherable]**. I kept on working.

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Q: Can I ask here; what authority – what British authority, or government authority was the one that kind of regulated your life?

A: I don't think it was a – a government, I think it was a Jewish private organization.

Q: I see, so –

A: I think **Bloomsbury**(ph) **Hall** was in the name of the organization. Also the – the – I-I guess they were in charge of bringing the **Kindertransports** to th-the – to the **States** and find them homes. So, I lived in this place, **Clapton**(ph) – you know, I used to play the che – cello, and I want to something musical, so I bought a clarinet in a pawn shop, and – but I had to give it up very soon, because we slept in a dormitory, you know, a whole bunch, and as soon as – that's the only place I could practice, and you know, as soon as you try to do that, someone wants to sleep, and – I also had a – a – a bad experience.

Q: What happened?

A: You know, I – I didn't earn much money, but I tried to save as much as I could, and I had a – a pa – a post office savings book, and one day I ha – I kept it in a little table next to the bed, and it disappeared. So I went to the director of the – that – the place, and he went straight to one particular person, and he had it. So, he must have had some previous record. So after a while –

Q: Did that mean you lost your savings?

A: No, he – he – he had – he had – he had my book, you know.

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Q: He had your book, but he wasn't able to withdraw anything.

A: No, n-no, no, yeah. Yeah, later on a few of us moved to a boarding house, you know, English boarding house, about four of us, and then decided, you know, decided to join the army, volunteer in the army.

Q: Can I interrupt? At this point I want to ask, a lot of refugee kids, particularly who had been on **Kindertransport**, who came from **Germany** or **Austria**, sometimes were classified as enemy aliens –

A: Oh yes –

Q: – by the British government.

A: Right, right.

Q: So I wonder, what was – what – what happened to you?

A: Well, when I wa – when I turned 16, I had to appear before a tribunal, and I was classified, friendly alien of enemy origin.

Q: So, had it changed a little by then.

A: Ri-Ri-Right, you know. I – I know others that were interned a-a-at that stage.

Q: Yeah.

A: Later on I was thinking maybe living with a rabbi, and maybe there was some – maybe he had some influence, or they recognized that I'm not really a dangerous person. So I, you know, was a friendly alien.

Q: And then you – that would have been – you would have been –

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A: That wou – when I was 16, that’s –

Q: 1940.

A: Right.

Q: 1940.

A: Right, right.

Q: So, pretty early on.

A: Right.

Q: All right. So – so that experience is one that you avoided, of being interned.

A: Right, yes, I was –

Q: Okay.

A: – not interned. And I ear – I – I – I made some English friends, one particularly, and he went in the air force. So, I wanted to get – you know, I thought – you know, my friends to – do their duty, I have – you know, I – I ought to do something. You know, I joined too, and I tried to get in the air force. And I – you know, I appeared before a board and I re – I – I was refused. It was be – I – I would say because of the German background. You know, if you had been Polish or Czech, where they had Polish people in the air force, maybe it would have been made lighter, easier. So –

Q: Was that disi – was that very disappointing for you?

A: Yeah, yeah, sort of, you know, right, right. So then I volunteered for the army, and I would – and I figured maybe with my ma – ma – mechanical background, I get

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into engineers or something like that. Well, they put me in the infantry. First it was, you know, begin in **London**. It was the Royal Fusiliers. Then was basic training, and when that was over, they needed ra – it was already towards the end of the war, you know. They needed reinforcement. As a matter of fact, I s – I saw in one of my army books, a notation about Far East. I think they were going to send me – vaguely I remember they were going – you know, they had everybody lined up to go to the Far East, and I said I speak German, and then they changed by it – you know, sort of destination. And, you know, I had my medical basic training. And then we were flown over to **Belgium** as reinforcement, and I joined the 53rd division, which was a Welsh division.

Q: What year was this?

A: It was f – 40 – beginning of '45, you know, it was –

Q: So the war was coming to an end.

A: Right, right. So – and I – and it – in the infantry platoon of the ra – the – the Welsh fusiliers. On – a-a-at that stage of the war, they had sort of cur – columns with tanks ahead, just moving until they hit resistance, or – you know. So, at – well, in – in my platoon already, the lieutenant found out that I speak German, so he kept me close to him. And one day, you know, the – a-and afterwards, the company, you know, that's the next stage, found out I cou – you know, there was a German speaker, so I was transferred to the company headquarters. And –

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Q: As an interpreter, as a translator?

A: Oh yes, interpreter, yes. You know, I still had my rifle and, you know, all that stuff. And while I was there, my platoon was riding on tanks that were, you know, just traveling into **Germany**, and they were ambushed, and – and you know, they were sitting on the tanks, and a whole bunch of them got killed, and some captured, and some wounded. So I escaped that.

Q: Yeah.

A: And soon after, when the battalion headquarters realized there's a German speaker, they put me in the intelligence section of the battalion. So, you know, we – we – we had – we had sa – we still had some fighting on the way into **Germany**. I ha – I ke – I kept a little diary, and I put down every little town we passed through.

Q: Do you remember the first town you hit?

A: No.

Q: Do you remember what part of the country you entered?

A: Well, it was a – a – northern – northern **Germany**. I know we had a – some kind of a – quite a battle in a place called **Bocholt**.

Q: **Bocholt**.

A: Yeah. Well, we ended up, on the day the war ended –

Q: May.

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A: May fifth – either fifth, sixth or seventh. Fifth – well the – they were – we ended up in **Hamburg**, you know. You know, the city was very – very much destroyed.

Q: I want to step back a bit. What was your job in the intelligence work, when you were now on company level, I believe, and you were part of the – what did you do?

A: I li – [indecipherable] because there was not – th-there wasn't much to – you know, at that time there wasn't much to do.

Q: Okay. Did you –

A: And in – verg – you know, maybe th – if there was a prisoner or something, you know, asked a – a – a few questions. I-I – I don't – I don't – I don't rem-remember. I'm – well, I – yes, you know, wh-when we came upon German civilians, you know, and th-there had to be some conversation, you know – you know, you – you were always called –

Q: Right.

A: – to i-interpret. So in – in **Hamburg**, we stayed there for a while, and we couldn't – it was the end of the war, and we controlled the – th-the traffic on the bridges, you know. So I was there quite often, and one day a – a limousine came by and it was sto – you know, the – the – the – the people, the platoon, they stopped the – the car, and looked at the papers, and they went to a German policeman and asked, are the papers in order, you know. And he said yes, but the – the – the British – I think it was a

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lance corporal, wasn't quite sure. He came over to me, showed me the paper. And I
real – realized, we have a big Nazi fish there.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: It was **Seyss-Inquart**.

Q: **Arthur Seyss-Inquart**?

A: The – the one who was in charge of **Holland** and in – in **Poland**. You know, the

–

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: He later was executed in **Nuremberg**. So, it was –

Q: Was his name on those papers?

A: Well I – I – so – ma – ma – I – you know, when I think about it now, maybe he
was on the way to give himself up, I – I – I don't know, because he came from the
east, you know, and the Russians were co – right behi-behind him. So, I had – I had
him arrested, and then they called the – the colonel, the, you know, battalion
commander. He had his picture taken, and then there – he was sent on to
Montgomery headquarters.

Q: Di – what did – what did – I mean, that's an amazing event.

A: Right. And I have proof of that. We had a new – a – a new – a battalion
newspaper, and they featured the person who ar – who was in charge at – of that
bridge detail. And they mentioned me, that he called me o – like I se –

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Q: Yeah.

A: – as I – as I related to you, th-that story [**indecipherable**] in there.

Q: Do you have that newspaper still?

A: Yes. Yeah.

Q: That would be amazing to see.

A: Right. **Steven** ha – makes up copies. It's – it's falling apart, you know. Yeah. So

–

Q: What did size – excuse me, I mean, do you – what did he look like at that point?

A: I – I don't –

Q: What was his demeanor?

A: – I don't remember. I – I don't know if – I don't remember. It's another of those moments. Ma-Maybe when I was there, he didn't come out of the car. I – I – I don't remember. Like I said before, tha-that – tha – there's another – another incident I come back later or pretty soon, which I also completely forgot. So after that, we – you know, the – the division moved up north to what's the – the Danish border.

Stayed there for a while. And then we – then we went down to **Dusseldorf**. We were on the a -- **Dusseldorf** airport we occupy – you know, we lived there. And I – I – there was a notice going around that they were looking for people for the [**indecipherable**] corps. So I put my name down and I – I got transferred it to the [**indecipherable**] corps. Out of the division, you know, that's a separate. And I have

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written down that I went on a course, you know, before I joined the unit, and I can't remember that. I don't remember it.

Q: It happens sometimes. Do you remember the work that you were doing at the time?

A: Well no, a-a-after that, I joined the unit in **Hamelin**. You know, the Pied Piper of **Hamelin**? That's – it was a small unit, but I ha – I w – I w – I wa – I – you know, I was detached to a place called **Bad Pyrmont**. That's a rural area. That's where I stayed, and you know, that – that was my report-reporting what goes on, or –

Q: In that place, that small place?

A: In a whole rural area.

Q: So that – did that mean you had to get in contact with, you know, the local German people there?

A: Yeah, ger – German people. Well, you know, go to – if they had that meetings, you know, report on that. I remember once there was sa – **[indecipherable]** there was someone who came up with a da – a **Danzig** manifesto. I don't know wha-what is really consisted of, but I handed it, you know, up, the letter. And they were very interested in that.

Q: What was the behavior, and the – how did people – how did the local Germans in this village, in this small place, react to you?

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A: Well, they – no problems really. Friendly, you know. And then – then, this was in '45, and then the – it was the occupation – military occupation, military – so, at first I – I – you know, I had a house in **Bad Pyrmont** and I – and the servant to clean up, a cook, you know. But – when – and had my own **Jeep**, or, you know, a transportation. But then, when military occupation was declared, I had to have a driver, an English driver. So I had a English civilian driver to br – you know, the –

Q: Sounds like you were – you were the chief of the town.

A: Sort of. There were all – and a bunch of displaced ca-camp, and funnily enough, these were people from **Latvia**.

Q: No kidding?

A: But I didn't know.

Q: Yeah.

A: I – I – I didn't have any details, I didn't know yet, you know, that my parents got killed in – in **Latvia**.

Q: What do you remember from those displaced persons' camps? Do you have any images in your mind, or any conversations, or any **[indecipherable]**

A: Well, they – they – as a matter of fact, I – I – I was quite friendly with them. They had a fairly easy life. They – you know, they were taken care of, food and wise. They – they enjoyed, they drank a lot.

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Q: Was there any effort, was there any movement to send them back forcibly, to the east?

A: No, no, no, no. I think later they – they moved on to **Canada, Australia**, different places. So –

Q: But they were part of your responsibility – area of responsibility?

A: Well, to check – you know, to check on them, you know.

Q: Was there any denazification going on in those camps?

A: Also – not – not – not in those camp – no, no. While was in **Hamburg**, I learned to write a motorcycle, and while in **Bad Pyrmont**, you know, I go – I was driving on – on the motorcycle, and I hit a pothole, and I had a cor – go to a smithy that formerly belonged to a Nazi, who had been arrested, to straighten out my motorbike.

Q: Did he?

A: Yeah – well, that – he – he – he had some employee there – there who did it. So after that, unfor – I think it was in '47, I had to go to some other, you know, a – a regular, bigger army unit, to be – to become a citizen, you know, to –

Q: Yes, now, a couple of thoughts here. So it means that you were in **Germany** for two years?

A: Right.

Q: Almost two years?

A: Right.

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Q: That's quite a long time.

A: Right, right. '45 - '47. Yeah.

Q: And –

A: A-A-And I was like a – a – either you couldn't consider me a German, because I da – wasn't English, or stateless or wha – I don't know what to call myself then. But then I became – you know, I'd applied to become a British citizen.

Q: But you were no longer **Norbert Müller**, you were already **Norman Miller**.

A: Yeah, or – ri – yes. From day one when I went in the army.

Q: I see. That's where you changed na –

A: Right.

Q: But it's also interesting that in the British military, you could have been transferred into these intelligence units without being a citizen.

A: Yeah, th – well, then, nobody knew that. I mean, the people I – I – I associated with, other soldiers, or – they didn't know I was not a citi – you know, th – nobody asked, so – nobody asked, so nobody knew.

Q: Yeah. It wouldn't be something that would occur to anybody.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. S-So, in 1947 –

A: '47, I –

Q: How did that process start?

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A: Well –

Q: Did you start it, or did they come to you?

A: – no, I sta – I started it, I requested it. Probably a – probably quite earlier. And you know, th – I – I went to that a – I think it was an engineering unit of the army, and some officer sort of took on the details and, you know, I had a oath, and I became a British subject, they called it.

Q: Were there requirements? I mean, did they require what people would require after the war, or was it that you had served in the military and that was enough?

A: No, no, that's separ – sep –

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Well, let's say I put in an application, and during the war they just filed it, because they – I – I – I – I'm not sure if I'm right, but I think even Prince **Philip** wasn't – became British til after the war. I don't know whether – where – where I got that, but that's what I her – heard. So the – so I went back to **England**, to the same boarding house. Oh, when I joi – when I joined the army, my employer didn't want to let me go. And h-he put in an application that – you know, that I would stay with the – you know, wartime work and that sort of stuff. But I is – insisted I want to go in the army.

Q: Did he do that to – for self-interested reasons, or to try and save you from –

A: No, self-interest. I – you know –

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Q: Self-in – yeah.

A: – you know, the job, yeah. I – I – you know, I did – did good work, and he appreciated it. And then when I came back, he took me in again. And while I was in the army in **Bad Pyrmont**, I got to know another British soldier who came to visit **Bad Pyrmont**. It seems his sister lived there, was married to a German. Jewish – a Jewish person. And so when I returned to – to **England**, I – fo-for a few months I stayed there, and this friend – ne-newfound friend and his wife went to **Canada**. So I decided I, you know, go follow them, and I went in **Toronto**. And I was there for about a year and a half. I was working in this tool-making field. And I had my uncle and aunt in **New York**, and they beckoned me to come there and I wasn't really settled in **Toronto**, you know, boardinghouse here, boardinghouse there. I had some fr – some friends, and –

Q: By this time, did you know what had happened to your family?

A: Yeah, I – I would – I would s – I don't – yeah, I wou – I don't know. Probably I would have known. Probably I would have known. I ca – I – I don't know exactly wh-when I really – you know, when I really found out about it. So then I –

Q: But you moved to –

A: So I – I moved to – here to **New York**, and I stayed with my uncle and aunt up in – on the – in the – **New York**, in **Washington Heights**. And I met my wife, and got married and settled down.

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Q: Tell me – tell me a little bit about that. Tell me about how you met your wife, and how you got to know of her family background and so on.

A: Right, right ... So I – I worked here, you – I worked in **New York**, in different jobs, and –

Q: But let's talk about your wife's story a little bit.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: You said that – do you remember how you were introduced?

A: Yes.

Q: How you first met?

A: Actually, it was a blind date.

Q: Was it?

A: I was in – I lived in **Washington Heights**, and I had a cousin living on the east side of **New York**. And they – they belonged to a congregation, Orthodox congregation. And one day she said, oh, I know a family, a very nice girl. You know, they're belonging to the same congregation. So I made the blind date, and –

Q: What was her name?

A: **Inga(ph) Sommer**.

Q: **Soman(ph)**?

A: **Sommer**.

Q: **Sommer**.

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A: **S-o-m-m-e-r.**

Q: Ah, **Inga(ph) Sommer.**

A: Yeah, and you know, th-they opened the door, pretty girl. Young, very yo-young looking. Well, she was six years younger than me. And we hit it off, and soon after we got married. Si – maybe six months later.

Q: That is pretty quick.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: And we have some – you know, two nice boy-boys, you met one of them.

Q: When was your oldest son born?

A: In '50 – '53? He – he's just celebrated his 60th. And the other one, '55.

Q: Was born in 1955?

A: Right.

Q: And your marriage, when did it take place? What year?

A: '51.

Q: Okay. And you said earlier, your wife comes from a different part of **Germany**?

A: Yeah, ba – in **Baden**, German [**indecipherable**] **Baden**, but very close to **Bavaria**.

Q: Oh. **Baden-Württemberg**? Is this –

A: Yeah, well that's – yeah, ba – the **Baden** part.

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Q: The **Baden** part [**indecipherable**]

A: Small town. Like I mentioned before, we went there once.

Q: Mm-hm. When had she left **Germany**?

A: It must have been a year or two earlier, with her parents. And she went to school there, the school year.

Q: Yeah, in **New York**.

A: Yeah, right. And then she worked as a – in dental assisting, and – and the whole thing. And she enjoyed it. And later she taught dental assisting in sa – one of these careers schools, and she loved teaching. And they loved her, they gave her presents and th – but then she, in one of the medical, you know, examinations there, she des – didn't have any pains, or any signs of any serious illness, they found too much protein in – in the blood, and right away they knew it's was a – a cancer in the bloodstream, or – and she died three years later, you know, it's a –

Q: When was this?

A: In a na – 19 – she died in 1996.

Q: So you had 50 years together, 55 years together?

A: I think it was 46 –

Q: 46 years.

A: – something like 46. Something like that.

Q: Yeah.

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A: Yeah. And you know, we are a very small family. She was also the o-only child, and my family was killed, so – and **Steven** didn't get married, and **Michael** now has two little babies.

Q: And they are named?

A: He is **Joshua**, and she is **Susannah**, after my sister. And **Joshua** also is named after – I – I don't know who, maybe from the **Sommer** side, I – I – I – I'm not sure. Cute kids. Smart kids.

Q: Yeah? Did they live in **New York** as well?

A: They live in the place called **Sleepy Hollow**, which is in **Westchester**.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: Ri – along the **Hudson** River. It's about 35 miles from house to house. I go there and visit, stay over. I enjoy going there, and it's, you know, in my old age, having those little kids to fool around with, I go down on the ground and play with them. It's a real joy.

Q: Yeah. Your two sons, were they – did they ask you, as they were growing up, about what the war was, and what you had gone through, and – and anything? Did you talk much about it?

A: Yeah. I mean, we must have – we must have talked about it. I – there again, I don't – I do – I – I don't remember the – the occasions, but –

Q: They knew your story?

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A: They – they – yes. I mean, the – they’re – they’re smart pe – smart boys. They’re interested in everything, really, you know. They know what’s going on and – and they’re smart, and – and especially his – **Steven**, he got a deg – a Master’s in history, but – he wanted to teach history, but a-at that time there were no jobs. So he – he switched to – and became a lawyer. And he – you know, he had a few jobs **[indecipherable]** Wall Street, one of the big companies, for a short time, and then he went somewhere else, and then he worked for a short time at Channel 13.

Q: Oh, a **PBS** station.

A: R-Right. And his boss went to – left 13, he went to the company that made “**Sesame Street**,” and he asked **Steve** to come along. So he worked there for a number of year – quite a few years. And f – he did some lawyering, but then the – I don’t know whether you call it promotion, but he got a – you know, he was – traveled all over the world finding sponsors and money for a **Sesame** program in the di – in different countries. But I have at home a cassette of when he appeared on Polish television. And then, after a while, I – I don’t know, he must have lived – worked there what, maybe 10 years; he went to **Disney**, and worked there, was a – for many year – many years.

Q: And your other son, **Michael**?

A: **Michael**, he went a different way. He went into geography. Now thinking back, when I went to sch – when I was in my father’s class, I remember my father had a

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big sandbox in the classroom, and he taught geography in – in that san – you know, of the surrounding areas, he – mountains and this and th – in the sandbox. And it sort of runs – I – I sometimes feel it ru – it runs in the family because I – I like maps, too. Wh-Where – when I go somewhere, I always go – always look up the map, where is it. You know, where this place? And **Michael** went ga – he went – where did he – oh, he went to – my – **Michael** went – he always went to something little different from what everybody else would do. He went to school – he went to college in – at the – to – in – at **McGill** in tur – in **Montreal**.

Q: That's quite prestigious. That's a – quite a prestigious college.

A: I know, I know.

Q: Yeah.

A: And there already, he studied geography. When he came out, when he came back to **New York**, when he was finished, he went in **Columbia** to get a Master's in geography. And on the side, he worked for – oh, while he was still in school, remote sensing, that's – the pictures from – of satellites, o-of the earth, it tells you a lot, that they have the ultraviolet, or something like that, they – they can forecast about floods, and things like that. And so after he f – got the Master's, he went to – it was difficult to find jobs, because they wanted experience before you get a job, you know. So he g – finally worked for the Army Corps of Engineers in **New**

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Hampshire, with this lance – **Lancet**(ph) remote sensing of the snow cover, you know, forecasting floods or – or th – the springtime tar –

Q: So in some ways he's in meteor – meteorology as well?

A: Right, right, right, right.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And then he came back to **New York**, and there was a job opening in the city government, and he had to know computers, and he didn't know computers. So he bought a book, and he learned in a book.

Q: Wow.

A: And it was sufficient for them to be – to be accepted. So he worked for – ever since, he worked for the city planning in **N-New York City**, in the – you know, in – in th-that field, ever since, and – oh, and before that, in his spare time, before he was married, he went to one – as a human – human – human at – humanitarian organizations, who issued a lot of books about what's going on in different parts of the world, and he's – he told them, you know, you have all these place names, but ne – but people don't – they don't know where they – where they are.

Q: That's right.

A: So he started making maps for them, beautiful maps.

Q: Oh wow.

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A: And you know, in – in a – in a – in the books, beautiful maps – maps for them.

And he enjoyed that, he do – did a tremendous amount of research. He ca – let's say he had, like in **Iraq** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – the – there were the – the government fo-fought the **Kurds**, they had fights, and he did research, he went to the consulates or embassies, cause he came to here to get maps and he made his own maps, and he really enjoyed it. But he has no time for that now.

Q: Do you remember the name of the organization that he worked for?

A: No, th – the big, well ca – well-known organizations. Something watch?

Q: Human rights watch?

A: Well, some – some of those, right.

Q: Human rights watch is – is – is –

A: I think so.

Q: – one of the –

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: – largest human rights organizations, yes.

A: So he has on **Iraq**, he has on **Sudan**. I have – I have the – some of the books at home. Very, very creative, you know, the way – the way he's shown mountains, he way – th-the – where the **Kurds** were bombed, on what dates, and – there – there

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were – both of them, they're very – what the word? They put their whole personality, life, into what – you know, the –

Q: Into what they do.

A: – conscientious.

Q: Yeah.

A: I enjoyed that, and he was precise. But now he is married, and he has to co – he wi – still works in the city and he lives upstate, so he has to commute every day.

Q: Yeah, yeah. It takes time.

A: The – right.

Q: It da – takes time.

A: [**indecipherable**] time, and his wife is also working, she – she's an environmental engineer. I don't know what she do – does, really. Something to do with water.

Q: What do you see as the – is there a thread between the family that you were born into, and the family that you created, that you see it got passed down? You mentioned a little bit about – about geography, and how your father taught it.

A: Right, right, an-and then the – you know, like we – we did – we liked the outdoors, we liked hiking, and they do too, this – my sons, especially **Michael**. And like I said, he's always – h-he doesn't – he – he does everything a little different than other people. His traveling, he – he went to places where nobody went, you know.

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When – when he went, to **Italy**, he went to a place fr – I think it's called **Friuli**, which is on the border to **Yugoslavia**; I never had heard of it. And –

Q: What would you have wanted to tell him about your gra – about your father? You know, what would you want him to know about your father, again in a – as a person? And the question's also gonna be reversed to, what would you have wanted your father to know about your children?

A: Well, he – well, h-he would be very, very proud of them. But n-now that you say that, I also have to bring up my wife, who, you know, as – I would say my sons were closer to the – my wife than to me. My wife was very – an avid reader, and both of my sons are. **Michael** can't do it now, he has – doesn't have the time, but **Steven**, he – he reads all kinds of stuff. He is – I think they call him intellectual, in **Italy**, you know, amongst the expatriates.

Q: Sure, that's right.

A: And it – you know, m-my – well, both of my parents would have been very proud of them. You know, it – so, you know, the grandchild, a-and we, especially me, you know, when we leave **Mi-Michael's** house, we often t-talk, you know, how – what a shame that my wife couldn't enjoy th-the grandchildren. And she would be a great grandmother. A very warm person. And like I said, she was a – more outgoing than me. **Steven** is really outgoing. **Michael** is l – little less so, more like me.

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Q: Do you see family traits in your children that you also saw in your parents, and other members of your family?

A: I never – never thought of that. I never – well, they – you know, my father being a teacher, he was very much – the we – e-education was very important to him.

Knowledge, you know. My mother less so, also education-wise. And you know, I have pictures here where the – wh-where the whole family went bicycling. I have pictures of – of us in front of the **Lorelei** on the **Rhine** with four bi – four bicycles. Now, if you ask me how we get there, I don't remember. I have pictures of the four of us – actually five of us, as a – a cousin was with us in some – in touring in where my father's brother lived. I don't remember how we got there. You kn – I-I – I – I don't – you know, lots of things escaped my mind. So, my father, we liked the outdoors, we liked to doing things. My fa – we – we were all Orthodox. But not – well, maybe in this – in this country it would be similar to a ya – young **Israel**, which is all Orthodox, but not extreme. And we – I – like I belong to a congregation

–

Q: I was going to ask you again.

A: Since maybe 1960, when – in the – in the 60s, when my kids were Bar Mitzvahed, and I've been a member ever since, and paying my dues, and supporting the synagogue, but I'm not religious. I – I don't go to a service very often. When I do go, I always get called to the Torah to – you know, when they read the Torah?

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Because I'm a **Levi**. You know, they're the – they are the three stages; there are **Kohens, Levis** and Israelites. So, you know, the – so I'm a **Levi**, that's –

Q: What does that mean? I don't know.

A: That's a – you know, one [**indecipherable**] above – at the –

Q: Is there –

A: They had – they had duties – duties, and – at the temple, way back, yo-you know.

So I'm – I – I – I-I don't go to the service very often. I mean, I go on the high holidays, but –

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: – also during the year, once every six weeks, or s – you know. I'm not learned, overly. I-I know quite a bit. I wouldn't be surprised that my sons who are more studious, know more in certain respects than I do. I would say that, if my parents would have come here and had to – th-th – maybe they would be less religious if they had to be, than they used to. But years ago, they followed all the – the rules.

And my father was pretty learned, and he sometimes quotes in the letters –

Q: Some passages?

A: Wa – well, he – he compared my trip to **England**, you know, with all these incidents with the, you know, train and **Kindertransport**, consulate and all that to some Biblical occasion where one of the – abra – not **Abraham, Jacob** or somebody looked for a wife or a son, and there were so many incidents involved that just like

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wi – in my case, there were so many, and the final result was positive, they found a bride, or – never heard of it before. I – I mean, I never, but he wa – he was, you know, learned in – in many respect. He was –

Q: It also sounds like it was his rock, that – that – that in difficult times, you look to –

A: He was a strong person.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know, he would – he – he – I wouldn't say fearless, but he – or – or – or – or aggressive, but he – he followed his plan, he – he pushed for it, you know, he –

Q: He had so much on his shoulders.

A: Yeah, right, right, right.

Q: He had so much on his shoulders at a very thankless time.

A: And he did a lot for other people that had left.

Q: Yeah.

A: And he do – he was known, because you know, he was – he was very active in cultural – Jewish cultural happenings.

Q: We've talked rather intensively about him. Do you – do you think your children have a sense of who he was, of who your mother was, of who your sister wa-was, as people?

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A: I don – I don – I don't know. I – I don't – well, in the letters – I'm more involved with **Steven**, who is – takes great interest –

Q: Yes.

A: – and being hi – ha-having a historical back – history background –

Q: Right.

A: **Michael** doesn't talk so much about it, you know. But he's aware of it. He showed interest to coming here.

Q: Yeah.

A: And this wa-wa – ap – yeah, these letters, and the – apart from the letter – letters, I was going to write my history, and – for my grandchildren, you know. They oughta know, they should know.

Q: Yes.

A: It's important.

Q: What i – what is it that you would want your grandchildren to know about you? I know it's a – it's a sort of like well, how do you answer that question.

A: Yeah.

Q: But – but, if there's a way of – if there's a way of phrasing it, what would you want them to understand that you think is important for them to understand?

A: Well, they should know that – what I went through, you know, to get here. And, you know, I – I – I f – I mean, people usually don't talk about themselves that way,

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but I feel I'm de – a dependable perso – person, and they could depend on me. I – I – I do a lot on – I-I've done quite a bit for others just lately – I don't know if I mentioned this before. One of my neighbors died. He was 101 years old. He had no family, he never had children, they never had children. I wa – in – I live in my house about 50 year – over 50 years, he came later. And we weren't really friends and – for quite a while. He was a fisherman. I never got fish from him. But later we got – you know, I did gardening in my garden. He gave me – let's say, he gave me a gooseberry bush, I gave him a raspberry bush, and you know, we got friendlier. And after a while, he – I visited – you know, I – they get older – I used to visit him every si – e-every week, let's say Saturday or weekends, or Friday, if I couldn't make on the weekends. I stayed there for a couple of hours. He lo-loved astrology and he used to try to teach me, and – but it went in one ear and out the other. And he ser – he came from **Poland – Poland**. He reached his old age by eating salamis and cheeses and vodka – drinking vodka.

Q: All the healthy food.

A: That's right. So I – he always offered me a vodka, and – but he ha – he also ha – made a vodka fermented with the cherries in it, o-or strawberries.

Q: Right.

A: That's still – tha – one I drank, but it still had a kick. And so over the years – then his wife died, and – and he had no plans whatsoever. I – I took him to a funeral

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home, I got him a plot in the – in the cemetery, I got him a rabbi. And I realized he had no plans even before that, and I worked – I – I attended a woodworking shop in a senior center, and that organization was – it – it – it was sort of sponsored or – it was an organization – it was a center of an organization called Self Help. And so I went to a social worker and talked about him, and then ta – got me in touch with her office, and I got him – a social worker for him, and meals on wheels. And I took him to a doctor once in a while, but there was another neighbor, a woman that took him even more to the doctor, got the medication for him. I took him – I – I helped him collect his –

Q: Social Security?

A: – ma – ser – the – his number – no, his numbers for filing the income tax, I took him – we went to the library, where it was free, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: But you – first come first serve. Then he got older, I go – I took him to some other place where he didn't have t – where he had to pay for **[indecipherable]**. I took him – this was the worst – I took him to – to voting, yet he cancelled my vote, because he voted the other way.

Q: There's payment for you.

A: That's right.

Q: There's gratitude.

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A: So I – you know, he had – so he had no relatives i-in **New York**, he had a niece, and – who had two sons. But he wasn't close, only lately, when he got older, came around. So he – th-th-they – the other woman had power of attorney while he was still alive, and he put her and me in his will as executors. So for – he died a-about a year ago. And there was problems, there was supposed to be a bro – a brother, so we had to se-se-search for a brother in **Poland**, which we couldn't find. Everything got dragged out. Then the – the relatives, they contesting the will, it's still not settled. We – just to – 10 days ago, we saw – that was my job, you know. Well, the other executor got sick, so it was all on my shoulders. And just recently, I – I – and the house was in a mess, and I cleared it up, making more presentable to be sold. So I feel –

Q: That's pretty big.

A: – I ma – I – a dependable person, and p-previous to – there was another – I had a heart attack, and I got a – I met somebody else in a – in a – in a hospital, an-and he – I looked after him for a while, it was a sickly old man.

Q: You know, I see a thread there. You have your father, who was worried about your grandmother –

A: Right.

Q: – and couldn't leave an old woman.

A: Right, right.

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Q: Couldn't leave her.

A: Right.

Q: And – and there's something in the fa – and then I saw the – the photograph of your hundred year old great-grandmother, was it?

A: Right, right.

Q: Who was still part of the family.

A: Right.

Q: So, in some ways this sounds also like something that the family valued, you take care of people when they can't take care of themselves.

A: Mm.

Q: And that's – that's a legacy.

A: Yeah.

Q: I don't want to put words in your mouth –

A: No, no.

Q: – but from what you're saying, that – that strikes me as a thread. So you pu –

A: I – I da – I – I ga – you know – I mean, a-actually, this is mutual. Somebody needs a ride to a doctor or something, if I'm available, I – I do it, but they do it for me also, you know? But they do – hardly anybody around nowadays. They died, or they moved away. Just recently, somebody who was in my class in – in **Nuremberg**,

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a woman that lived a f – maybe half a dozen blocks away from me, we were quite friendly, she died suddenly.

Q: Yeah.

A: Another friend, just now, April the fifth, moved to **Pennsylvania** to one of these senior places. But I always say [**indecipherable**] you know, that if – for the last 10 years or so. But now I realizes, there comes a time where I have to make a decision, you know? I live on my own, I manage very well. My memory is not good. Even in speaking English, I – what they call senior moments, I got plenty of those.

Q: I got a few too.

A: Heh-heh. So **Michael** and **Steven** and I, we went to a couple of these retirement co-communities, near where he lives, you know, up in **Westchester**. Beautiful places. There's one f-fairly new, overlooking the **Hudson** to **New Jersey**. Beautiful inside, they have covered everything, workshop, the pools, very nice. But you need a million dollars to live there. And some of the others, and I don't know, I – I'm not really such an outgoing personality. I make friends, but you know, I have friends. If I, let's say, we're in an elevator, he starts speaking to, you know, complete strangers. That's not me.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I don't know how I would – I would fit in, of course, but to make good friends again, I don – I don't know. I had doubts.

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Q: Of course. Of course.

A: So, I don't –

Q: If you lived one place in 50 years, who – it's like leaving a life that was known.

A: Right, right, right. Like, I belong to that walking group. These are my new friends. And for years, after the walking, they go to a diner and have brunch. And I always consider that a ridiculous – they're undo – un – they're undoing the benefit of the walk with eating omelets and stuff like that. So now you find me – at first, on one day of the weekend joining them. You know, company, socializing.

Q: Sure.

A: And in the meantime now, I go both mor – bo-bo – both days, eating brunch after.

Q: Okay. I think one is allowed.

A: Yeah?

Q: Yeah. Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Is there – is there anything else you'd like to add to what we've been talking about today, that you'd want your kids to know, that you'd want your – or to understand. Sometimes the facts they know, but to understand the significance of things.

A: Well, you know, to appreciate – to appreciate the – where they come from, you know, where they – the grandparents and the great-grandparents and their lives, their

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lifestyle. How that developed, how – how it changed. And, you know, when they see the pictures, they see us all, the whole family on the bicycles. My mother was always kind of clumsy on that, but later on **[indecipherable]**. You know, and different pictures of our vacation and – or a – or these pictures here, you know, the

[indecipherable]

Q: Let's take a look at those. Maybe we should have filmed them, yeah? We'll – should I move a little bit, or – if you want to – no, no, don't – stay, you stay.

A: No? Okay.

Q: Then you pick up that – yours, and – and if you'd hold it in front of you like this – up a bit –

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: – so that she can pho – film it. **[technical directions]** And maybe you can explain who the people are.

A: Yeah.

Q: **[technical directions]** All right. So here we have a shot of your family. Tell us who's in the shot.

A: Well, this is me, sitting on my father's shoulder. This is my mother, and this is my sister.

Q: Yeah.

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A: Here i-is my mother's sister **Anne**, my aunt, and her daughter. And this is her son. And this is taken in a very small river in **Tann**, where I was born. And I would say this is t-taken while we th – returned to the – my grandparents' on a vacation.

Q: Do you – do you remember who took the picture?

A: No.

Q: Okay. Do you remember – what happened to – besides your family, what happened to the other people?

A: Yeah, well, my mother's sister and daughter and son and her husband, they came to this country.

Q: I see.

A: And she – the daughter is an – now living in **California**.

Q: She's your cousin through –

A: Right.

Q: Yeah, okay.

A: Well, that's the o – the only one survived of that family.

Q: I see.

A: I mean, th-they – they came here before the war started, and they were s – also the people who tran – sent my letters to – to my parents.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know, the – the –

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Q: That circuitous route.

A: The route.

Q: Yeah.

A: Right, right.

Q: And let's see – on the other side, here –

A: On the other side is a picture that was taken in **Marienbad** in the
Czechoslovakia.

Q: Oh, like this [**indecipherable**]

A: Yeah, that – that was a – an a – in a spa, you know, ba – **Marienbad** spa –

Q: Can you hold – can you see this?

A: – place. Also –

Q: Okay.

A: – in vacation, but I also – my – I th – I think my mother had some skin problem,
and it's – it's possibly that we went there for a treatment.

Q: And I see that there are – let's see now – there are some – I'm gonna hold this up,
or – these are some of the letters your fa – your son says these are scans of letters, so
maybe they can film one or two of these. This is what they looked like, the ones that
you got from your parents and sister. Can you hone in on that?

A: Now, now, there is one here. This was written on the 27th of September, '39. This
is my father's handwriting. And usually –

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Q: Let's hold it up a bit. Like that. Can you see? Yeah, okay. That's his handwriting, yeah?

A: That's his handwriting. And usually my –

Q: Keep holding it up, okay?

A: All right. Let's see what I have in the back.

Q: You can pull it out. This is a scan of it.

A: You see?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Usually – well, here is just a short note. Usually my moth – my mother, or – also wrote, and my sister wrote, and my grandma – my grandmother wrote, and then si – sometimes my uncle in **Belgium** also put a – you know, he –

Q: A little note, yeah.

A: – put a note in when he's sending it to me.

Q: I'll put it back in. And these are scans of the originals. We didn't want to take the originals out, which are in the other binder. And this is a **[indecipherable]**

A: Well, there's so many – ver-very often he – he writes on a type –

Q: Writer.

A: – ty – a typewriter. And my – my son **Steven**, he sur – after I translated, he sort of fine tunes my English, and does a lot of Googling – I was just looking for some -- something special. Like here, this is my sister's writing.

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Q: Aha, your sister, a letter from her.

A: Yeah.

Q: **Mein liebe Norbert.**

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: An-And li-like I said, st – th – here – **Steven** does a lot of research, and my father very often writes about ‘my **Erika.**’

Q: Okay.

A: And we want – not me, but **Steven** wanted what – who is that **Erika**? And I told him, that’s wa – my father’s typewriter. So **Steven** researched on Google, and found a picture –

Q: Of **Erika.**

A: – of **Erika** that’s probably in – not manufactured for the last 40 years.

Q: Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness, hello **Erika.**

A: And th-that’s – yeah. And that’s some other – some – some other –

Q: Uh-huh, here’s [**indecipherable**]

A: Here – oh, here is a – one of the Red Cross messages.

Q: It says your Christian name is **Norbert.**

A: Oh, well –

Q: Here.

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A: – yeah, right.

Q: And – and your other –

A: You know, I send – send it, and – and then, on the reverse, you know, you're – you're only allowed a certain amount of words.

Q: Yeah, it says, **mein liebe [speaks German]**

A: I'm well. I hope the same of you – of you. I wrote on the sponsor – you know the sponsor –

Q: Yeah.

A: – in iv – in the state, and **[indecipherable]** that's my uncle and aunt.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I – I'm earning more, which means more pocket money.

Q: Right.

A: And then they're – they – I don't know if – if they answer it so – no, it's not in there. No. On – on the original, on the back side, they answer me.

Q: Sur – I see.

A: Also with a few words.

Q: I see. So this is one of the few –

A: Yes.

Q: – that you have that's from yourself to them.

A: Right, right.

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Q: Okay.

A: I don't know, it doesn't give a date, or –

Q: Oh, there is a date for your sending it. On the May 30th of 1940.

A: Oh. Where do you see that?

Q: Right down here.

A: Oh, I see. Right, right.

Q: Is there anything else you'd want to show us from this book? Oh, do you have the newspaper with – the newspaper here, where you catch **Seyss-Inquart**? That would be really cool to see. Would this be it?

A: Yeah.

Q: So **Monty**'s second visit.

A: This is the Welsh fusiliers newsletter – newspaper. And this is the issue when **Monty** – mont – **Montgomery** came to visit us, I think it was in **Dusseldorf**. And they're arriving about – Corporal **Schoen**(ph) who was in command on the bridge in **Hamburg** –

Q: Okay.

A: – when **Seyss-Inquart** was captured. It's – it's written –

Q: Right there. Let me see – can you read it? The section where –

A: Here. Fusilier **Tyler**. This – this section.

Q: Right.

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Q: Fusilier **Taylor** was guarding one of the approaches to the bridge on Monday, May seventh, and at about four p.m. in – in the afternoon, a large, brown **Opel** saloon swerved out of the middle of our convoys and knocked over a couple of tins which were being used as a barrier. **Taylor** jumped on the running board of the car, and forced the driver, who was wearing Luftwaffe uniform, to pull up. There were four men in the car, and one who spoke English said he had papers for Field Marshall **Montgomery** to sign. **Taylor** then asked a German policeman if the papers were in order and the German replied, yes. Still not satisfied, **Taylor** took the occupants of the car to Fusilier **Miller**, the interpreter and **Miller** immediately had them taken before the **c.o.** **Taylor** returned to his post on the bridge and a few minutes later one of the men he had arrested was marched onto the bridge again, and his photograph was taken with the **c.o.** and adjutant. This man was the notorious **Seyss-Inquart**. So thanks to the vigilance of one of our battalion's men, another war criminal was in the bag. Terrific. Let's put that in there. **[off camera]** So, is there anything else you'd like us to – to capture on film?

A: **[indecipherable]** in here.

Q: But take a look through this one, because the original letters are not in the very first –

A: I – I don't think so. No, I don't think so.

Q: Okay.

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A: I don't see anything.

Q: All right. [aside] So, in that case, I'd like to thank you, Mr. **Miller**.

A: I thank you for, you know, leading this.

Q: Well, thank you for sharing, thank you for telling us your story, and – and sharing it with us. We much appreciate it.

A: You're welc – very welcome, right.

Q: And this concludes the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. **Norman Miller** on April 15th, 2013.

A: Thank you.

Q: Thank you. Okay.

End of File

Conclusion of Interview