

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Edith Levy Weinstein  
May 18, 2015  
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## PREFACE

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**EDITH LEVY WEINSTEIN**  
**May 18, 2015**

Question: Good morning.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mrs.

**Edith Levy Weinstein**, on May 18, 2015, at the **United States Holocaust**

**Memorial Museum** facilities, here in **Washington, D.C.** Thank you very, very much Mrs. **Weinstein**, for agreeing to come and speak with us today, to share your story, to explain a little bit about what your life was like, and your family's life was like in **Germany**, before the war, and some – and during the war. Okay, so I'll talk a little louder. I'm going to start at the very beginning, and we'll talk an awful lot, as I said a little bit earlier, before we started filming, about what life was like pre-war. So the very first, basic question I've got is, can you tell me the date of your birth?

A: Yeah, January 20, 1932.

Q: What was your name at birth?

A: At birth, **Edith Levy**.

Q: **Edith Levy**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And where were you born?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: In **Treuen**, **Vogtland**, **Saxon**.

Q: **Saxon**.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, **Treuen**, you said?

A: Yeah.

Q: **T**?

A: **T**, like **Tom**, **r-e-u-e-n**.

Q: **T** like **Tom**. Okay, so **Treuen**.

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: It means – in German that would mean loyalty, or something like that.

A: I don't know, it was **Treuen**.

Q: **Treuen**, okay.

A: That's was I – was I born.

Q: Okay. Was it a big place, or a little place?

A: It was a little city.

Q: It was a little city, okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And **Saxon** is where, in **Germany**? What part of **Germany** is that in?

A: It's the east zone.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: It's down there, not far from **Hove**, not far from **Erzgebirge**, not far from the **Czechoslovakia**.

Q: So it's near the **Czech** border?

A: Yeah, but I think two, three hours from the **Czech** border. People used to go to **[indecipherable]** up there. You know **Chemnitz**?

Q: Yes.

A: **Zwickau** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – **Leipzig**, but far in, very deep **Germany**.

Q: I see. How far was it from **Berlin**?

A: Six hours by car.

Q: Six hours by car, that's –

A: Three hours to **Leipzig**.

Q: I see. Was it east or west of **Leipzig**?

A: It's the east zone.

Q: I know, but **Leipzig**, was it east –

A: Oh, I don't know.

Q: You don't remember.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: I – I was young, I never – I don't know east or the we – I know now here.

Q: Okay. And were you the only child in your family?

A: No, we are seven children.

Q: That's a lot, seven children. Are you amongst the youngest, or the oldest?

A: No, I'm the second oldest.

Q: So let's – let's go through the list a little bit, the – of all the children, and if you remember the years they were born.

A: Oh yes.

Q: Okay, so who was the oldest?

A: My oldest sister is **Ruth Gdanski**. She passed away. She's born October 14, 1929.

Q: Okay, **Ruth Gdanski**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then came you?

A: Yeah, then I come.

Q: And then, who came after you?

A: **Anita Blanker**.

Q: Okay.

A: She's born January – October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1933.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay. Then came?

A: My brother, **Harry Levy**. He's born April 10, 1935. Then my next brother is born March 18, 1937, and my next brother is born July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1939.

Q: His name?

A: And then – oh, **Heinz Levy**.

Q: **Heinz Levy**.

A: And then I had a sister, she's born April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943, that's it.

Q: It's a lot. It's a lot of – a lot of siblings –

A: Yeah.

Q: – during a very – a very turbulent time. So, tell me a little bit about – well, first we'll start with the basics again. Your father's name was?

A: **Leonhardt Levy**.

Q: **Leonhardt Levy**. And when was he born, do you know?

A: Yeah, he is born September 26, 1907, in **Wolkenstein**.

Q: And **Wolkenstein** is also in the east zone?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Was it far from **Treuen**?

A: Yes, that was about, I think, 20 kilometer.

Q: Twenty kilo – kilometers.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Twenty kilo – kilometer. I – I think at least it was, walking like almost two hours there.

Q: Okay, wow.

A: It's a bigger city. He – he's born there.

Q: Okay. And your mother's name was?

A: **Charlotte Levy, Hendel.**

Q: **Hendel** was her maiden name?

A: Was her maiden name.

Q: So it was **Charlotte Hendel** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – at birth.

A: Yeah.

Q: And when was she born?

A: She was born April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1913.

Q: So she was seven ye – six years younger than your father?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And she was a very young bride then –

A: Oh yes.

Q: – if she was born in 1913 –



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: She – she – she – she was really young. Young and dumb.

Q: So, if your sister was born in 1929, your mother was only 16 years old.

A: Yes.

Q: My goodness.

A: But th-the other story already begins.

Q: So, let's talk about that a little bit, to th – your fa – was your mother Jewish, as well as your father?

A: No, my mother was Gentile, Protestant, and my father come from a very Orthodox family.

Q: In **Germany** in the 1920s, and they got together.

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me how they – how they met.

A: In [**indecipherable**] ask me – in a **sportsverein**(ph).

Q: Really?

A: There were – they were swimmers, and you know, very active

Q: A **sportsverein**(ph) is a sports association.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And they met while sw – you know, being part of a swimming group?

A: Yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: And he was then – he would have been 21 years old, or 22 years old.

A: Yeah, I guess so, I never figured that out. But he –

Q: So, he was also young.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Did – so that's – that's how they met, their worlds met.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Tell me a little bit about your father's Orthodox family. Were there many brothers and sisters in that family?

A: Yes, he had two more brothers, and one sister.

Q: Was he the youngest, or oldest, do you think?

A: No, I think he was the second oldest.

Q: Okay.

A: The second oldest. He had a brother **Harry**, who got killed in – in the Gestapo – he went first – that's ahead, everything is like, messed up.

Q: Sure, okay.

A: Hi-Him – my father and my – his older brother, they were in 1938 already, in the concentration camp in **Buchenwald**.

Q: We'll – we'll talk about that in a little while.

A: You see, I – like I says, it's –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Yeah, yeah. It comes – it comes all together. Right now we're just –

A: Yeah, okay.

Q: – kind of getting the **I.D.s** down.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: So, his – your father's name, again, was?

A: **Leonhardt Levy. Leo Levy.**

Q: **Leo Levy.** And his older brother was?

A: **Harry.**

Q: **Harry.** And he had another brother?

A: Yes, ah – oh, I forgot now. **Harry – Harry** and – oh, I just forgot now what is –

Q: It's okay.

A: I have in a paper.

Q: Okay. And your – and he had a sister?

A: Yeah, that was **Edith.**

Q: **Edith.**

A: Yeah.

Q: All right. And they came from an Orthodox family. What did that mean in **Germany** at that time?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: At that time? In **Wolkenstein**, there was a lot of – and even in **Treuen**, a big Jewish community.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: On – and what I mean, I – I remember – see, that I have to tell. Whe-When my mother got pregnant, his mother sent my father to **Argentina**, not to marry my mother. But my father came back on the boat. He got – earned his way back shoveling coal, and – and he came back to **Germany**, to marry my mother.

Q: So, your father wa – when she got pregnant with your sister.

A: Yeah.

Q: When she got pregnant with your sister, his mother sent him away.

A: To **Argentina**.

Q: To tina – to **Argentina**. Did you ever know your grandmother from this –

A: Yes, I did.

Q: From her si – what was her name?

A: **Augusta Levy**.

Q: **Augusta Levy**.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was she like, as a person?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: She was like – well, the women at that time, people didn't look as young, and she wore a **sheitel**. But, when we were even little, and it was so far – then we lived already in **Schreiersgrün**, because we did not get no – already at that time, we didn't get no living quarters, so that's why we lived in that small town, **Schreiersgrün**. Nobody gave us to live already, that early in the year. When we could walk, my father took us, and walked us, as little children, every Shabbat Friday evening, up to his mother.

Q: Really?

A: And yesterday my s – my – my brother told me he remembers how she let us children in, but not my father.

Q: Really?

A: I – I didn't remember that, that she didn't let my father in. And they were rich, I can – I have proof, and – at that time, they had a **kaufhaus**.

Q: Oh, they had a – they had a –

A: Yeah.

Q: – a department store.

A: Yeah.

Q: That's huge, yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah, at that time, what they had, that's huge. Th-There was a lot of family there, Jewish family, and after the war I – I met some, some of them came back. But most of them got killed in the concentration camp.

Q: So, he used to take – did you – were you brought up Jewish, or were you brought up Protestant?

A: We brought – my mother really did not go to chur – church, nothing. She was – my mother was a hard worker. We were, before, you know, the – we did nothing. My father only talked Jewish to us. Because he –

Q: So, only Yiddish?

A: Yeah, Yiddish, he talked to us. That's why we knew, all the time. But we didn't understand. You know, I was little then. And then, it got worse. By 1935, the – what is then – the pastor came to my mother's mother, you know, maternal, and said – because we had already bad time, nobody wanted to give us live – to live, or nothing. He says, you bring the kids to the church, and we gonna protect them when we christen them. So, I have the paper. So that 19 –

Q: So, you got christened?

A: 1935, we got christened. Only, we – because later on, I didn't know – only we three girls, I think. When my brother told me yesterday, he was – he was sick at that time, and there was emergency christening on him.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: I see.

A: So – and that's –

Q: Okay, so – so your mother was not particularly religious, she did not go to church on a regular basis, or anything like that.

A: She had no time.

Q: Okay. And your – and your father tried to keep up the traditions in Jewish life, as much as he could, and he – so that he took you home to his mother's place every Shabbat.

A: Yeah, every week.

Q: Yeah.

A: When we were remember – I remember she always gave us toys.

Q: She gave you toys?

A: Yes, she had that – sold all that stuff.

Q: Mm-hm. But she would not let him in the house.

A: That's what my brother said. I don't – you know, I only was a – when she left, she left 1937, with – **Rudy** is the other brother.

Q: Okay.

A: And – and my aunt went to **South Africa**.

Q: I see. So **Rudy** was your father's brother.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah, he ca –

Q: He was your uncle.

A: – he came after my – no, he was the youngest, then came the sister, and then came the brother, I think.

Q: Okay, so it was **Heinz**?

A: No, it was **Harry** –

Q: **Harry** –

A: – **Lee** – **Leo**, **Rudy**, and **Edith**.

Q: Okay, they – those were the four siblings.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So you're – let's go back to the 1920s a little bit. Your mother meets your father, and they have a romance, and she gets pregnant.

A: Yeah. Could we shut that thing off, that is [indecipherable]

Q: Okay, yes, we can. [break] Okay, so your – your father is sent to **Argentina**, and he returns, but your – your parents weren't married when he was sent there – or were they married already?

A: Not – not when she sent him. When he came back, he married my mother.

Q: So, what happened with your mother, what happened with her parents? They must have not been very happy.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: I don't know if they're happy or not, but they kept [indecipherable]

Q: Your sister?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, in other words, they – she gave birth to your sister in their home?

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: And so, did you know your maternal grandparents?

A: Yes.

Q: What were their names?

A: **Paula Hendel** and **Emil(ph) Hendel**.

Q: And how did they make a living?

A: He – my grandmother, I think she was a housewife, and her father was a salesman.

Q: A salesman?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were they well-to-do?

A: All right, yeah.

Q: Not rich, but not bad?

A: Yeah, okay.

Q: Okay.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: What kind of a place did they live in?

A: They had their own house, that's came already from my grandfather's parents.

Q: Okay.

A: And my mother's grandparent – yeah, grandparents, they had a mill. That was out of town **[indecipherable]**

Q: I see. And were they from **Treuen**?

A: No, they were from – from **Langenfeld**, at – yeah, my mother wa – my mother was born in **Langenfeld**.

Q: Okay. And when your father came back, you – he was sent away to **Argentina** when your – your mother got pregnant, what year did he come back?

A: He must have come back 1930, 1931. I don't know the date exactly.

Q: Okay.

A: All I just know, we found the picture yesterday.

Q: Uh-huh. Of him?

A: From the ship.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Somebody had thrown, I think. Because – and we were laughing yesterday.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay. Did your parents talk much about how they met, and how they got to know each other, and – and all of these sorts of difficulties?

A: No – no, we only knew the beginning they told us, that because we be – you know, we could figure it out later, or – and you know, we could – and they were we – they were very devoted too, and my mother was a strong person. My mother wouldn't gave us for nothing in the world, nothing. She stayed with my father, and –

Q: Did they love each other?

A: Must have.

Q: Well, when you grew – were – were growing up, were –

A: Bu – because, they must have loved each other, because the Gestapo came to the house, and they offered my mother everything and anything to divorce him.

Q: And she wouldn't leave him.

A: No.

Q: Wow. Wow.

A: She converted, my mother.

Q: To what? To Judaism?

A: Yeah.

Q: When did she –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: After the war.

Q: After the war.

A: Yeah. In **Berlin**. And I will – I se – I converted back to **[indecipherable]** look at me, I – my husband, I – and I had my children Bar Mitzvahed.

Q: So – and, there were seven children in your family, so that was, you know, again, as I say, during turbulent times –

A: My mother worked, when my father – that is the other thing, so he used to work in – in the business, in his mother's.

Q: Yeah.

A: But then when he came back, she never gave him a job. He did menial work all the time when he is home. He worked by the farmers, he worked in the quarries, he did anything work, was –

Q: Was he educated, your father?

A: He had a ra – educated.

Q: Did he have a university degree, or a college –

A: I don't know if he had the university degree, I don't know that, but there were all – they went the Jewish school, because, like I says, they were a community there.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And I don't know if you ever heard **Plauen** –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Yes.

A: – that is the next biggest city.

Q: Ah, near **Plauen**.

A: Yeah, not **Plauen**. Then he had to go, when he came back from –

Q: **Argentina**?

A: No, from **Buchenwald**.

Q: We'll get there. Let's – we'll get there.

A: Uh-huh. He had to go to **Plauen**, working.

Q: Okay.

A: Sl-Slave labor, in a forced labor.

Q: We'll talk about all this.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Okay. Let's talk about – let's talk about your home life a little bit. You were born in **Treuen**.

A: Yeah.

Q: But your maternal grandparents lived in another place, is that right?

A: No, my – my mother's parents? No, they lived in **Treuen**. I was born in that house, it's still standing there.

Q: Tell me what that house looked like, if you can remember.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: I can remember. It was a big garden in there, lot of fruit trees. They had goats, they had chickens, and – and when I slept there, upstairs, under [indecipherable] wouldn't you know it, they – they made the beds with straw [indecipherable] at that time. And for the toilet you had to come around the house. So –

Q: So yeah, it was an old-fashioned kind.

A: Yeah, it's no more like that, it's modern now.

Q: Yeah.

A: So that – and I was the – born in **Treuen**, and they looked for living quarters. You know what I got told – and nobody gave them, already at that time.

Q: In 1935?

A: 1932, I am born.

Q: Oh, even in 1932?

A: Oh yes, we had already – I m – I mean, I didn't know then, I was a baby, but I know from all – and then my – my sister was born a year and nine months later than I. Then, we lived already in that **Schreiersgrün**, in that little town, somebody gave them two rooms.

Q: I see.

A: Two rooms. And we lived in there, the end of the war.

Q: In **Schreiersgrün**?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: And **Schreiers** – is it **Schreiersgrün**, or –

A: **Schreiers** – **s-c-h-r-e-i-e-r-s-g-r-u** - umlaut - **n**.

Q: **Schreiersgrün**.

A: Yeah.

Q: **Schreiersgrün**.

A: A very small town.

Q: Very small town, so –

A: With a lot of farmers, and with some factories.

Q: Now, did your mother have more siblings? Was she the only child, or did she have other –

A: No, she had more. She had, I think, three bro – three brothers and two sisters.

Q: That's also a large family.

A: Yeah, at that time.

Q: Yeah, three brothers, two sisters, and your grandfather was a salesman.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did they have land as well? Did they farm?

A: No, he was not just a salesman, he worked for himself.

Q: Ah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: I don't know what you say [**indecipherable**]

Q: Okay. So was their house – was your grandparents house full of people? I'm wondering why they didn't stay with your maternal grandparents. There was no room?

A: Because all siblings, was some of them younger, too. And then, the older son, he with his family lived in the house, they made in the side. And he had two children. Yeah, they were older than me, they were – the daughter was as old as my sister, but then the son was a young – they lived in the house.

Q: Let's go through your mother's list of siblings. Your mother's name was **Charlotte**, yes?

A: Yeah.

Q: And so, was she the youngest, or the oldest, or so –

A: No, she had the ho – older brother was **Hans**, her second one was **Motte(ph)**, then my mother came.

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

A: And then came **Lies – Liesel(ph)**, **Louise**, or whatever, and then **Rolf**.

Q: **Rolf**, okay. Did they accept your father?

A: Yes, they did.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay, did they have trouble from the community, because they had a Jewish family member?

A: They did, and –

Q: They did. So, your mother's pare – your mother's family, how did that show itself, the trouble that they had?

A: Ha – how – I don't know really what is. Like I says, the pastor came, because everybody knew **Levy**, that horrid guys, **Levy**. Everybody knew. Very well-known people, my father.

Q: Because he married your mother, or because his family was rich?

A: No, because of the business. It was a bigger city, and people came there from smaller, and they were very well known.

Q: I see. I see. And so then of course, when he married your mother, that became known, too?

A: Yeah. Because nobody gave us to live.

Q: Yeah, yeah. So, the larger community, the larger German community – **[phone ringing]** excuse us, is that your – can we stop?

A: Yeah. **[break]**

Q: Okay. So, again, tell me this place that was sh – that you had the two rooms.

What was the na –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: **Schreiersgrün.**

Q: **Schreiersgrün. Schreiersgrün.** And, was that a village, or was it a town?

A: It was a little town.

Q: Okay. About how mu – how big was it? Was it –

A: I-I really don't know, I thought last night, and I – I just remember – I just know in my class was like 12 kids. And sometimes we were like three classes in one room.

Q: Ah, so it's small.

A: Yeah.

Q: It's small, it's small. And was it the kind of place you could walk from one end to the other, and – in a very short amount of time?

A: No, it was pretty long –

Q: Really.

A: – from what – yeah, it was like **[indecipherable]**

Q: Okay. So when your – your parents ended up living there, in **Schreiersgrün** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – in these two rooms, were they part of an apartment house, or was this a single family place? Describe it.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: No, that – that was a – a twin – a twin house, and there lived more families in – just in our half of a twin. There was one – one older couple, they had two children, and then we. And upstairs was a family with a son. We had like one toilet down there. And at that time was no water in the house, we had to walk like two blocks down, and –

Q: And pump –

A: Yeah, the pump.

Q: What are some of your earliest memories as a child?

A: That is – that is the earliest memories.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah, how we lived there, and – and [indecipherable] people shunned us, some people don't talk to us, but at that time we didn't understand why.

Q: Did you feel that there were – would – did children not play with you, or did you not notice it?

A: We had no time really much, to play.

Q: Tell me why.

A: Why? Because when – as little children already, we had to make money, yeah.

We – in there, in the forest, in the summer, we had to go pick blueberries, and we got – my sister got this one, we got – and then my other sister, and then we brought

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

them home, and do – God forbid we come home earlier [**indecipherable**] we head on home. My mother was strict with us. So – and then, my poor mother, because nobody bought from us, she sold them so we made money. We worked for the farmers, picking up potatoes when it came in September, October. We – we – we were – we – we did a lot of things, and later on, I – I remember – that is already much later, when I – I remember when my – my – from my father's mother came to **Schreiersgrün**, before she left for **Africa** – she – she went for **Africa**, the rest, with the – with the sister and the brother, and she took a lot of people out of, and she cried when she couldn't get us no more passage out of **Germany**. We – she – she forgave her son, and so we – we – we were left behind. And we – we just always did, and then my grandmother, she took on paper routes, or the some – we always had to work, had to make money.

Q: To live.

A: We had to live.

Q: Yeah.

A: When my mother worked, and when – when we got older, she – in that **Treuen**, she hired out – she had the machine, she could sew good, and she – she did work. We deliver it, and bring new work, and – all the time.

Q: And you were little children.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: As little children.

Q: Yeah, you were very –

A: Look, end of the war, I was 13 years old.

Q: Yeah.

A: And we – we did all that. And I remember that's ahead of time when my – my sister was 14, and she could go out to work, sh-she couldn't. Why didn't she could?

Because, when she would go out to work, they would have right – right away to take her to work camp. See, at that time, we didn't know there is such a thing as concentration camp. I didn't know when they took me fath – they said work camp.

And there were no fathers home from the – from the German people, nobo – no father was home. When they took my father, they said he goes to a work camp.

Q: So, did other fathers go to work camps, too?

A: No, they went in the army. They're soldiers. That is the – when did I notice, really, the difference?

Q: When?

A: When I was five, six, and suddenly the **Hitlerjugend**. And we were not allowed. That's the difference, we were Jews, we were not allowed to do that. We were –

Q: To join the **Hitlerjugend**.

A: Yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Yeah.

A: And all that stuff. Then we really began the difference. We were not allowed to go to a movie, we were not to have a radio. We – we were not allowed to have nothing. Then we only said – but really didn't – and I tell you the truth, I didn't know til the end of the war there was such a thing as concentration camp. Even I – when they took my father to **Theresienstadt**, 1942? Forty-two, yeah, when my sister was born, he was already no more home. Forty-two somewhere, it's in the papers, we have it. My mother, my sister and I, we went to **Plauen**. He had to report to the Gestapo. In between, he did forced labor, when he came home from **Buchenwald**. It's all in the be –

Q: Okay, let's – that is getting ahead of us a little bit. I'm still in the early, early years, where your father is working as – at any kind of job that he could get.

A: Any work he could get.

Q: And – and your – your earliest memories are of this two room apartment that your parents have in a house.

A: Yeah, that was not apartment, it was just two rooms.

Q: Two rooms.

A: We lived til 1945.

Q: Yeah. And two other families were in the same building.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: And you'd have to go a couple of blocks to get – to get water.

A: Yeah, later on they put water in.

Q: Okay. And – and your father is still – he's working in the area –

A: No.

Q: – but he's – and your – you remember going to your grandmother's for Shabbat.

A: Yeah, to **Wolkenstein**.

Q: To **Wolkenstein**. And that would be a two hour walk, did you say?

A: Yeah, hour and a half.

Q: Hour and a half each way?

A: Yeah.

Q: Wow, that's quite a trek.

A: Oh, yes, he schlepped us.

Q: I can imagine, you know, seeing this man with, you know, children behind him,  
like ducks in a row, huh?

A: My mother didn't go, but –

Q: But he would go, and he would wait outside until –

A: That's what my brother says. I don't remember that, really.

Q: Okay.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: I didn't – but you – he must have been downstairs, in the business, you know

**[indecipherable]**

Q: Your grandfather, was he alive? Your father's father?

A: Yeah.

Q: And did he have anything to do with ostracizing your father? Did – was he against –

A: No, I don't think so. I really never met him.

Q: I see.

A: I really ne – ever – later, he went to **Berlin** to live.

Q: Your grandfather?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, did he split with his wife?

A: Looks like, to me, how I can made out. My mother met him, and always she says he was very nice, to her, and –

Q: Okay.

A: Because they had a lot of family in **Berlin**.

Q: So, tell me a little bit about your father's family, and how they decided to leave, and when they left, and tell me more about what happened with them. If they were such a prominent family in the region that everybody knew them –



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah. Because they arrested the Jews. Every time they [indecipherable] arrest us and – and them, too, and they broke the windows on the business. And later I remember the **Kristallnacht**, when they're burning all the books and all the stuff. And then they broke –

Q: Where did you remember – did you see any part of it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Where?

A: I saw, because people – people had to bring the books in the – in the – down in the squares a-and then – and the SS – I didn't understand at the time, what that was.

Q: It's okay.

A: You know, I was young.

Q: You – you were a child.

A: But I saw them things.

Q: So tell me, how did it look where – where were you, and were you alone in your home, or were you outside, **Kristallnacht**?

A: We – we was – we were standing sometime outside, and sometime I stayed with my other grandmother, she helped us, and we just looked, cou-couldn't understand. And you know the – and the Gestapo, the SS, they marched around, everything.

Q: So, **Kristallnacht** itself –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: **Kristallnacht** itself, you were with your grandmother –

A: No, I – I was home in – in the town.

Q: You were in **Schreiersgrün**?

A: Yeah.

Q: And your family was at home, entirely?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Your father was at home at that time?

A: Yeah. After that they took my father to **Buchenwald**.

Q: Okay, we'll come to that. But that evening of **Kristallnacht**, do you remember whether anybody came into your home?

A: They always came the – in our home. I don't know exactly if it – and then – they always came to our home. The Gestapo always came, and they borrowed my mother and my father. Even my father was not home, they borrowed my mother all the time, to give up them children, and she would never.

Q: They wanted her to give you u – your chil – the children up?

A: Yes.

Q: To whom? What would they – what was going to happen?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: With them. They wanted to take us away, 1945 when the war ended, they found the paper, we were ready for transport.

Q: Okay, that's 1945.

A: Yeah.

Q: I'm talking when you're still five or six years old.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did they want to take you away then?

A: Yeah, always. That's why the church. The pastor came to my grandmother and says, bring the children to the church, we trying to protect them.

Q: Okay. So that was 1935?

A: Yeah, that's on the record.

Q: Okay. So, **Kristallnacht**, you're in your home.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you see books being taken to be burned?

A: We didn't had no books wa – in – in the – in the – in the place, you know –

Q: Yeah.

A: – in the – in the square –

Q: Square.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: – of the down – they did all that, and the [indecipherable] looked everything, because in my town, in that **Schreiersgrün**, there was a other family, they were sh – **Jehovah's Witness**.

Q: Yes.

A: They killed her father, and I remember, because they were really very religious, how they took the mother naked through the streets.

Q: Really?

A: That was **Jehovah's Witness**.

Q: You saw this happening?

A: That, I saw. I just remember having [indecipherable] not that I think about that all the time –

Q: No, of course not.

A: – you know, I bra – but I remember that. And she was in my class when I went to school, and she was not – so I was lucky that we –

Q: She was not what?

A: So – she would not budge. She was really strong. So, they picked more on her, than on me. Just at the – you know, kids pick on you.

Q: Yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Like, I can tell you my sister, when we delivered the work my mother did at home, they waited for us in that little town, **Feidenhaus(ph)**, all the kids waiting us already, and beating us up. My mother couldn't do nothing about it. Could not s – all that they are under **[indecipherable]** where my grandmother lived, they had 10 kids down there, they waited for us to beat us up. We were the Jews, we had no rights. Even we – we converted, we were the Jews.

Q: Yeah. There weren't – were there any other Jews in the – in **Schreiersgrün**?

A: No more, at that time. I think erma – in – in **Wolkenstein**, that is – see, that – that is the only mixed family I knew, **Pausch(ph)** was their name. He was a Jew, and she was a German. Really, he was a musician. That is tun – all that time, when I was little, not til later, that was all the mixed family. All when 1939 – 1940, in – my father had like – in that **Wolkenstein** was a lot of them, they all had big business – and in **Treuen**, the Jews, and they mostly were related. They all took most of them right away to concentration camp, all got killed. My father's whole family got killed, just his mother and his sister and his brother went – from the family, went to **South Africa**.

Q: So tell me about how did they – how did – what happened that they decided to go to **South Africa**?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Wa – they decided, they took everything away. The business got taken away, the [indecipherable] every day they are – they are – they take every day something, you know? You couldn't live – as a Jew, you were not safe in **Germany**. Even already young, even there were born already in **Germany**. You know, my father was already born in **Germany**. They were not safe.

Q: So your grandmother's big **kaufhaus** was nationalized, was taken away from her?

A: Yeah. First when they left, I think it was my father took care of it, I think, yeah. But then, the **Kristallnacht**, they took everything away, because they are smashed the windows, and everything, and –

Q: Did you see those smashed windows?

A: I saw it on the pictures.

Q: I see. But you didn't go to the town and –

A: No, bu – we were not allowed to – to leave the area. See, that was our thing what comes later, when the war broke out then, they brought forced labor in from the **Ukraine**, from **Poland**, from **Holland**, and they're working there by the farmers, and – and in the factories. I don't even know what there th – and when that – and prisoners of war, they brought that. You know, very deep **Germany**, and there went, by themself, to the farmers, the workplace, and in the nighttime they went

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

back in the barracks where they slept. And that's how they kept us. We were not allowed to leave.

Q: I see.

A: That's why we s – in that little town we stayed. I never went, all that time, to **Wolkenstein** no more, after that, or whatever. We went to **Schreiersgrün**, and **Treuen**, and little town what we – that's – that's all. We didn't –

Q: Okay.

A: – we were under the supervision of the –

Q: The police, yeah, yeah.

A: The Gestapo, everybody.

Q: So, when we talk about – when we talk about your grandmother leaving –

A: Yeah.

Q: This was before **Kristallnacht**?

A: Yeah.

Q: She left before **Kristallnacht**?

A: 1937.

Q: She left in 1937. And why is it that the older brother did not go with her?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Because they had a salesgirl in the store, a refined girl, and he was a refined man, you know? She had different kids, she – one she had **[indecipherable]** and one more refined.

Q: Okay.

A: At that time, I – and he married that woman.

Q: The salesgirl?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: So he didn't go, and he stayed there, and he went with my father. To

**Buchenwald**, they took him.

Q: Now, was the salesgirl German or Jewish?

A: German.

Q: Also?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, both sons end up marrying –

A: Yeah.

Q: – German women?

A: Yeah.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: So, your grandmother leaves with her other two children, and she has enough money to do it?

A: Yeah, and she took a lot of people out of **Germany**.

Q: So who did she take out, besides her own children?

A: I don't know, family, some relatives. Because there were a lot of people, they were a big family there. Not that I ever met them all, but I knew about them. The **Hartzfelds(ph)**, the **Korodovskis(ph)**, or – and they all had fur business, and – and other – they all business people. You know, the German Jews in – at that time, and down there, they were not poor.

Q: So how come she could take them out, and wasn't able to take you and your parents out?

A: Because she still was mad that he married a Gentile woman. And when she gave him – forgave him, she came down to **Schreiersgrün** before she left, and she begged my mother's forgiveness.

Q: Did she?

A: She've gi – begged my mother's forgiveness.

Q: Did you see this?

A: Yes. Because she – there was just a little carnival-like in town.

Q: Yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: And she gave us money to go there, and – and she brought us toys, fancy toys what we had all the time. And she was sorry we left. After the war, they got in touch with us again.

Q: But – but she left, but nevertheless, she left you in danger.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: When she could have taken you out.

A: Oh yes, she could have taken us out, we could have not left – lived in **Germany**.

Q: Left you. Okay. And they went to **South Africa**.

A: Yeah, to **Johannesburg**.

Q: Okay. So, in 1937, they were still able to do so.

A: Yeah.

Q: And – and she left the department store in your father's hands, and in his brother's hands.

A: Yeah.

Q: And di – at that point, did your father go back to working in the department store?

A: Yeah, he went there.

Q: Okay.

A: And then about 1938, they took him and his brother already, to **Buchenwald**.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: This was after **Kristallnacht**? Or the –

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: I think it was after the **Kristallnacht**. I do –

Q: Okay.

A: I don't know exactly how – I don't remember, but it's papers here, they can figure it out. I didn't read it, I don't want to know, I don't c – you know –

Q: Okay. Do you remember him disappearing?

A: Who, my father?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, suddenly he was gone, and – and then, a year later, he came back. And when I ever told that to people [**indecipherable**] said, there not such a thing, nobody came back from concentration camp. But I says, I remember exactly, how my fa – it was around the Christmastime, how he came back. I don't know, I spilled vinegar or whatever, when he walked in the door. And – and his brother came home, too, that **Harry**. And he said at the time, because he always came, he loved my mother, this brother. So he says, the Germans never going to get me again. So, his wife did not stay with him. She had two brothers who were in the SS. So he

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

could not live with her, so he went to live in **Berlin**. And then they had this – to wear this yellow star, my father and his brother.

Q: His brother.

A: And his fa – his brother lived in **Berlin**, he didn't want to wear the bra – yellow star.

Q: Yellow star.

A: And he – and he carried cyanide with him, and he says the German never going to get him alive, when he came back from **Buchenwald**, never going to get him alive. And one – and my mother was like – he's staying in [indecipherable] and my mother send him rations card, and everything. And one day there got – they picked him up, and he got killed. We don't know if he killed himself, and the Gestapo picked him up, or that they beat him to death. But of course, when my mother went to **Berlin** and picked up his clothes, they were all bloody.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: So we never know if he killed himself, or that they beat him to death.

Q: And was the – had the war already started when this happened?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Okay, so he –

A: The war started 1939.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: So, this was hi – his death came after the beginning of the war?

A: What?

Q: Your uncle's death.

A: Yeah.

Q: He was killed afterwards.

A: During the war.

Q: During the war.

A: During the war. Because he went – he came home 1939 like my father, from  
**Buchenwald.**

Q: I see, so if it was Christmastime, it was already –

A: Yeah.

Q: – the war had started a few months earlier.

A: And like I says, and his wife's brothers were in the SS.

Q: Yeah.

A: And she did not stay with him, she did not want to live with him. After the war,  
she claimed she was, and wanted a piece of, you know?

Q: Yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: But he didn't. When he told – he told my mother, **Lotte**, when I'm dead, whatever I possess in this here, that is yours and the children. Because he had no children, she had a child, but he had no children, and –

Q: I see, I see.

A: It – it's like such stories, unbelievable.

Q: It's very tragic.

A: Yeah.

Q: Very –

A: And [**indecipherable**] it was with –

Q: – I mean, tragic – yeah, tragic for so many rea – we know the historical reasons –

A: Yeah.

Q: – for it, but also being, in some ways, let down, disappointed, betrayed by those who are closest to you.

A: Yeah, li – like I says, we did not know – we knew we were different, but what was the difference, we didn't know. You didn't mention that word **jude oder**, just when you saw it written or the su – somewhere.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know, we di – what did you me – know as a little child? When – when we were the only ones there left?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Yeah.

A: What would you know? We just know we got picked out, we were this, and we were hide, we – we didn't tell nobody. Our grandmother said from that side, sh, you don't say nothing.

Q: So, always careful, always careful.

A: Always careful. As little we were, we grew up like that. And we were very tight, and we had to wear – somebody gave us something to do, and like, there were orchards on there, what you lived, from one town to the other, and we went in the morning and picked up the – the – the apples and stuff. So we – we had to eat. You know, was seven kids by then, and my moth –

Q: That's a lot.

A: And then it was forbidden, we were not even allowed to do that.

Q: Well, that – we'll get to there. But let's talk about when your father came back from **Buchenwald**.

A: Yeah.

Q: What did he look like?

A: He looked like himself, he was a little guy, my size, and – and then –

Q: Well, I mean, did he look older, did he look sick, did he look skinny? Did he look different?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: I don't know, he was always a thin, skinny guy, a little guy.

Q: I see.

A: What do you know? A-At that time, '38, how much – seven years old, I was.

Q: That's true.

A: What – what could I tell you? This was my father, and he came home.

Q: Yeah, that's the most important thing.

A: Yeah.

Q: That's the most important thing, yeah.

A: And he picked up life, and he had to do forced labor.

Q: So what ha – how did his life then change? He comes back from **Buchenwald**, but what happens to him then?

A: Then, he had to do forced labor –

Q: So that means –

A: – by – for the farmers.

Q: So that meant he was taken –

A: No, he lived home.

Q: He lived at home, but he was – what was different than working for the farmers before? He had worked for farmers before.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: It was not – he had to do what he was told, he was not just – open his mouth. Then he worked in a quarry. And then – then comes the clincher, he could not [indecipherable] no more. He had to go every day to **Plauen**, had to get up three o'clock in the morning, had to walk to the train station a hour. Had to take the train to **Plauen**, and there he had to do that – the big trash cans, from down the basement or wherever, they had to pick it up, and he had to do that work, til 1942.

Q: So, he was a garbage man?

A: Yeah, then there ma – he was a forced garbage man, he had to do that. Came home late night, and early in the morning, and he would not stay in si – he had to come home to his [indecipherable] and not then –

Q: So, he would come home to the family, and – and have this grueling, and demeaning kind of job.

A: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Q: Did he ever talk about it by – you see, you're getting older, as all of this is happening. Did you – did he ever talk about –

A: No, we don't – no, didn't talk about it, he had to go to work, and had to lay – make a living. That's what. And then, when he – 1942, I think, 1942, it says in paper, when they had the – comes a letter, even all the time, the Gestapo comes to

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

the house, and bothers and bothers, I remember that, because my mother let them never cross the door.

Q: Oh really?

A: She never let them cross the door. And that's – we took – my mother was a very pretty woman. That's – we [indecipherable] whenever – didn't budge. So, we got a letter he had to report to the Gestapo in **Plauen**. On that day, when he had to report to **Gestapo** in **Plauen**, my sister and I, and my mother accompanied him to **Plauen**; we had to report in the Gestapo. And there, I meet the first time, mixed marriages, a lot of them. From **Reichenberg**, from **Zwickau**, from – from **Plauen**, from all over. Not just German men with German women, German women with German men.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, when everybody was there, they marched them to the **Bahnhof** and we walking beside. They marched them with the guns. I didn't understand. Was – army was all over. The German army was all over. They marched with the ger – we coming out that **Bahnhof**, they are coming –

Q: The train station, yes.

A: Yeah, the train station. There are coming transports and transports with prisoners, and – you know, from ar – other coun –

Q: Yeah, yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: – and from – at that time I didn't know concentration camp woman had sliced the wrist and – and they are bleeding, and they are holding them up. I didn't know. It said, my father goes to a war camp. No fathers were home.

Q: So, here's the thi – you see women who have sliced their wrists.

A: They had it and they're holding up, they still had to walk. That **Bahnhof** at the train station, was full of transports with people from going back and –

Q: So you and your sister and your mother went to **Plauen** with your father.

A: Yeah.

Q: There you see mixed marriages for the first ti – people from mixed marriages.

A: Yeah.

Q: Jewish women with German men? And then German men –

A: A-A-And –

Q: – Jewish men –

A: Jewish wom –

Q: – Jewish men with German women, and – and so on.

A: Yeah.

Q: And as they're going to the train station, your father is now under guard?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, he's separated from you and your mother and your sister?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: And – and women who were under guard, have sliced their wrists.

A: Th – they are ke – not from that, from – the transport was coming in, with marching people, and coming. That train station was full with I didn't know what. You know, at that time how old was I? Ten.

Q: Yeah.

A: I didn't know.

Q: And so, you see these women who have tried to commit suicide. And when you're saying they're being held up, someone's holding them, and walking them, or they themselves are walking?

A: And sometimes they took a stick and – a-and – and hit them, and, you know? I didn't know what to di – I – it was war, I don't know.

Q: Yeah.

A: I was 10 years old. They didn't teach that in school, or anything. And nobody talked about it.

Q: So, what happened with your father at the train station?

A: That – he went to **Theresienstadt**.

Q: Well, did he – did you see him get on a – one of the trains?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yes, the – all them who – who reported in the Gestapo in **Plauen**, they all had to go in the – in the train, and that took them to **Theresienstadt**. That's what we found out, and when – when the card came. He sent a card from **Theresienstadt**, he was allowed to send a card.

Q: And – yeah?

A: The next time I saw my father again –

Q: Yeah?

A: You wouldn't believe it. You – my father was on the death march. I lived mi – mostly with my grandmother in **Treuen**, and somebody come running, that was like the end of the war, in April, or whatever, you know, and – and says, **Paula, Paula** – because everybody knew **Leo**. You know, the only Jew.

Q: Yeah.

A: **Leo – Leo** is coming through the town, **Leo** is coming through the town. And you know how many exits are in then? She takes my mother – my grandmother takes me, and we go on the **[indecipherable]** they're coming, the big wagon – remember the movies, wagon train?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: The Jews are like cattles on that and pulling that train, and the Gestapo, and the motorcycle with the machine guns. They took the death march all the way back to **Theresienstadt**.

Q: Now I'm confused. They were on a death march from –

A: From **Theresienstadt**, because the Russian advanced.

Q: Okay.

A: Came in. And you know they took people out of concentrations camp?

Q: Yes.

A: That my – my husband [**indecipherable**] out of **Dachau**.

Q: Okay.

A: So – and they came through our town. And somebody came and said to my grandmother, **Leo** is coming, my grandmother took me, and she went – and she went there, and she don't care, **SS**, or the nat – I didn't know **SS** wa – what did I know? She went there and she says, **Leo, Leo**. The **SS** man came with the gun and stepped to her, and says, take that child away, take that child away. In the meanwhile, somebody else went to my mother's sister, because we lived in that **Schreiersgrün**, in that little town, and got my mother. And tha – again, it's one thing out of the town, they let my mother talk to him for three minutes. He went all the way back to **Theresienstadt**.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Well, this is what I don't understand. He went out of **Theresienstadt**, and then back to **Theresienstadt**?

A: They marched him all the way back, he got liberated in **Theresienstadt**. They marched him all the way back. The events – the – the – the American came from one side. We got liberated there from the American.

Q: Okay.

A: And the Russian came from the other side. And they emptied the camps what – what they couldn't kill, they march, and put them on the streets, and they marched.

Q: So you – when you say goodbye to your father in **Plauen** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – when he's taken by train, was it a cattle car, or was it a regular train he was on?

A: I couldn't tell you.

Q: Okay.

A: It's probably was cattle cars, because that was – most transport cars was –

Q: Right.

A: – because that was – well, there was no plain cars in there.

Q: Okay, and in – if – and if this is 1942, then you only get one card from him during that time –

A: Yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: And your moth – nobody knows if he's alive or dead –

A: No, we didn't.

Q: – aside from this.

A: We didn't.

Q: And then, as the war is winding up, so we're talking early 1945 –

A: Yeah.

Q: – he comes through **Treuen**, or he comes through **Schreiersgrün**?

A: Through first **Treuen**, **Treuen** came first, because they're coming like from **Plauen** or the – whatever that. There was the highway with th –

Q: And you're with your grandmother.

A: Yeah.

Q: And someone tells her, **Paula**, there's **Leo** on the – in [indecipherable]

A: That is – coming through the town.

Q: Okay.

A: And they're pulling, like horses, pulling the wagon, the Jewish people, the men.

Q: And did you have a chance to talk to your father then?

A: No, no, I didn't. I just waved, and he waved to me.

Q: Okay. So when the Gestapo said, get that child out of here, they – they meant you, on the side, waiting?



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Right.

Q: And your grandmother doesn't pay any attention, she goes to him.

A: My – my grandmother – like I says, my mother's family – and her brothers were soldiers.

Q: Her – your mother's brothers were soldiers?

A: Every German man got – that's what I –

Q: So, your grandmother goes up and hugs your father.

A: She didn't care. She didn't.

Q: And she sees him, and did you see him in the distance?

A: No, we –

Q: Did you s – were you able to see what he looked like?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: What did he look like?

A: Well, like himself, what he looked – they're pulling the wagon. There are a lot of people, a lot of walk-ins – h-he – he – he didn't –

Q: Did he look older?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: I don't know if he looked older or not. He was not allowed to do – he had to do – they had a gun in their back. They are with the motorcycles, they are riding next to it. The next day my brother told me, I saw him too – he was home in **Schreiersgrün** – I saw him too, we were hiding behind trees. And he was only like, at that time – 35 – 10 years old.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then, that – from his brother's wife, she came – end of the war she came there, and she says, I would hide him, he could run away. She didn't save her own husband. That what – was German was about. That's why I says, when they said – when they mate with us, oh, the Jews – said we were **yekkes**, and the Jews said we were Germans. I said, my mother was more a Jew than you ever will be, because she had a choice, and she lived to be a Jew. She had a choice, and she was a beautiful 42 years, and she's buried in the Jewish cemetery, next to my father. So, nobody can look down on us. We are not people who going out of our way, all of that. We had a hard life, my mother made it bearable. Her – her mother s – kepted us, protected us, and it – but we were nobody.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Everybody could have done with us what they wanted. And there was like we – like we talked yesterday, there was the farmer next door, and he got banished, he

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

got banished. He was a young man, and always [indecipherable] up and take the – you know, degraded my father, and things like that.

Q: What did he do with your father?

A: Degraded him, you know, as a Jew.

Q: He degraded him, I see.

A: Yeah, th-th-the Jew, you nothing. You were nothing. Or – and my father was a little man. And he came back after the war, he was paralyzed, and he died, he's died [indecipherable] he got his punishment. And a lot of people did to us like that. But I don't – I went one time back to **Germany**, one time, '95. And I didn't want to, I had for my cousin there, and he always come to us, to – to – to **America**, visit us. And he always says, why don't you come? He still lives in the house I am born in. He's a builder, and they made it modernized and everything. And I se – I always says, I didn't forget nothing there, and I didn't lose nothing there. So, one time I went back, and that's it. And my mother one time, and she says, I'm never going back there.

Q: Okay. Let's go back a little bit. Your mother and your fath – y-you see your father in **Plauen**.

A: Yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: He's taken away. He – he – you don't know at that point that it's

**Theresienstadt**, but it ends up being **Theresienstadt**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And in the three years that he's gone, or two-plus years that he's gone, you get only one card from him.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And at one point in the winter, early spring of 1945, he's on the death march from **Theresienstadt**, comes through **Treuen, Schreiersgrün**, turns around, goes back to **Theresienstadt**. And your grandmother – your mother had three minutes with him.

A: Yeah.

Q: Your mother had three – did she come back and tell you what he spoke of, what they said in those three minutes?

A: No, no, I don't think so. Not that I remember.

Q: Okay. Let's go back to 1942, when your father is taken away. How did life proceed for you and your mother, and the rest of the children?

A: I – like I told you, we always had to work, we each had our job. My older sister, she – she had to take care of the kids. I had to make sure the food is in the house.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

My other sister, after we – we had to deliver with my mother th-the work for the factories, to **Treuen**, and bring a new work, and that's how we survived.

Q: Were you allowed to go to school?

A: Yes, through the beginning I was.

Q: Okay, so tell me a little bit – we haven't talked much about school life. What was school life like, from your earliest memories now, going back before the war.

A: I started school in 1939. I remember – I remember that was the day of the war began.

Q: That's right, September first.

A: September first. Sep – and I remember that they – when they send us all home.

And I went home, happy from going home again. And later on, like I says, I had that one who was the Jehovah's Witness in the class. And we had to get up and, you know.

Q: Do **heil Hitler**.

A: Every morning. Wha – we separated. At that time, we were not allowed to go any further in the school, only basic. We were not – were not allowed. And that is when I noticed really, we were different, when school – because every kids wore the **Hitler** uniform, they went – and we asked why aren't we? You know kids, it's

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

kids. And my mother says, just we're not. And my grandmother, just keep quiet.

And that's what we did. We –

Q: So how many grades of school were you allowed to go to?

A: I went til 1945.

Q: So you were in school until 1945?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, so you were 13 years –

A: But –

Q: Okay.

A: But –

Q: Yeah.

A: In **Germany** at that time, in adult grade, you go in higher school. You get higher schooling when you are smart.

Q: Okay.

A: We were not allowed to go. That was just **[indecipherable]**

Q: All right. But if you start in 1939, and you go until 1945, that's six years.

A: Oh yeah, that was in – in that town, in **Schreiersgrün** I went there.

Q: Yeah, right.

A: Later on, after the war, I went to school up in **Wolkenstein**.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay, that's different.

A: Yeah.

Q: We'll talk about that, too.

A: Yeah.

Q: But – but during the war, you went to six grades?

A: I don't know what –

Q: From 1939, til 1945.

A: Wait a minute. Yeah, maybe fifth grade, what – whatever. I don't even remember.

Q: You were never thrown out of school, in other words?

A: No, I don't think so. I don't th – oh, I don't re – I-I really don't remember. We didn't go to the end no more to the school, because every day bombs falling on that, you couldn't go.

Q: Okay, that could be. But not because you were half Jewish and half Christian?

A: I-I really don't know exactly that.

Q: Okay.

A: Because at that – you know what, a funny thing happened there too, at **Plauen** they are bombed – the American bombed **Plauen**, and you know when the sirens went off, and you had to go in [**indecipherable**] and you know what happened?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Like the man upstairs watched us? When the worst bombing came, they knocked our doors, and knocked those doors, we were supposed to go in the basement. We didn't wake up. In the morning we woke up, and they all said, we all tried – God watched out for us.

Q: So in other words, you're in **Plauen**, and there's a siren because this –

A: No, we were in **Schreiersgrün**.

Q: In **Schreiersgrün**.

A: But you could see how there the bombs dropped off from **Plauen**. You could see that, everything.

Q: And so the – the basement, where people took shelter, did that get bombed?

A: No, we didn't get bombed, but we had to get out of our living quarters, but they couldn't wake us up. It's like higher power watched out for us.

Q: And you didn't get bombed?

A: No, but we didn't know the worst would happen either.

Q: What was the worst that happened?

A: That a lot of people died in that night from the bombs, all that stuff. We didn't know nothing. It – like you say, it's **[indecipherable]**

Q: Yeah. Yeah. Did your mother – you talked a little bit about how people degraded your father when he was, you know, neighbors and – and like a farmer who – a



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

young farmer who he had to work for. Were there – were there people who also helped, or tried to watch out for your family?

A: Yeah, next door – next door was a very religious woman, she had the Sunday school, or whatever, and she was my mother's friend a little. Otherwise, nobody was her friend. My mother was shunned. We were shunned. We were nothing. Like I says, there were so many prisoners in forced labor from other countries, and there came working. In the nighttime they went [indecipherable] and slept. But they walked free. But everybody they are watched, we were watched. We couldn't go no place. And then we were not the only one, we were with – with other forced labors, from u – from the **Ukraine** they brought a lot of young women to work by the farmers. And Serbian, there were a lot of. There were a – a – prisoners of wars, were a lot of in there. They all had to work by the farmers. So many, and from – from **Holland**, Dutch in – in that room that [indecipherable] first time that I had to put my shoes on.

Q: Oh yeah, [indecipherable]

A: I had to go – I went to the factory working, and then I went to there. They walked free on the street. That was not that big, so it was every ba – we were all in prison, but we could – I don't know what you can say to that.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Well, you're – you're observed, you're watched, you're – you're not really free. You know, you're – you may not be in an actual prison, but there is – but you're controlled.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: We were controlled. We could not le – do what we wanted to.

Q: Okay. Now, you mentioned that your mother's brothers, your uncles –

A: Yeah.

Q: – joined the ger – had to join the German army.

A: Everybody had to.

Q: And where did they serve?

A: I don't know. I just know that is the funny part. One brother was, before the war, a communist, you know, like **[indecipherable]**

Q: Right.

A: And he got in the – in the Russian prison camp, he was no more – first of all, he came half dead home, after a lot of years, he never was a communist again. And one was in **England**, I think, they took him for prison camp in **England**.

Q: Okay.

A: And where's the other one? Anyhow, all three of them came back.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay, so they all served in the Wehrmacht.

A: Yeah.

Q: They – two of them, at least, were taken prisoner of war.

A: Three – all three were.

Q: All three were prisoners of war.

A: All three. But one had it really bad, he came home half dead.

Q: That was the one in the Russian prison?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And –

A: That was the communist.

Q: And that was the communist. And how many years was he in the prison camp, do you think, lot?

A: I don't – I don't think he was home yet – I think he must have been two, three years, because he was not home yet when his sister passed away, and his father.

See, at that time, I didn't live no more, when they come home, in **Schreiersgrün**.

Q: Yeah.

A: 1945, when the war ended, my father went to **Wolkenstein**, and he took back what it was ours.

Q: Okay, **Wolkenstein** is where your grandmother had the – the store.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Business, and my father was from there.

Q: Okay. So your father – let's – all right, let's then – I get different topics here. But let's – let's – let's stay with your uncles.

A: Yeah.

Q: The ones who served in the Wehrmacht.

A: In the Wehrmacht.

Q: And then we'll come to your father. So you no longer are around when your uncles come home –

A: No.

Q: – from prisoner of war camps. Do you ever see them again?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Okay.

A: The one uncle I met when I went, '95, to **Germany**, he was – that was her youngest brother.

Q: Okay.

A: That was my cousin's – h-his son is as old as my daughter, so he was young.

Q: So this uncle, the young – did you ever see – was the first time you saw your uncle again after the war in 1995?

A: Yes.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Or did you ever see them in the 40s, when you were living there?

A: No, I only saw the one, that youngest one, 1943, when he got married. That is the only time. They were never home any more. They were never home.

Q: Were they all very – did anybody ever talk about **Hitler** at home? Your grandparent – your – your maternal grandparents, did they ever talk politics?

A: They didn't like it.

Q: They didn't like him.

A: They didn't want to go to war, they didn't want to be soldiers. They were nice people. They didn't condemn their sister.

Q: And the larger families, their wives and children and so on, were they also similar? When you were –

A: Yeah, th-they lived in **Treuen**. My – my mother's older sister, she was a dressmaker, and coat maker by trade. She teached even people, and she made sure that we had something to wear. She made us, and my mother made th – were very handy.

Q: So your mother's – th-there wasn't anyone in your mother's family who turned their backs on you?

A: None.

Q: That's a very remarkable family.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Oh. But I really didn't see them much after the war, because we moved up to that **Wolkenstein**. We lived – we lived in that small town, and my grandmother and they all lived in **Treuen** mostly. And then when you had the – had transportation to go, you know, it was a long – like two hours, to go to that **Treuen**, to **Wolkenstein**. And the – after the war was not much transportation. And then, you had to have a special pass to go on a bus. Even after the war, you know, was nothing that as – was the Russian zone, they traded us – we got liberated from the American, and that's when they found the papers, we were ready for transport. We children were ready for transport.

Q: And your mother too, or not?

A: I don't think so, but we children were ready for transport. So –

Q: So who found those papers?

A: My father, when did he come home, an-and the **Bürgermeister**, and then they came out to my mother and said, oh, we were good, we – you know, they wanted to help, that she shouldn't – because a lot of them were Nazis. They wanted my mother to say good, because then they traded us in for the Russian, for **Berlin**.

Q: I – now I'm s – now I'm confused.

A: We got liberated by the –

Q: Americans.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: – American.

Q: Right.

A: And later, **Berlin** got traded for –

Q: Okay.

A: – sectors. [indecipherable] got traded in for **Berlin**. So suddenly, overnight, the Russian came to our town. And my parents were not home, we children – and we were young girls, and they still raped and did different things. So we had to choose [indecipherable] and my – my sister – I was 13, and my sister was already 15, 16, you know how –

Q: A dangerous age.

A: Yeah, so sh – we took that Jewish star, and we hide it when they come in, that they didn't do it, because they went from house to house to look. That they didn't bother us, we were home by then, safe.

Q: So soldier – Russian soldiers tried – Soviet soldiers tried to come into your house, too?

A: Yeah, every home they came.

Q: Every home. And when they saw the star, they left you alone?

A: They left us alone, but [indecipherable] other thing.

Q: I see.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: But so that's – that's what happened after the wa –

Q: So in other words – I want to understand this, the **Bürgermeister** came, and showed your father that you had been on the lists to be transported.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And wanted to be – show a good side –

A: Oh, that all –

Q: – so that your mother would speak up for them, and that the town would not be traded for **Berlin**. Is this right? I don't understand the connection of being traded.

A: That has nothing to do with it.

Q: Okay.

A: Th-th-th – **Berlin**, in trading us [**indecipherable**] of it, that has nothing to do with us.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: But we were liberated from the –

Q: Americans.

A: – from the American, but later we got occupation from the Russian, because the American wanted a part of – of **Berlin**, the English wanted, and the French, and the Russian. So they divided **Germany**, and we became **East Germany**. You know that.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Yes, but people will not know it, necessarily –

A: Yeah.

Q: – who are listening to the interview.

A: That – that became **East Germany**.

Q: Yes.

A: But originally, we were liberated.

Q: Okay. So, let's go back a little bit, and talk about how did your father get back home?

A: He got liberated in **Theresienstadt**, and he came home again.

Q: By foot, by train, by –

A: What do I know?

Q: Okay.

A: I don't know – I don't know. There was su-such turmoil after the war, I don't know, but suddenly he was home again.

Q: And was he different than he had been before?

A: Older. Little wiser. He right away went and – went, and he went up to that

**Wolkenstein** [indecipherable] I knew, and he took back, he had the people throwing out what his parents lived in there, in the house. I have pictures of that.

And then, after few weeks, we moved up there to **Wolkenstein**, we took over the

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

quarters, he took over the business. My father was a big man at that time. He was only Jew – like, in **Wolkenstein** then, like a few of them came back. But they ar – later went away again.

Q: So, when he came back, his mother's business, which had been taken away by the – the Nazis.

A: By Nazis, yeah.

Q: And the living hou – the house, the – or wherever she lived –

A: It wasn't a house, was apartment, right above the store.

Q: It was an apartment above the store.

A: Yeah.

Q: People had moved in there.

A: Yeah.

Q: And so he was able to take that back.

A: Yeah, he took them – evicted e-everybody. Ni – the police –

Q: Right.

A: – took them all out, because it – it was theirs.

Q: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And what kind of quarters were these, the – you know, where your gra – this was your grandmother's home.

A: That was my grandmother's home, and that's where my father was born.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: So, what did that place look like, that apartment quarter? You know, tell me a little –

A: Compared what we had in that **Schreiersgrün** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – it was a palace.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah, we – it was a big kitchen, was a living room, a big office in there, or whatever you need. A bedroom upstairs, under the **[indecipherable]** was bedrooms that – where we slept, and that. But that was not big enough, too. And then later when – across the street, a bigger one – then I was already married – we moo – they moved over there.

Q: So in other words, your parents were able to move into this family's home.

A: Yeah, and take the business back.

Q: That's many ironies there, you know, it's very ironic.

A: Bec-Because like I said, it's deep in **Germany**. You said you knew **Prague** there, in **Czechoslovakia**. It was not far.

Q: Yeah. Yeah

A: When I went '95 back, and I said – my husband wanted to go **Prague**, once he says, and my cousin says, we not going there by car, we not going. They are

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

stealing the tires off the cars and everything, we not going there. That was '95. So, we didn't go there.

Q: Yeah.

A: But I was about **[indecipherable]** after the war.

Q: Yeah.

A: We – we took, because my father had business, we went to **Tieringen**, we went to **Leipzig**, and we went **Berlin**.

Q: Amazing.

A: But –

Q: But – okay, but we'll talk – we'll talk about all those things a little bit later.

Now, I want to go back to – what do I want to go back to? Your brother – your uncles on your mother's side, all served in the German army. Were they only soldiers, or had they been officers, as well?

A: I don't think – they only were soldiers.

Q: They only –

A: I think the youngest one was a little more – I don't know, what do I know from – I don't even know now what the – what the **[indecipherable]**

Q: Okay, okay. And – and you never saw the uncle again, who was under the Soviet

–

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Oh yes, I th – I think I saw him once, and we didn't go there more.

Q: To **Treuen**?

A: Yeah, we didn't go much. I just went there when my aunt made us something to wear, she was a dressmaker.

Q: I see. I see.

A: Because my parents were busy then, and –

Q: So – but let's go back to the Jehovah's Witness family that was your – also in **Schreiersgrün**.

A: Yeah.

Q: You say the husband was killed by the Nazis?

A: Yeah.

Q: In a camp, or in the town? You don't know.

A: I really don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: All I just know that he got killed, and then she was with her mother.

Q: Okay.

A: And they took her mother naked through the town.

Q: Through the town. And then what happened to the mother and the girl? Were there any other children?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: No, no, that's were – only was them two left.

Q: Oh my.

A: And when I went back '95, then I heard that she died too, the daughter. I don't –  
I s –

Q: Okay, okay.

A: Well, you know what I can tell you [indecipherable] even, a person who was  
not quite normal? There was one in town too, she was like – or whatever, not quite  
right.

Q: Mentally disabled, yes.

A: Yeah, they took her to [indecipherable] which there was for – for people,  
mental, they killed them there, too. That I knew.

Q: Did you know that? Did people know that –

A: That I knew.

Q: Yeah.

A: That knew – I knew – I knew, when you were disabled, or something like that,  
they took them to that mental thing, and – and they killed them. People were talking  
between themselves, and just hear, you know, what here and there. That I knew. But  
concentration camp? [shakes head no]

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Tell me a little bit about – about how your grandmother in **South Africa**, when was the next time you ever heard from her?

A: After the war. After the war, 1945.

Q: Was there a letter?

A: It says in the papers, too.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, there's a letter – letters. By that time she was blind already, and then his sister send us packages, but they only was allowed to send used clothing out, and I'm the only one who wa-was fitting in and – and then – and then, later on, when we left already the – the east zone, she wa – she had no children, she wouldn't – I was married then already, and they lived in **Berlin**. She wanted my sister to come to live with her, and my sister didn't go.

Q: This was your Aunt **Edith**?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, did they ever send any financial support to your parents?

A: During the war, you mean?

Q: I mean after the war.

A: No, no, no, no.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: And – and did they ever offer your parents to leave, that they would es – they would –

A: Like I told you, they wanted my sis – sister to come to live with her.

Q: Oh, but not the rest of the family?

A: No, that is already when we le – left **Wolkenstein**, and we went to **Berlin**.

Q: And that's what year?

A: That was 1950.

Q: Okay.

A: Fifty when we went – we left the east zone, by nighttime we were fleeing **East Germany**, because by that time it – under the Russian it gotten already bad.

Q: Okay, we're going to talk about that a little bit, then I'll move back.

A: Okay.

Q: I'll – I'll head back. Your father gets back the store.

A: Yeah.

Q: And he then becomes a store owner.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you all move from **Schreiersgrün** –

A: To **Wolkenstein**.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: – to **Wolkenstein**. Now, his brother, you know, his – was either killed or committed suicide, but your mother had gotten his bloody clothes from the Gestapo.

A: Yeah.

Q: His father had moved to **Berlin**.

A: Oh, he was dead already, by then.

Q: He's dead.

A: He died already in the camp, during the – during the war.

Q: Do you know about his fate? About your grandfather's fate?

A: No, no, I didn't. I didn't hear nothing. They lived in **Berlin**. I didn't know nothing about them.

Q: Okay.

A: I knew – just knew – I knew my own **[indecipherable]**

Q: Okay.

A: I knew him.

Q: I see.

A: I knew him.

Q: So, your father really is the only heir –

A: Yeah.

Q: – to the – to the property.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah, yeah, was.

Q: And the family comes there –

A: But no, after the war, this is the – when the other brother was alive, the one who lived in **Africa**.

Q: Were they – yes, they were alive –

A: Yeah.

Q: – but they weren't there.

A: No, no –

Q: They weren't in **Germany** any more.

A: – no, no.

Q: Okay. Did they have any claims on the property?

A: I think they did. I don't know, I really don't know, I wasn't interested in it. I –

Q: Okay.

A: – I really didn't – all I just know, I – I think once a letter came, I heard my mother and – and my father talking, and my mother says, leave me alone, I don't want to know, let them have everything, whatever they want.

Q: I see.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: And I think that got to be **[indecipherable]** for it. I don't know. I don't. Because my – his sister, in the meanwhile, became rich. But I do – he – when – from his father – from his other brother –

Q: Yeah.

A: – the son came visiting us in **Philadelphia**.

Q: So that's way – long after the war.

A: Yeah, because his father – his brother, in the meanwhile, passed away too, and so he looked us up as a family **[indecipherable]** family.

Q: So, when you're back there, your father takes over the business.

A: Yeah.

Q: And opens it up as a business again.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you – and then – I mean, life changes. If **Wolkenstein** is in the east zone, tell me how – how did he –

A: They **[indecipherable]** took it again. Then –

Q: Well, tell me – tell me how long he had it as a business, and then what happened.

A: He had it the business til we left. We left, I think, October or November, 1951, end of the year. Because they **[indecipherable]** it again too, they didn't – you know, was a consume, that everything the Russian made, they **confiscated**

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

everything too, and in the meanwhile he had for the Russian magazine, and he sold for the Russian soldiers, and you know, what –

Q: He had a store for – for –

A: Russian soldiers goods.

Q: – for Russian sold – so he had like a special store –

A: Yeah.

Q: – for the Russian soldiers.

A: And he put that – for the officers too, the Russian **[indecipherable]** always a different, for the officers, and for the –

Q: Soldiers.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So was all – did he also have – did he turn the store into one for the Soviet soldiers, or was it –

A: That was one separate, yeah, mm-hm.

Q: No, okay, I'm confused. Did the store have any part of it that still sold goods to the public, to the German public?

A: No.

Q: Or did it all become –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Only the other one, th-the store what was his from all the time, from his mother, that sold to the public. The Russian store sold only to the Russian officers.

Q: So that was a different store?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, so he – in other words, he became the owner of three stores.

A: No, two.

Q: Two, two stores.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And how did that develop, that he had gotten this possibility?

A: Oh, then it gotten worse, and worse too, they are a-all made it everything stayed owned. They took it again everything away, the Russian. It's la – like – I gonna tell you that, I married my husband, and when I married my husband, I lost German citizen. They wanted to send us – every six months, I had to – we had to have a permit to stay in – in – in **Germany**. So they wanted to send us back to **Poland**. And my husband always dream was to go to **America**. Where is – he had enough, he says.

Q: So first of all, tell – did you marry your husband before 1950?

A: Yeah, 1949.

Q: So you married him also a very young woman.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Very young. I know my husband since I 15 years old.

Q: So you met him in the first years after th – 1947?

A: 1947, the beginning of 1947. You know what he did?

Q: Tell me.

A: He got liberated – his last camp was **Dachau**, my husband has a number. In the Bavarian **Alps**, laying in the snow, in his – half-dead, and in the morning they woke up, no more Germans there, and suddenly the American was there. That's how he got liberated, May second.

Q: How did you meet him? What happened?

A: How I meet my husband? I did – I went in that **Auerbach** then, you know, in – in **Wolkenstein**, at – I had to go to **Auerbach** to a school, after the war. And I was down there, and you had to have per – you know in the Russian zone, you know how it is under the Russians?

Q: Well, tell me.

A: You had to have special permission for a bus, because was not enough transportation. And I had – want to go home with that bus, and I staying there and the bus comes and there comes a guy ca – running, and he wants to go in the bus, and the conductor says, you are not allowed to come in. And you know, he's a Jew, and a German tells him what to do, he gave him a push, and he says – and he went

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

in, and he came to **Wolkenstein**. And I know that oh – and I come home, and I says, boy, did I see today a handsome man. Did I see a ha – he – so all right, two days later I come home, and he's in there, in our house. I said to the – by that time my mother had two maids, you know, after the war already. And I said, that's the guy I saw. He came two days before, but my father and my mother wasn't home, and I found that out later, he stayed in hotel – he came to my father. Somebody else in **[indecipherable]** the other small town said he was a Jew too **[indecipherable]**. He says, go to **Levy**, **Levy** has a lot of kids, go there. He send him to my father. And he – when he waited in a hotel, there was only one hotel in that **Wolkenstein**, I didn't know that at the time, and he waited for my father to come there. And my father made him paper. You know, he lived in the west zone, ma – and he did black market, my husband, at the time, and then he had to go away, he came to the east zone.

Q: Okay, what did he want from your father?

A: Papers to stay there, in – in the Russian zone you just don't come in and – and – and live there.

Q: Okay. And why did he want to li – why did he want to have papers for **Wolkenstein**? Why would he want to stay in **Wolkenstein**?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Because at the time he didn't had no place to go, he had no more family. He was the only survivor.

Q: Okay.

A: He was a young man. He was 22 years old.

Q: Okay. And so your father may –

A: Oh, and his friend came with him, he stayed in **Auerbach**. He was with him in concentration camp, and – and that – and then my father made paper, but he says, you can stay with us, but sta – don't touch my girls. I had a older sister.

Q: He didn't listen to your father, did he?

A: No.

Q: Did your father –

A: That's how –

Q: Did your father –

A: That's how I –

Q: Yeah.

A: – met my husband.

Q: So tell me, did your father like him?



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Oh yeah, my mother liked him very much, and he loved my mother. He loved being part of a family. You know, we had all them little kids, he grew them up. My younger sister was five years old.

Q: Yeah.

A: And he loved being part of a family.

Q: And where was – he was from **Poland**, you say?

A: Yeah, from **Warsaw**.

Q: So what were the difficulties? Your father made papers for him to stay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what did the authorities, the new authorities, what did they require? Did they keep wanting him to go back to **Warsaw**?

A: They are always after [indecipherable] yeah, they always wanted him when he says he's not. His dream was just to go to **America**, to – he only wanted to go to **America**, my husband. And one day it's got too much, and he says, **Edith**, we leaving. And when he's doing my [indecipherable] then there – and with them, everybody got difficult too, because they took everything already [indecipherable] all for the state, you know, whatever that is. And then his friend in **Auerbach**, he had a family in the meanwhile too, and he says, we leaving. So one day we decided, so the chauffeur, we had a chauffeur – after the war we lived good. The – my father

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

took back. We had nothing. So, he drove my husband, my son – he was born in the meanwhile – and my father and my – and his friend to **Berlin**, to **Potsdam**. And in **Potsdam** we took the **Ubahn**(ph), or whatever it's called.

**Q: S-Bahn.**

**A:** And we went in the **West Berlin**, and we went to the **HIAS**, and we rented a room, and my – my father and my mother and all the little kids, that couldn't get [indecipherable], they went in a camp in **Berlin**. I don't even know what it's called. And we right away went, made papers. We got right away, in one afternoon, my husband, I, and my son, papers to **Canada**. So, we say, we go to **Canada**. And I left everybody, and –

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** – I didn't – didn't know nobody there. I didn't know –

**Q:** In **Canada**.

**A:** Even I – yeah, didn't. His friend had a brother there, so when they asked us on the ship, where you want to go, my husband says, we going to **Toronto**, it's close to **America**. And he always told me he has family in **America**. And then in **Canada**, and I says, oh shut up. You always telling me you have family, always telling me. And so we went to **Toronto**, and in **Toronto** we lived three years. Again, right away we came there, because the **HIAS** knew already that I wanted to bring my

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

parents over with the children, and that [indecipherable] to **Canada**, they wanted able-bodied people at that time, 1952 – 1951. And my older sister was, in the meanwhile, already in **America**. She got married, and she was in **America**. So then my parents – and right away when we came to **Toronto**, they knew that we wanted to go to **America**. And they said, we leave the babies here, but as the Polish quota, it takes years, like 11, 12 years to go. And then one day came out a new law, and they called us in and said, Mr. **Weinstein**, you still want to go to **America**? He says, we have good news for you, you can go on your wife's quota. So that's how we c-came to **Philadelphia**, and we reunited with my whole family. In the meanwhile, my father and mother and my little siblings all were there, and we reunited all of them there, again. It was amazing.

Q: [indecipherable] quite a journey, quite a journey.

A: And my husband had family, we found later on in – in **New York**, and when he found in **New York** the family, they said, you know you had cousins in **Toronto**?

Q: Oh gosh.

A: And they lived a block from us.

Q: And you didn't know?

A: He didn't. He was a young man, a young boy when he was – he only knew that the [indecipherable]. And he found his mother 22 years after the war, my husband.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: His mother?

A: His father.

Q: His father?

A: And his brother.

Q: His brother.

A: He was in **Russia**.

Q: Wow.

A: I went to **Kiev** even, with my husband. Yeah, he found – because when he found his relatives in – in **New York**, he says – yeah, he says, oh, there are letters, and things like that, and – and he always used to write letters to the Polish

**[indecipherable]**

Q: Right.

A: – in – in **Poland**. And one day we got a letter, and it said that, from the Polish Red Cross, it seems like that one and then is the same, and we found him in **Tarnopol** in –

Q: Yeah, in the **Ukraine**.

A: Yeah, 22 years after the war. Because when 1939 the German invaded **Poland**, he went **Bialystok**.

Q: Ah, okay.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: And – and his mother didn't want to leave. What my mother did when the Russian occupied us, she says, oh, we finally have something, we staying here, what they can do to us?

Q: Yeah. So – no, but now you're got to explain. Your grandmother had – your husband's mother went to **Bialystok**?

A: No, this brother. The brother.

Q: This brother went to bialys –

A: His – his sister – his father died already in the – in the ghetto.

Q: Okay.

A: And his sister and mother went right in the – in the gas chamber, in **Treblinka**.

Q: Ah, ah. And the brothers went toge –

A: He found 22 years after the war, through the Polish Red Cross.

Q: But the brother was in **Bialystok**, and how did he end up in **Tarnopol**?

A: Because he was later in the Russian army. He was in the Russian army.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: And later – you know there – you know how they do it, they transport people from one city to the other one wa –

Q: Of course, of course.

A: – he ended up in **Tarnopol**.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Did he – did he live out his years in **Tarnopol**?

A: No. It took us 12 times to bring him out. He was one of the first Jews they let out of **Russia**. They let him even out for a visit for three months, but keep the wife and the daughter there [indecipherable] the **HIAS** did all that.

Q: Amazing. Amazing stories, yeah.

A: Oh, we – how we – how we [indecipherable] unbelievable how the – the rabbi, who even married my daughter in fur – my daughter – my sister in **Fernwald** later became the rabbi in [indecipherable] or whatever. He buried my mother and my father, and he – the father his married my sister. It's all in that wind – it's a big world, but it's a small world.

Q: Yeah. You say your mother convi – hang on just a second, let's break for a second. [break] All right. I wanted to ask about your mother.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you say she converted to Judaism after the war. How did that happen, how did that process happen for her?

A: How that happen? Because she did not want to be different from us, when she married for my father so long.

Q: So, you were – if I get this un – if I understand this right, the children felt – you all felt Jewish.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah, we always.

Q: Okay. From the very beginning.

A: Because he talked to us Jewish, and he made sure he took us for Shabbat to his – his mother. And I remember thi – that I knew from [indecipherable] and with the fish

Q: And had you ever gone to – to a Protestant church? Had you ever gone to any services?

A: I went to a Protestant church, yes, as a child. Never, never – after the war, I never went to a church, a – a Catholic church I don't even know from inside, I never – because we were Protestant where we lived, yeah.

Q: You were Protestant, yes.

A: I never went in any of it, never.

Q: Okay.

A: Not that I have anything against it, I respected that, because of my mother.

Because I always fear, you really cannot change what you're born, it's always in your heart. I – I tell you, I'm very open, I don't lie.

Q: Mm-hm. So what was the –

A: Even she did for us, she wanted a – my mother, everything. But I think deep inside – and my sister-in-law just told me that, you know [indecipherable] the last

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

week, when she was alive, she says, you think God gonna let me in and gonna forgive me, I went over to Judaism?

Q: Oh.

A: She never married, or looked at other men. She was 42 years a widow. She was in her 50s when my father passed away, 58, my father was 65, just 65.

Q: When did he die?

A: He died '72.

Q: In 1972.

A: Septe – October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Q: So, he lived for another 27 years, after the war.

A: Yeah, well, '72 –

Q: Twenty-seven years.

A: – '45, 15 - 17 years, 18 years. Oh no, '45, yeah, yeah. Mm-hm, '45.

Q: Twenty – so that's a good, long time.

A: Twenty-seven, yeah. Let me tell you, my husband lived – he – he had a massive heart attack when he was 55 years old, and at that time, heart surgery just started, they didn't give him. He lived 30 more years, and he had only half a heart muscle.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

A: But to the end, he was broken. I did hospice at home for him. I did.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Yeah. Let's talk about your father again. So, when he came to the **United States**

—

A: Yeah.

Q: — did he work again?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: What did he do?

A: What did he do? He did everything, he wor — worked in factory. To the last years, I know he worked for a combination **[indecipherable]** was kosher place, and he did bookkeeping stuff, the stock, and all the staff, they loved him very much, even when he was sick, because we knew was dying, he was — I told him, September fourth, Labor day, or what was, or October 23<sup>rd</sup>, he was dead. I remember we celebrated my daughter's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. And on the way home, we had to stop the car, he coughing and coughing, and my brother-in-law was a doctor. And he says, if I **[indecipherable]** yourself, Monday you coming in there, and I gonna take the x-rays myself. And from there, he had cancer of the lungs. And then he had bone cancer, and they gave him a half a year, and in six weeks he was dead.

Q: What an amazing life. What an amazing life, that he withstood **Buchenwald** and **Theresienstadt**, and a death march, he survived all those things.

A: And you should have seen what a little guy he was, a little guy.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: What kind of a personality did he have?

A: A happy go lucky one.

Q: Really?

A: He was – had a heart of gold. A person tell him a story, picked him up off the street, bring him home. My mother got so mad, don't bring me home, he like, took my husband to – don't bring me no more. After the war, he brought people home on the – my mother says, I don't want nobody, and he –

Q: That's okay.

A: He says, I have so many mouths to feed, I have one more. He was a good man, he had a heart of gold.

Q: Was he someone you were close to?

A: Oh yeah. I told my brother yesterday, you know my father, he loved me the best.

Q: Oh, really?

A: I was more like him. I was a **Levy**. I was a **Levy**.

Q: And – and what kind of a personality did your mother have?

A: Very serious, very working, honest, hard-working, loyal, unbelievable. Beautiful person. My husband loved her.

Q: Oh yeah?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Loved, loved my mother, and my mother loved him. It was like a 12 year or whatever [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah.

A: She asked him always for advice and that, and she always told him – she di – passed away when she was 95, she says, I don't want to go before you. Because he was then sick, you know, for –

Q: Yeah.

A: He says, all I wish, I don't want to before you **David**, I don't want to go before you, I want to go after you. She loved him.

Q: So she – she passed away when, your mother?

A: Seven years ago.

Q: My goodness.

A: May third was seven years, and my husband five.

Q: My goodness, she lived a long, long life.

A: Ninety-five, and she stayed a widow all that time, never married again. We were a very close family.

Q: Did she do much talking about what she went through during the war, and before the war?

A: No, no, she was a very private person. Very private, my mother.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Did she ever keep up with her own family, back in **Treuen**?

A: No, her sister [indecipherable] died then, but her one brother lived til about 95 – about 2000. No, and she didn't write no letters, nothing. She went one time, my one brother took her one time back to see them, that her older sister was there, her mother was already no more alive. And when she came back, she says, I don't want to go back there no more. I don't like it. I don't want to – she did not – she did never want to go back to **Germany**, she didn't ind – identify with the being German.

Q: What about your grandmother and your grandfather after the war? What happened – what was their fate, you know? They didn't like **Hitler** –

A: They stayed where they are. They were born German, and they were Protestant, and that's what they were.

Q: And did they stay – I mean, but did they – the new regime that came in, they had the son, who was a communist until he went to **Russia**.

A: Yeah, well, they all stayed there til they died. What else did they had to do? [indecipherable] going?

Q: Okay, so they never left. They never tried to go to the west, or anything like that?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: No, no, no, no, they stayed there, the – what is left, cousins? I only have one cousin I am close. The rest I – they were much younger than I. We are down – most of them were nine – '45, the one who died, they were little – little kids. So I didn't know, we were older. And I had only two cousins who I was really close to, and I saw her when I went there, '95, she lived outside **Dresden, Berne(ph)**, or the – whatever that's called. And – and her brother, that's the way he went, to the west. He went to the west, and he passed away.

Q: So –

A: Otherwise, I didn't – after we lived in – in **Wolkenstein**, we didn't go much down there, because it was far, and we were little. We had our own life, we had to go to school, and we got married, and –

Q: So, did – when your father and mother go back – you know, now, right – we're going back again to post-war years, when they moved to **Wolkenstein** –

A: Yeah?

Q: – did you have – tell me about some of the conveniences, whether they were there, or – was there running water in the house – in the apartment?

A: In – in **Schreiersgrün**?

Q: No.

A: In – in –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: **Wolkenstein**.

A: – in **Wolkenstein**, yeah, there was even a **Badezimmer**.

Q: There was a bathroom, okay.

A: A ba – and a bathtub, a **Badezimmer**.

Q: So, a bathtub in there, okay.

A: Yeah, a bathroom.

Q: Right.

A: There was a real bathroom up there.

Q: So that was different, my goodness.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: All right.

A: I told you, my grandparents, that's right, they were –

Q: Well-to-do.

A: That was a big Jewish community there, and you can look when you in history long. When my daughter asked me, what was the church where you? I says, I don't know [**indecipherable**] I don't know. I don't know. What do I care? What did I – then she looked it at on her phone, and she found that **Treuen** there. I don't have things – I don't own no computer, or something.

Q: So di – was there a telephone in the apartment?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: In **Wolkenstein**? Yeah.

Q: There was. Was there a car?

A: Yeah, we had a car, we had a chauffeur.

Q: You had a car and a chauffeur, and how were you able dur – you know, this was a socialist, now, place.

A: Country, yeah.

Q: How was your father able to manage that, to have both the car and a chauffeur.

A: In the beginning, yeah, but later it came worse and worse. You want to know how – when we left? We had to leave my sister what's after me there, so she could open in the morning the business, so the police didn't know we left. And when they are then the next day, they got wind we are no more there, they took my sister in, and they kept her for hours, and after they let her go, the chauffeur took her to **Leipzig**. He drove her to **Leipzig** and put her on the train to **Berlin**. That's how we left, by night. When I left the east zone, we left, we had two suitcases for baby clothes in there. Nothing, we left everything behind. It was the same like, you know, had nothing, we couldn't take nothing. And I never had no pictures, or no nothing, but when my parents, when they went in **Berlin**, later they put them in **Fernwald**, next to min – **Munich**, there was a Jewish camp, a **DP** camp

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

[**indecipherable**] where the Jewish people lived, and my – my mother's sister came, she brought some pictures and some stuff over there.

Q: So she was able to leave **East Germany**, to go to the **Munich** area.

A: Yeah.

Q: And this was in the early 50s.

A: Yeah, I guess so.

Q: And thi – so that would have been –

A: Yeah, because my parents left like a [**indecipherable**] 60 years in **America**.

Q: Okay. So, I still – you say it becomes more difficult and more difficult, but I still don't get a sense of how did it become more difficult?

A: Because –

Q: Because it was a good life. You have a chauffeur, you have the whole –

A: I know, but there – there – the Russian, you know, you are not all – at that time, you were not allowed to have nothing. Everything become a communal whatever.

Ev-Every day they took more. Like I s – I – when I married my husband, I told you, every – I lost my citizen. I – every six months we had to report to the police.

Q: You – when you married your husband, you lost your German citizenship?

A: Yeah.

Q: And were you stateless then, was that the thing, or were –



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: What a – whatever, I think so. My husband made himself stateless. He didn't want to be no Polack citizen.

Q: Okay.

A: My husband never would have gone back there. Misery. Never. So, his dream, only **America**. And I always say to my children, thank God he's buried in **America**, in the soil.

Q: Mm-hm. So –

A: And every day they took more away from people.

Q: Mm-hm. What did they take away from your family?

A: Everything. You couldn't get no more stuff to sell in the store. All the big factories got – I don't know what they called it, a communal whatever, you know, it's state owned. Everything was then state owned.

Q: But what about your father's store then, the sto –

A: That too. They started give him tha – give him no more things to sell, no more porcelain and no more that came from **[indecipherable]** and all that. You know, they limited everything. So he –

Q: So he wasn't able to get supplies? He wasn't able to get stock.

A: Get supplies no more, and things like – it got worse, it got every day worse. Worse and worse.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay. But did they take away the store? It's –

A: No, they didn't take it away. But we – we just left it. We didn't ha – we had enough. When you get no supplies, you cannot make no money.

Q: Yeah.

A: You cannot make no money, so that's – and so we had enough to stay there.

Q: So that meant that when you left the store –

A: We had nothing again.

Q: All right, but you also lost the store. You never were able to get it back.

A: No. No. Now – I have pictures of it, it says on top, on the house, it's in the **[indecipherable] Augusta Levy**. From before the war. Everything can be documented, everything.

Q: Were you – was there any thought, after **Germany** reunited, to try and get some of these assets back?

A: Oh yeah, but it had to do with his sister in **Africa**, they wanted too, and his mother was alive, and the whole thing – I don't know what he got, my father, or whatever.

Q: Okay.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: They come to **America**, they wor – my mother worked, he worked, and the children then worked, that got older. That's it. We lived a free life, nobody told us any more what to do. Finally we were free.

Q: Tell me, how did your husband make a living, when –

A: How my husband made a living? First he did like black market, and then when he had to have a – he took it, made a taxicab. And then he didn't chauffeur no German around, you know, my husb – then, he worked for the Russian –

Q: You're talking about – okay.

A: That was the [indecipherable] work there, you know, that –

Q: Right.

A: – and [indecipherable] up there, on the **Czechoslovakia** border?

Q: Yeah.

A: In **Ertzgebirge**?

Q: Yeah.

A: He worked for a big captain. There was this [indecipherable] or whatever they're called [indecipherable] he – he made a taxi, and he drove the Russian, he went there.

Q: Okay. So he – when you're talking black market, he would go between east and west? Or –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Ea-East and west, or the – the – they gave him gallons for the benzene, for the gasoline, and he – for the factory, he knew people who had stockings, the Russian women loved stockings, and – and underwear, fancy stuff. He tried it, you know, back and that. So, he made a living, but – and we had – he had enough. So one day we said – went there, started always with that six months, we need the permission. Oh, I would never go to them countries. So he says, we leaving. We left everything. By night, we went. My son was not quite two years old.

Q: And you got to **Potsdam**, and then you took the **S-Bahn** to –

A: Yeah, into **Berlin**.

Q: – into **Berlin**.

A: In the west.

Q: Into the west.

A: And you know we could have been picked up.

Q: Oh yeah. Oh, easily, easily.

A: Oh, we had a life.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then we lived three years in **Canada**, my daughter was born in the meanwhile.

Q: How long did you stay in **Berlin**, when you were there?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: I didn't stay long in **Berlin**. I only no – I don't think even a month. We got right away papers to **Canada**. Then they took us to ludwis –

Q: **Ludwigsport(ph)**.

A: – **Frankfurt**, first to **Frankfurt**, and from there to **Ludwigsburg** –

Q: Okay.

A: – in that camp I –

Q: Yeah.

A: – that I saw the first time, what kind of living that was. And then, from there, you know, we got **immunized**, and all that stuff. And then they took us to **Bremerhaven**. We took a ship, and ha – that went to **Halifax**, to – in **Canada**, and two – two nights and one day it took us to get **Toronto**.

Q: Did – I – I assume your husband had a career after the war as well –

A: No, he didn't had a career, he took any work. Let me tell you.

Q: Okay.

A: We a – I gonna tell you, that's – we didn't even know til he brought us over. You know, you got one trip to immigrate what they paid. We never knew that they paid us, because we had no sponsor coming to **America**. There sponsored us again, the camp, but we didn't know that. When he brought his brother from **Russia**, they asked us, who brought you to **America**? Maybe by that time we had a few dollars

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

saved. She looked in the paper and he says, we did. You n – I go to tell you, when we came to **Toronto**, my husband, the first day, he's coming home with the newspaper. I says, what you coming with the newspaper? You cannot read. He says, I'm looking for a job. The **HIAS** gave us 30 dollars, that was eight dollar for the room, and 22 dollars to live, that – had the room in the **HIAS**, the kitchen with the – a lot of people in one room. He found a job washing new cars for 30 dollars. He didn't take no money from the **HIAS**, 30 dollars. And from there, he always found **[indecipherable]** til we left **Canada**, he already joined the 107 union, he drove a truck. Made already good money, but he wanted to go to **America**, so went. And here in **America**, he started the same thing again.

Q: What did he do?

A: That – he drove a big trailer for like 10 years, more. And then he was only in the city, and he found business, we bought a business, and he had a business, a food market, until he retired.

Q: So he owned a grocery store?

A: Yeah.

Q: Pretty cool.

A: He never, in all the years, he never had an un – unemployment check, and he never let me go to work.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Really?

A: Them kids were his life.

Q: How many children do you have?

A: Two.

Q: A son and a daughter?

A: Yeah. My son is 65, and you want to know a funny thing? He's born Christmas day. I said to my husband, now you got a **Jesus**. Do you know how – how life is funny? When he delivered him, he helped to deliver, I had him in m – home in my apartment in the bed. And it took a long time, so you see, he had to deliver him.

Q: Back in **Wolkenstein**.

A: Yeah.

Q: Amazing. A Christmas present.

A: Yeah. Life is so funny. He met his sister's brother-in-law in concentration camp. He did – never knew him, because they said in the ghetto al – they taking all the young, unmarried, in the concentr – not concentration camp, he didn't know either.

Q: Right.

A: You know, nobody knew who – otherwise, who would go like a sheep?

Q: Yeah.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Like a lamb. And so, she got married to a guy who always liked her. And when one day he came home from work with this brother-in-law, and the mother and the sister was gone. So the Germans said to report to work, you get to eat. They report to work in the ghetto. So they are going, and they come at the – the train station, the brother-in-law this, and he's this. He was a long time in concentration camp.

Sometime, I think was in **Auschwitz**, even. They called – and that guy was in as a – he did do black market, and he got caught. He was not in a Jew, he was in as a –

Q: Black marketeer.

A: Yeah. But he was a Jew. They called – one day they are laying in the bunk, and this [indecipherable] and listened. After a while, what's was that? And he asked, are you from that little shtetl? And he says, yeah. You had a brother by that name? It turned out to be his als – his sister's brother-in-law. Never saw him again after that. In **Philadelphia**, one day my brother-in-law, and the – when my husband found his family – he looked for his family, you know, and my sisters, we all married Jews. So he – he says, my cousin is here from **Montreal**, bring it to **Philadelphia**. We driving home, and we talking in the – and talking, and talking, when she says, and her sister, and he's married from [indecipherable] I says, do you mean that [indecipherable] **Emil**, from there and then? She says, yeah. Oh, I said, that's my father's boyfriend. They grew up together. I come home, and I tell



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

[indecipherable] the cousin to my brother-in-law, and that – my husband goes over, and says hi, and shaking hand with all. In the meanwhile the other cousins from a relative, from my brother-in-law comes. One day we sitting and playing cards, and my brother-in-law says, you know that **Sam** [indecipherable] his nom u – his name used to be **Tom**. He says, yeah, my husband says. That was my sister's –

Q: Brother-in-law.

A: So – yeah. So, he called him up, and they had a bakery, my brother used to work with him. It turned out that was the guy he met in [indecipherable] and they are sitting in one room in my brother-in-law's house, they didn't recognize each other.

Q: Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness.

A: Became later very good friends, he assigned from my husband the – when he had a partner, this – to the partner.

Q: What was the name of the grocery store?

A: **Lucky's Market.**

Q: **Lucky's Market.**

A: That was the name how he bought it, and he kept, and it was good to us.

Q: Yeah? Was it the one grocery store, or did he have more?

A: No, only that one.

Q: Only that one.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: And then my son did not want it, my son is college educated, and – and everything, and didn't want it. And my husband was, in the meanwhile had the massive heart attack. Somebody came in, wanted to buy it, he sold it. And that's it.

Q: And that was **Lucky's Market** in **Philadelphia**.

A: Yeah. I did the bookkeeping, I did the – everything I did. He needed me as the cashiers didn't show up, I helped out. In the meanwhile my kid got bigger. He never let me have somebody for the kids.

Q: Amazing.

A: We had a hard life, and a good life. You know, life is what you make of it.

Q: Yeah.

A: And we never really talked about it.

Q: No, really?

A: No. We only remembered like what – it was hard. When I think back, and when – like my grandson, he's 41 this years, he's gonna be. One day he's coming to me **[indecipherable]** he says, he knew from his grandfather, I never told, he says, Grandma, I never knew you went through them tough times. I says, yeah, **Eric**, I don't talk about it. I says, it was normal life. You take what life dishes you out. Was not easy. Believe me, when we were on the ship – and later we found out he married a German girl – my husband would never mar – would marry a German.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Never. He told me that later. I says, I was young, what – he – he liked me right from the beginning. I was happy go lucky kid. I was my father's daughter. The other one are more serious, they didn't talk that much, or – so it's –

Q: You were saying something about the ship, you were on the ship.

A: Oh, ship. And a guy called me a **yekke**.

Q: What's that?

A: You know, the German Jew got called a **yekke**. My husband got up and he said, what did you say? What did you say? Say it again, and ckk. And – and later I found out he had a w – a wife from **Berlin**, a German, because I got friends with her. And that was a father and a son. They were a little –

Q: Yeah.

A: This I didn't tell you in the story, when you asked me all the things. When we lived in that **Schreiersgrün** –

Q: **Schreiersgrün**, yeah.

A: And I told you was a family upstairs with a son.

Q: Yeah.

A: And he always picked at us. And you know my mother was not – we were not allowed to hit back. We were Jews.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Excuse me, can we cut for a minute? **[break]** So you were saying there was a boy –

A: And so that the –

Q: – he picked upst –

A: And – and one time he – I don't know which one he hit to, and my mother had enough. And he was in the **Hitlerjugend** form. You know the –

Q: Uniform, yeah.

A: – for – I don't know. Yeah, I don't know what they are called any more. What – I didn't –

Q: Yeah.

A: Anyhow my mother went out, and she gave him one. You know, they arrested my mother, the Gestapo picked her up.

Q: Really?

A: She was not – the uniform on? You were not allowed to tou – they picked my mother up. My mother got such a warning, one more time and we are going.

Q: Wow.

A: Do you know what my mother lived through with us?

Q: Well, it wasn't you who were – who were making trouble for her, it was the – the – the community was – was hostile.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah. Yeah, but we had no rights. Even we were – went through the – christened, we still were the Jews. And when somebody had the **Hitler** uniform on, you were not allowed to touch them. I didn't know that, I didn't – you know, later I felt – and they arrested my mother. And then she came back, and she got a warning, one more time. You know, what parents want to see how your kids always get beaten up?

Q: Of course. Nobody does.

A: And we always got beaten up. But my sister and I, we had to take – we got so tough. We fight our own – like I says, a lot of things. I had – when she **[indecipherable]** my daughter, I had a lot of restless nights. Because you put that behind you. We had other life, we had a life to make in **America**. We had to save again, and I had the kids **[indecipherable]**

Q: And so, when you learned that you were going to be doing this interview, it kind of all came back?

A: A lot of it.

Q: Yeah.

A: I – a lot of things come – come like back, what you put out of your mind.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: But us little kids, we always worked, we had to make – we all had our job.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Well, we're going to break right now.

A: Okay.

Q: We're not finished. We've gone in many different directions, but we'll break for lunch and come back – **[break]** Okay, so before the break, we were talking about your life story, and your experiences in growing up in a – in a mixed marriage, with, you know, mother and father and siblings. And now you have brought a lovely folder of pictures, or shall I say a folder of lovely pictures. And we want to get a sense of who they all are. So here's the first one. Tell me, who is this?

A: That's my mother.

Q: That's your mother. And what year would that be?

A: I guess '46 - '47.

Q: So this is in 1946 - '47, after the war –

A: Yeah.

Q: – when she's already had seven children.

A: Yes.

Q: And lived through all those difficult times.

A: Yes.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: And this is when life starts getting a little bit better. Amazing. She's so young looking in this photo. And then let's go here. Okay, and can you tell me, who is this a picture of?

A: It's my mother and my father.

Q: And would have that been after the war?

A: After the war.

Q: So, he was very young looking there, too.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Born in 1907?

A: Yes.

Q: So that would have been – he would have been in – about 40 years old.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. It's hard to – you know, they're such young looking people, and to think that they had gone through the war, you know, and that – that they had seven children, and that they had faced all these difficulties. Okay, now I'm going to hand you another picture, and we are going to cut the camera. Can you tell me, who is this a picture of?

A: That's my mother's mother, **Paula Hendel**. She's already in her 80s. I think that's shortly before her passing.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay, so that would have been well after the war.

A: Oh yeah, she –

Q: Okay, all right. So, **Paula Hendel**, your mother's mother. Thank you. Okay, and who would this be a picture of? Are these two different people?

A: Yeah, I got – I think this is his sister, and my father, although his – I don't know which one of –

Q: So wi – the boy, swi – the one in the little sailor suit be your father?

A: No, I think that's his sister. I don't know, exactly.

Q: Uh-huh. And the little baby is?

A: That's what I mean, the little baby is his sister.

Q: Is his sister.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then –

A: The other one is – is my father, or his older brother. I don't know which one.

Q: Okay. Okay. Who would this be?

A: That is my grandmother from – the mother from my father. Her name is

**Augusta Levy, Korodewski(ph)**

Q: **Korodewski(ph)** was her maiden name?

A: Yeah.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: And **Levy** her married name.

A: Yeah.

Q: And she is the one who first disowned your father, and then apologized, before the –

A: Yes, before she went to **Africa**.

Q: Do you know when this photo was taken?

A: I wouldn't know.

Q: Okay. Okay. A-And tell me, who's this again?

A: That is my grandmother from my father's – the mother. I think that is a picture already after the war, when she was in **Africa**.

Q: Okay. So that's **Augusta Kold** –

A: **Augusta Levy Korodewski**(ph).

Q: **Korodewski**(ph) **Levy**, mm-hm, okay. Thank you. And tell me, who is in this picture?

A: That's my three brothers and my little sister.

Q: Can you tell from left to right, their names?

A: **Harry**.

Q: Mm-hm, then comes?

A: **Siegfried**.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

**Q: Siegfried.**

**A: Erika(ph).**

**Q: Erika(ph).**

**A: Heinz.**

**Q: Heinz.** Eri – **Harry, Siegfried, Erika(ph), and Heinz.** Okay, and this would have been taken when, do you think?

**A:** Probably after the war, because how else would be my sister? My sister is born '43, so she's already older there.

**Q:** Okay, so she's like four or five years old, something like that. Looks it.

**A:** Yeah, she is.

**Q:** Tell me, and what is this photograph?

**A:** That's a family photograph, my father, my mother, and all seven siblings.

**Q:** How wonderful, and what year would this be?

**A:** Does it say on the bottom, '48?

**Q:** Yeah, it says 5.9.48, so that would have been May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1948.

**A:** Yeah, yeah.

**Q:** Or – or it could be September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1948. How would one read in – when you have 5.9.1948, what month of the year would that be?

**A:** Five point nine? Five point nine, first [indecipherable] then September –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: So you'd say it would be –

A: There – there say fa – here you say first the –

Q: The month.

A: The – the month. Then it's the date, the first.

Q: Okay, the fifth of September, 1948. And tell us, left to right, who –

A: That's **Heinz**.

Q: Then?

A: **Ruth**.

Q: **Ruth**. Then?

A: My mother, me, my father.

Q: Okay.

A: **Erika**(ph).

Q: Yes?

A: **Anita**.

Q: **Anita**.

A: **Siegfried, Harry**.

Q: **Siegfried** and **Harry**. Wow, all five –

A: Only one passed away.

Q: Seven children. And this was in – where was it taken?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: In **Wolkenstein**.

Q: In **Wolkenstein**. Terrific, thank you. All right, and tell me, what is this building?

A: That's the house where I was born in. But you can't see the front of the house, that's already – they are rebuilding it. That like on the right side, you can see how it used to look, when I was born.

Q: And it still is an old photograph. Do you think it's after the war?

A: Oh yeah, it's after the war.

Q: It's after the war.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So this is the house in **Treuen**, is that right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Thank you. **[break]** So tell me, what is the – what is this photograph that you have?

A: It's from my – from my grandmother's mother. It – they used to have a mill in **Langfeld(ph) [indecipherable]**. And that's just a picture, I never saw – I just know what they told us.

Q: Okay, so this is from your mother's side of the family.

A: Yeah.

Q: All right. And then we'll tilt down and see – and who are these people?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: That is my great-grandmother.

Q: Again, your mother's grandmother?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And the man standing in the doorway?

A: Must be her husband.

Q: Ah, okay. Thank you. That's from the 19<sup>th</sup> century then?

A: Whatever.

Q: Yeah. So tell me, what is this photograph?

A: That is the original house where I was born, 1932, from my grandmother from my mother's side.

Q: I see, okay, so the other photograph we saw was after the war, when it's being reconstruct –

A: Remodeled, yeah.

Q: – yeah, rebuilt.

A: But that is –

Q: But this is the original one.

A: Where I was born in.

Q: And I can see that you said there was a yard outside, and some orchard –

A: Yeah, and see the outhouse on the side?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Yes, yes, okay. All right. Thank you. Okay, so tell me, who is this?

A: That's my older sister in back, and then I'm in front, my brother, and then is a cousin, my little sister eri – no, the – **Erika**(ph), I think. I don't know which one. That is my cousin, and the one with the hat is my cousin. In the front it's my sister **Anita**. And that's my grandmother back there.

Q: I see. And the child in front is having her head ba – bent down, is this – cause we can't see her face.

A: I – I really don't know who that is.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't think it's my – no, my sister, nah.

Q: All right, but anyway, this would be your brother – some of your siblings, and cousins –

A: Yeah.

Q: – from your mother's side.

A: Yes.

Q: And is that in front of your grandmother's house?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And tha – hang on a second – and, would this have been taken after the war, or before?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: No, that is during the war.

Q: During the war.

A: Like '44.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

A: Because I know my aunt made us the coats.

Q: Okay, tell me, who is this?

A: At that time, it was after the concentration camp, it's – was my future husband,

**David Weinstein.**

Q: **David Weinstein.** And this was taken right after he was released?

A: No. He was in the hospital after he was released. Maybe '46, I guess. I don't know, I didn't know him then.

Q: Okay, so this is before you meet. And he was in **Dachau**, did you say?

A: He – he was **Auschwitz** –

Q: **Auschwitz** –

A: – **Majdanek, Dachau.**

Q: Through a lot of the –

A: Ghetto.

Q: Okay. So that's your husband, your future husband, **David Weinstein.** Thank you.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: His number is **129653**.

Q: **129653**? Thank you. All right, and tell me about this photograph.

A: I think was 1948, when I got engaged.

Q: This is your engagement photograph. And you were then how old?

A: Thirty-two – '48. Sixteen.

Q: A young one, very young.

A: Yeah, I was like 16 and a half, it was in – on his birthday.

Q: And when is his birthday?

A: Today, May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Q: That's right, May 18<sup>th</sup>.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, this would have been May 18<sup>th</sup>, '48, and your father had said, stay away from my girls. So, apparently, that didn't happen. And did he – was he upset that your –

A: Nah.

Q: No? Your parents accepted him?

A: They loved him. But they always said – my mother said, I'm too young. Because she was young. They didn't want me to get entangled with it.

Q: So this is – yeah, so this is in **Wolkenstein**?

A: Yes, that's in our house.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: The one across the street, or the one above the store?

A: Over the store.

Q: The one over the store.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Okay, thank you. And tell me about this photograph.

A: That's when I got married to my husband, **David Weinstein**.

Q: Mm-hm, what was the date?

A: Forty-nine. September, 1949.

Q: September 1949. What was the date?

A: Twenty-fourth.

Q: The 24<sup>th</sup>. And did you have a civil ceremony?

A: Yes. We couldn't get married because he had no papers. We had to wait from **Poland** that he got – that there are no original papers, so the lawyer had to make birth certificates for him.

Q: I see. I see. So, he didn't have any from when he was actually born.

A: No.

Q: Okay. Thank you. Okay, so tell me about this photograph, what is this?

A: This is like a **sportsverein**(ph), and that's where my mother alway – always told us that she met my father there.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: So, this is a sports association?

A: Yeah.

Q: And this was in which town?

A: I don't know, **Wolkenstein, Treuen**, I don't know where it was.

Q: Okay.

A: I – it's just that it says – that's where they belong, that's where she met him.

Q: And it looks like it's a very old photograph.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: So it must have been 1920s, or something.

A: Like '28.

Q: Yeah, yeah, 1928.

A: Because my sister was born '29. So I can go only from that.

Q: Okay, thank you. Okay, so tell me, what is this photograph of?

A: That is the business of my grandmother in **Wolkenstein**, her name was **Augusta Levy**. And, matter of fact, that is still now in – on the building.

Q: Is it? That – that engraving.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: It's in the cement.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: It's in the cement. And when would this photograph have been taken? Is this a recent photograph?

A: I would not know. I would not know when.

Q: Cause it looks newer.

A: I think it was after the war. I think my sister, or the – my brother once took it. I don't know, really. I never had one til now, that picture.

Q: Okay, okay. So clearly that's **Augusta Levy** after the war, and now we'll see a larger picture of the store.

A: Because they told me –

Q: Okay, hang on a second. So tell me, what is this photograph?

A: That is the business from my grandmother on my father's side, with my father took over 1945 again.

Q: Okay, and then above it would be –

A: Above it we – we lived in that apartment, he took – 1945, we moved from **Schreiersgrün** to **Wolkenstein**, because that is what the original home of my father

–

Q: Was, yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you said the – were their relatives who had a store next door?

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Yeah, next to on the other side, that used to be a fur store, and that was the name by the **Herzfeld**(ph).

Q: **Herzfeld**(ph). And what kind of a store was it?

A: Fur.

Q: Fur.

A: Yeah

Q: Fur, okay, pelts, in other words, **peltzen**, pelts.

A: Yeah, pelts.

Q: Pelts. Okay, so it was a furrier. And what – by the other side, do you mean where the garage is, or –

A: Yeah, that is not a garage, that's a door. And in the back, there was an auto repair shop. All cars were there.

Q: Okay.

A: And that was still after the war, there.

Q: Okay. And so the first store was on the other side?

A: Over the – yeah, yeah, on that side.

Q: Okay, okay. All right, and do you think it is – where it says **Haushaltwaren**, this sign is probably covering up what it said, **Augusta Levy** before?

A: Yeah, probably.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: It's now an – it says now, they told me, my – my sister, I think, told me, it's now on there that they made it like a remembrance, that there used to be Jewish people.

Because they told me it's still there, **Augusta Levy**.

Q: I see. Okay. **[break]** So, we've – earlier we spoke about your life, about the complications that came with being from a mixed marriage. About the extraordinary strength, as well as youth, that your parents had, to endure everything. I'd like to ask you now, is there something you would want your grandchildren to know, and other people's grandchildren to know, about that time that you lived through.

A: I would like them to know that they would never go through their life, what we went through. And sh-should respect people for their beliefs, and what they are.

They **[indecipherable]** everybody for that. Because life is hard enough without all the complication.

Q: Now the – you know, you mentioned through your story, something that I find very unique, which – unique in the degree of loyalty that your parents had one – to one another, when all the pressures were on them, particularly on your mother, to renounce your father. What would you want of the values that they passed onto you, that your children and grandchildren would also know about?

A: First of all, I was very against mixed marriages.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: You were?

A: Oh yeah. It's very hard, not on the two people who got married, it's for the children. They don't belong. Nobody wants to accept responsibility for them. But now we live in a new world, and I hope it never gonna happen again, because everybody's bleeding the same way.

Q: Well, that's true. That's true. Is there something in your story, and in your life, that you would like to share, that you forgot to tell us about?

A: I'm not even think of it, what I can te –

Q: That you think is important for us to know.

A: I know it, but I would – I can't think of it. I don't know. It's – I think my childhood, I – I could think it's – was hard, but still, I like to remember it, because we all had each other, and we worked for the common goal, and we were very loyal to each other, what it's very important. And especially, I give my mother the greatest respect, because she did not have to suffer like anybody, because she had a choice. But she did it, and my father and mother, happy. And she stayed a widow for 42 years. That's how loyal she was to her father, even she was not accepted from the beginning, by her in-laws. And I admire that so much. I admire that loyalty, and I think we have it as such, most of our children, or her children, have all that loyalty.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: So that's something that she modeled for them, and showed for them, and they took as a –

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: – their own value.

A: Yeah, my – my – my one sister is married 60 years. My other one was married in the 40 years, because her husband passed away. Now, my brother is married over 50 years. My other brother just lost his wife, and my other brother married very late, he has a young wife. His children is only as old as my children. But that's my youngest brother, so we all have that value that marriage is very important, and loyalty that we learned from my mother, and my father.

Q: Of your siblings, your brothers and sisters –

A: Yeah.

Q: – did you talk amongst one another after the war, about everything that you had gone through, about your unusual family, that you came from a mixed marriage, and so on?

A: We – we didn't talk as much, but we just say it is so very hard, how you grow up in that, and suddenly you live this way. Because we choose the Jewish way of life. And – but still, we cannot forget that we lived in a Christian world. It's something –

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

so when some holidays come around, you think about it. But, the celebration, it comes right down, we are Jewish. And our kids are je – always Jewish.

Q: And that's for all the siblings?

A: Wait a minute. No, the one doesn't keep [indecipherable] but all of them, yeah.

Q: That's quite a lot, yeah.

A: Yeah, my – my sister here, this one, she couldn't [indecipherable] she – like I told you, she even went to the **mikveh**. My – my sister too, my one sister, she married in **Fervenwald(ph)**, **Liezowski(ph)** married them, and she went to the **mikveh**. What I – because I was in the – in the Russian zone, you know –

Q: Right.

A: – there was not such a thing. But my sister, and – and my older sister, too, what passed away, and which one comes then, and then [indecipherable] and my sister, the one ya – younger sister, she married twice. She had kids, and then she married a da – a doctor, and – and she's a widow a long time, and she's so young, and she's not healthy. Really not. But otherwise, we all doing pretty good.

Q: And do the – does the younger generation – it clearly sounds that, from your family, that is, your husband and yourself, your children are interested in your stories.



**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

A: Oh yes, my – my children know. My – matter of fact, my one grandson took me my tape away, and he lives in **New York**, and he says, Grandma, could I have it? But Grandma never saw it again. So I let him have it. I says, what do I want to – I don't know. So yes, and there are – and like I gave you the paper, the one is like **[indecipherable]** she's very active, and then the one went to **Israel**, and he wanted to stay there, but his father was – they're all very – and – and here, the little one has. They're all very interested in it. They're – we instilled that life, and they're not that religious, but they know they are Jewish, and where they come from. And they'll know from their grandmother, from **Oma**, what was, and **Oma** choosed the life.

Q: So, in that case, I will say thank you, and conclude this interview with **Edith Levy** – no, excuse me – yes, **Edith Levy Weinstein** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015, here at the Holocaust Museum in **Washington, D.C.** Thank you very much for having shared your story with us today.

A: You're welcome. I hope I didn't just babble on.

Q: You hope you didn't just what?

A: Babble just on. Because I talk, and I say whatever.

Q: Oh no, you were wonderful, thank you.

A: I don't know. I don't know.

**Interview with Edith Weinstein**  
**May 18, 2015**

Q: Thank you very much.

A: I am not the –

Q: It was – it was very interesting, and very important for us to know.

A: Life was interesting when I go back.

**Conclusion of Interview**