This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Harry Rosenfeld on July 29, 2015 in Albany, New York.

Thank you very, very much Mr. Rosenfeld for agreeing to meet with us today to share some of your life story with us. And I am going to ask an awful lot of questions about pre-war years. And I'll start at the very beginning with the very simplest ones.

Can you tell me the date of your birth?

I was born on August 12th in 1929 at 7:30 at night. I think it was 23 Motzstrasse in Berlin, Germany. Otherwise, I don't remember a thing.

[LAUGHS] I've never gotten it as precise as that. That's as precise as I've ever had someone tell me.

It was at home. My mother was attended by a doctor and a midwife. And she was also attended by a number of her friends who were there for the occasion. And over my subsequent life, many people came up to me and would remark that they were there to help with my delivery.

How interesting. It just sounds so much like a reporter's answer to a question. So you also answered the second question, which is where were you born. And you were born in Berlin.

I was indeed.

Can you tell me the name of the street again?

Motzstrasse. Hard for me now to say, if you can believe that. M-O-T-Z.

Motzstrasse.

Motzstrasse 23.

And was that what subsequently would be the Eastern or the Western part of the city?

I think it would be the Western part.

OK, do you remember the neighborhood? Like, was it Charlottenburg?

That's where I was born and I lived as an infant and for a number of years. And then after 1936 and the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses, my father's big business-- he had more than one store. He had two stores. He was doing very well. But he had to retrench. And when they retrenched, we moved to Ansbacherstrasse number 56, which I know was Charlottenburg. And I think that Motzstrasse was as well. I think it was all in that neighborhood.

OK, OK. And when you were born, what was your name at birth?

The name that I was given was Hirsch Moritz Rosenfeld. And when my father went to register my name, the person who-- the clerk said, you know, you're saddling your son terribly. So they agreed to make it Hirsch, parentheses, (Harry), unparentheses, Rosenfeld. I've always been known as Harry.

OK. Is Harry-- now, I speak some German. But I never thought that Harry would be a name in German.

Well, it was my name. And I was born in Germany and-- not of German parents, but that was my name.

OK, so apparently it was. Harry was as much a name in Germany as it is in the UK or in the English-speaking world.

You may have to say that. I can't. I don't know how common a name it was in Germany. In my experience, nobody was shocked by it, you know?

OK, so you grew up Harry.

Yes, I did.

Rather than Hirsch.

I grew up Harry. Hirsch never came up again except on the documents that I came to discover many years later.

OK. Tell me a little bit about your family. Did you have siblings?

I had an older sister, 8 and 1/2 years older. She just recently passed away at the age of 94. She was born Rosa, but I knew her as Resi. R-E-S-I. She later in America became Ray because an American uncle decided that Resi was too un-American. She hated the name Ray because it was either a man's name or a woman's name. And in her mature years, she went back to her Hebrew name, Rachel.

Did you have any other brothers and sisters?

No.

She was the one.

Yes. So you were the youngest in the family.

Yes.

OK. Tell me about your mom and your dad. What were their names? Where were they from? And then I'll start asking more questions.

OK, my mother's name was Esther Leah Szerman. S-Z-E-R-M-A-N. And she was born in Warsaw.

That's the Polish spelling.

That is the Polish spelling. And as the spelling of Rosenfeld, instead of an S it's with a Z. My father was born Szlama, S-Z-L-A-M-A, Rozenfeld with a Z, in Warsaw. He was known as Solomon in my time. And then he was known as Sally. When he came to America he adopted the name Sam with a period at the end. And that was his name all his life in America.

Sam with a period at the end. Full stop.

Well, when he signed himself with Sam. But on his tombstone, that's Sam Rosenfeld.

So they were not native Berliners.

They were not.

How did they get to Berlin? How did they come to Berlin?

My father-- Poland was not exactly the land of opportunity for Jews. And my father came from an extremely impoverished family with a lot of kids, which was somewhat typical I have come to learn of many Jewish families. And he left school very early, either at the five or the year nine for sure. He became an apprentice, first to a tailor, then to a

furrier. After his apprenticeship he worked for his older brother, who was by then already established in a well-to-do furrier salon in Warsaw. But his brothers-- well, they didn't mesh all that well together.

And he wanted to go to Germany because Germany was much more a land of opportunity for Jews. And so many of his peers, his friends also were doing the same thing. The story in the family is that when he was about 19 and the Germans were occupying Warsaw during the First World War. And the German occupation of Warsaw meant that the condition of Jews was much better under the German occupation than they had been under the Russian rule.

He tried to smuggle himself into Germany. Put himself in a barrel. The story goes, rolled down a hill. But unfortunately, he was stopped and he was returned to his family. But in 1919 he-- no, in 1917. 1917, while the Germans still occupied Warsaw and during the war when most of the furriers in Germany were in the army. He was recruited by a very high fashion house in Berlin. The name is in my book. It escapes me at the moment. And he was recruited as a furrier.

And he came and he and he worked as a furrier. And he was obviously very good at it. Two years later-- no, next year he came back to Warsaw and married my mother. And she in 1919-- that's where the 1919 comes in-- the paperwork cleared. This is after the war. And she came and she joined him in Germany. By this time, he had gone into business for himself. And he was a very good furrier, a very good craftsmen.

In Germany, he had become certified as a master craftsman. They had a program there. And there is a degree that now hangs in the den of my oldest daughter that certified him as a master craftsman kÃ¼rschner, furrier. They did very well. They lived a very good lifestyle. They went to opera and concerts and the costume parties. And I have the photographs in their album to show that. My memories of them and Berlin-- even in Nazi times were, on occasion, of my father getting dressed in white tie and tails to go out with my mother.

What a far away from an impoverished family of many children.

In so many ways because even when he was living with his parents in this two-room hovel, he would have his suits made to order by fine custom tailor. He was a very meticulous dresser. And he had aspirations. And if you look at his photograph as a young man, he's a strikingly handsome and very well-dressed young man.

And my mother, on the other hand, came from a Bourgeois family. My grandfather was a successful entrepreneur. A real estate and this and that and whatever thing. And how they met I have no idea. Neither did my sister. Because they were very tight-lipped about things like that.

Really?

About everything, as a matter of fact. My father hardly spoke to me about anything. And my mother did tell me stories about her father, some of which were less impressive than others. And the less impressive was that in his real estate ventures he bought a decommissioned Roman Catholic church.

[LAUGHS] Don't tell me he made it into condos.

Wait, wait. And the result was that there was a great outcry that a Jew had bought even a decommissioned Catholic church.

Of course there would be.

So I said, how do I get out of this? And my mother telling me the story wanted to indicate with a smart man he was. I'll tell-- He said so he converted this purchase into a charitable contribution to the general community. And she said how clever he was. And she told me this when I was a very young kid. Maybe five, six or something like that. And even then I wondered so if he was so smart, why did he buy the church in the first place?

[LAUGHS] So you anticipated one of my questions and that is where your parents storytellers?

No.

And you're saying that your father was not.

I think also my sister being eight years older, almost nine years older, knew more, associated more with our relatives in Poland because she would visit on her own frequently. And then she talked to her mother and her mother talked to her even more than she talked to me because I was a little kid, right?

Yeah.

So she knew more.

And did she tell you--

But she doesn't know all that much. For example, she did not know how they met. Because they literally lived in two different worlds. My father left school at the age of nine. My mother went through Gymnasium.

That's a pretty big thing.

That's right.

That's a pretty big thing over there. And I can imagine that had her father known of his beginnings and his circumstances, he might not have been overwhelmed.

Exactly. And all of-- what were dynamics of that whole thing? You see a photograph of my maternal grandmother, and she's an elegant lady. You know, she's tied to the height of fashion of its time. And you see a picture of my paternal grandmother and she's wearing a sheitel. And she's grim-faced in a black dress, right? And she frowns.

So was she really an image of the shtetl, would you say, your paternal grandmother?

Well, they lived in Warsaw.

So it's a pretty big shtetl.

Yeah, and her family name was, I think, Rudel. And her family owned an inn in a suburb of Warsaw called Praga.

Oh, yes. I know of Praga. I think that's the eastern part of Warsaw.

Yeah, that's what I know. But how they got to mingle and marry-- fall in love and marry-- it's a mystery. And you know what?

What?

When I should have-- when I had the wit to ask, I should have asked and I never did because I was so concerned with other matters.

Yeah. It happens. It happens. Just as a side note, the reason I know about Praga is that I've interviewed many people, many Poles who were part of the Polish uprising. Not the ghetto uprising, but the Warsaw uprising in '40. And Praga was the first place that was closest to the Soviet lines because it was on the other side of the river.

Oh, OK.

At least from what I remember them telling me. I haven't been there myself.

So that was the uprising staged by the Poles right just as the Soviets were approaching.

And then they stopped.

Then they stopped.

And then they stopped and they let the Germans take care of them.

Being good Soviets, they stopped.

They stopped.

So let's go back to-- did you ever visit your relatives in Poland?

Yes, I remember at least one visit. And I saw then-- my grandmother was already dead. I saw my grandfather. I remember him standing--

Which side now we're talking?

My father's grandpa. My maternal grandparents had already been-- they died in the '20s.

So you never knew them?

No.

OK.

And I didn't know my paternal grandfather either, but I saw him. And he was an old man with a yarmulke, the one with the raised sides, and a black caftan. And he stood and watched as a Polish cousin and I played in a derelict truck that was in my uncle's junkyard which he owned. And we were having a merry old time. Although he spoke only Polish and I spoke only German. But come to think of it, he must have spoken Yiddish so that there was some familiarity between-- some degree between Yiddish and German because I spoke no Yiddish.

Anyway, I remember that. And I remember visiting my mother's sisters, and so forth and so on. But those memories are very few and very fragile. You know, I don't remember all that much.

Were you a little boy then?

I was.

OK, OK. So you hinted at yet another-- anticipated yet another question, which is what language you spoke at home with your parents.

We spoke German.

And your parents with one another?

Polish when they didn't want me to understand or Russian when they didn't want my sister to understand because she already had picked up some Polish from her visits to Poland.

When you have multilingual-- when you're multilingual kids and families, you get really pressed on how to keep secrets. What language do you go to?

When Annie, who was also born in Germany, and I wanted to keep some information from our daughters while we were

in front of them, we would speak our remembered German, which was not all that good. But they told us that the crucial word was always in English because we didn't remember it in German.

So it didn't quite do the trick here, did it?

OK, so you painted a little bit of a picture of the world that your father had come from and what you yourself saw of it. What about Berlin itself? Your earliest memories at home? Whether this would have been Motzstrasse or Ansbacherstrasse

Well in Motzstrasse I remember being in a highchair sitting next to a window and-- an open window-- and throwing things out. And I saw nothing wrong with that.

Well, it sounds like a lot of fun.

It sounds like what one did if one sat in a highchair.

That's right.

And I remember having a canary pet whose name was Hanzi. But who also died on me. So I've always been reluctant to have pets. That's what I remember. I remember the day that we had to relocate to Ansbacherstrasse So this would be after 1936.

So you would have been seven.

Something like that. My sister took me out, had me for the day while the move was taking place. And then she walked me to our new apartment at Ansbacherstrasse And that one I remember very well, and very detailed way.

Then please tell me because I'd like to get a picture and words of what did it look like? What was both the apartment itself, as well as the environment and the neighborhood?

OK, it wasn't a very high tone part of town. It was-- Ansbacherstrasse runs off the Wittenbergplatz.

Oh, yeah.

On the other side of the Wittenbergplatz is the Kaufhaus des Westens. And then there's Tauentzienstrasse. And all the major streets of Berlin intersect there. If you go down the other side of it, there was a famous hotel and then the Tiergarten.

That's right.

And if you go to the left side of it, there was the Fasanenstrasse Temple, where I wound up going to school and synagogue. And so that was the ambience. This was a toney part of town. I don't remember our particular apartment as being toney. But it was an apartment house. My father had a store. The store was in front on the street level.

What was it called?

Well, his first store was called Pelzhaus Rosenfeld. I don't know what the store in the Ansbacherstrasse was called. I know it had a sign that jutted out perpendicularly from the facade of the building that at least said Furs on it. Whether it said Rosenfeld Furs or not, I don't know.

But there was a big display window and a glass front door. And then there was a salon, which was very elegant because the salons that were abandoned in the downscaling were really elegant establishments. So he brought the crystal chandeliers and the furnishings and the wall-to-wall mirrors and all of that. So it was a very-- in my time, a very toney place.

So in other words, this was the downscaled version.

That's right. And he couldn't bring everything. But he bought to the smaller quarters whatever he could from the more opulent quarters that he had to give up.

So in other words, you have this in your memory. So you must have visited him.

No, we lived there.

So the shop--

--was in front. And then behind the salon was a big workshop where three or four or five people worked. And behind that was our apartment.

Were you on the ground floor?

We were on the ground floor. And then the apartment-- the houses are built around the courtyard.

That's right.

And so our windows looked out on the courtyard, which was a nice courtyard. It wasn't a garbage dump. It was, you know--

So it wasn't one of these where you kept the coal and where the carts would be and things like that.

I don't remember that. I remember it being, you know-- you came through there. You walked in there. There was an entrance. There was a door that had a metal plate inside and was bolted in many ways. Presumably because it was our first door-- and well, maybe because it was the times we were living in too. But I'm speculating.

Yeah. Now, the apartment building itself, would it have been built probably in the 19th century? Was it one of these that had stones that looks almost like a-- not a brownstone because it wasn't brown. But usually they weren't at that time. But I don't want to put words in your mouth. Maybe it was. Can you describe how many stories it would have had?

Well, it wasn't stones. It had had-- when I went to Belgrade as a newspaper man, I saw the facades of the buildings that very much reminded me of Germany, of Berlin. It was concrete or cement or something like that. But they were in-- molded in blocks. So the depressions, one the top of the other. And it was a very nice-looking apartment house. I know a doctor had his practice, if not also his living quarters there. And as I say, it was down the street from--

Of course, that's the center--

But I remember on the block was also a beer garden. I remember that. So I don't know how elegant that makes that. You know, with the outdoor accouterments.

How many stories? I mean, it doesn't have to be precise. But was it something that had like five stories? Or seven? Or four?

I don't know. I know from what my sister said that there were other stores on the block.

No, not stores. Stories to the building.

Oh, stories to the building. It was five or six stories I would think, at least.

OK. Well, I mean what you're describing is what became the heart of West Berlin, the center of West Berlin later with

KaDeWe and Wittenbergplatz and so on. And in the United Berlin before the war, it was one of the city centers. It wasn't "the" city center because there was the parts, Unter den Linden that was in the East, that became the East with all of that. But pretty central. I mean, Charlottenburg was pretty central as a neighborhood and pretty upscale.

Well, I remember my father taking me to the Tiergarten Zoo and it wasn't a big deal. It was that a couple of blocks away.

That's a cool place to grow up, actually.

Yeah, not bad.

Yeah. So let's go on this thread a little bit. Talk to me about your father's business. As much as you knew then, and then maybe what you found out later you know as you grew up. What happened? How did his business first develop in the 1920s? And then what happened after '33?

OK, it developed that after he left this high-fashion house, he went into business for himself. He first opened up one store. And it flourished so well that he opened up a second store. And my mother was involved with helping him as a sales lady.

Then there was a depression. And he was very severely impacted by that. And somewhere along the line he went bankrupt. But he reconstituted himself very slowly with the help of a woman by the name of Eisenberg, whose husband moved in musical circles in Berlin. And she had many friends in the upper-scale Berlin society. And she would take a bundle of furs that my father supplied to a friend and said my friend, Herr Rosenfeld, is a great furrier, and this and that.

And from that one bundle at a time, he rebuilt the business. Now whether that was before he moved on Ansbacherstrasse or after, I can't say for sure. I suspect it was before.

He recuperated. He paid all his bills. He never went into formal bankruptcy. He paid everybody what he owed them. And by the time they moved to Ansbacherstrasse it was still, as I say, an elegant salon. A smaller one, but it still employed people.

And my parents lived a bourgeois life. They had elegant furniture made out of mahogany and ebony. I remember that their bedroom furniture and their living room was extremely elegant. And we had a dining room.

Yes, describe the apartment to me. Describe its size.

It had to be big because all these things had to be accommodated. I had a room. My sister had a room. I think, maybe we slept-- I don't remember that. The maid had a room.

And your parents had a room.

My parents had a room. There was a kitchen. A big kitchen that with-- you cooked with coal briquettes. In fact, that's how you warmed the rooms as well. And they would deposit it in there. And then concentric rings in diminished sizes, depending on what you were cooking. If you're cooking a small pot, you took out one of the rings and let the bottom of the pot be completely healed by the fire created by the coals. And if you had a bigger pot, you took out two rings, and so forth.

Oh my goodness.

And heat was provided. There were--

So did you have these coal ovens? The kinds that had tile on them?

Yes, that's what I was just getting to. They were in the corner. And they went up to the ceiling, I remember. Or if they

didn't reach the ceiling, they came close. And they were beautifully tiled. And you shoved in these coals. And you got your heat from it. What else can I remember?

Were the ceilings high?

Yes, my memory was that they were high. I also remember, there must have been some space there because in the later years, or these years, people would come to our house that we didn't know. They were in transit. They would come and spend the night, maybe two. And then go on. Go on their way. We didn't know who they were. We didn't know where they went. We had no-- I certainly had no intercourse with them. But it was like the Underground Railroad in a very modernized way.

So this was people from Germany? Or people from other places? Oh, you didn't know. You didn't know. OK, and this was in your apartment itself rather than in the building.

It was in the apartment. They stayed. I remember there was a couch there where they slept. And then, like, in the morning they were gone.

Yeah, yeah. So this is-- again, there was something that you mentioned that I wanted to find out more about. The clientele who would come to the store. You mentioned a Mrs. Eisenberg. Do you know much about who became your father's clients?

No, I really don't. But I do remember one incident vividly. And that was my father had been deported to Poland. We'll get to that later, I guess.

Yes.

And my mother was running the store. And the store was not open in the front. After Kristallnacht, it never opened again. But customers, loyal customers, Germans, Gentile Germans came in the back door. It was hazardous for them to some degree to even patronize a Jew.

But she came. And she had the workers there to do the things. And she did good business. And to the extent that my sister told me that she would buy bundles of furs from other Jewish furriers who were having problem. And she was not having those problems. She was selling them.

What do I remember? I remember accompanying my mother on a delivery. I think it was a delivery to a woman. And I went with her. And she brought the garment, the fur coat. And I guess there was a payment involved. And what I remember so vividly is the woman met her in a negligee. And I got to tell you, it was a flimsy negligee. And I saw things for the first time I had never seen.

But I was a well-brought up kid and I averted my eyes. Jerk that I was. And that woman was said to be the mistress of a very high German general.

Oh my goodness.

So I can't tell you who my parents' clientele was. I promise you, after and in the 30s, it was no longer the Jews. It doesn't make sense to me that it would be Jews. They were doing other things with their money.

Yes.

It would have to be Germans.

So can I make the inference that while life was normal, most of the clientele would have been well-to-do Jews.

I can't-- I can't help you.

You don't know, OK. I wouldn't be surprised.

OK. OK. But certainly after things got difficult.

Well, I'm applying deductive logic here.

I understand.

And it takes you only so far, right?

Right, right, right. Let's turn to something a little bit closer to home. Your parents' personalities. Tell me a little bit about what kind of people they were. You mentioned your father's dapper looks and his attention to how he dressed and details of this kind. It kind of suggests that he had an artistic bent, visually.

Yes, he would design coats, for example. He did that, I know. He was a man of few words. He was a very hard worker. He was a very skilled worker. He's a very upright man. Always very well-dressed.

Was he a modest person? Or was he a more flamboyant person?

Oh, no. He was not flamboyant. He was a gentleman. And my parents would go to take the waters. We have endless photographs of them in Marienbad and Karlsbad and whatnot. You know, walking with the glass in hand or with a cane with the knickers. And they led a good life.

And when Hitler came-- early on, my father wanted to leave Germany for America. His sister was there. Several of his brothers were here. And he wanted to go. My mother did not want to leave because their lives in Berlin was so good. But constantly, people were coming from Poland-- relatives, friends-- staying with us for a period of time, or not with us, but were in Berlin, and then went on to America.

And my father wanted to join them but my mother talked him out of it. Instead, they bought a plot of land outside of Berlin in which they wanted to build a summer home. That shows you the degree of prosperity that they enjoyed.

Do you know what part of--

No.

You don't know where this would have been?

It was not in the city. It was outside the city. Then Hitler became Chancellor, and that was that. And then after he became chancellor, my father applied-- my parents applied to the United States embassy to immigrate. That must have been in 1934. And it took till 1939 for us to get the quota number.

That's five years. My goodness.

And so for five years, they knew they wanted to leave.

To leave, OK. You say he was a man of few words, but did you feel close to him? Was he a-- was being of few words, did that mean that you felt a warmth but it wasn't always expressed verbally? Or was he a distant person?

He's more a distant person. I felt respect for him and the kind of warmth that a child should feel for a parent. But we didn't have a terribly personal relationship. We didn't play games together. I remember him taking me to the circus once. But I don't remember an ongoing series of encounters of that kind.

Now listen, these were also hard times. But I also remember as a family, once we could no longer patronize movies and

whatnot, the Jewish community set up-- God bless the Jewish community-- an entertainment venue where everybody was a Jew. If it was a symphony or a play or whatnot, the actors, everybody was Jewish and the audience was Jewish.

And no one was forbidden from that?

No, far from it. The Germans didn't discourage-- I think they encouraged it because I remember doing a one-time there, an SS man in his black uniform with the small dagger that they carry on their hip, walking through very nicely, chatting people up and whatnot. And I speculated that it was Adolf Eichmann. But it's a pure speculation, you know? I don't know that it was Eichmann. But there was somebody there.

This was not done surreptitiously. This was done openly. Just as they had the Jewish community when I was kicked out of the public schools, which was late in 1937. And the reason it was late for me-- other Jews had already been kicked out-- was because I was a Pole. And the restrictive laws apparently didn't fall as severely on foreign Jews as they did on German Jews.

So even though you were born in Germany in Motzstrasse, you did not have German citizenship. You know that Polish citizenships.

Right. Well, first of all, you have to understand, as I have come to understand, Germany, even during the Weimar Republic, was very niggardly with how it gave out the citizenship to other people. There's a very strong tradition, as you well know, in Germany that citizenship derives from blood and land, you know. You were born a German and you were born in Germany and that's what makes you German.

Or you're born German in Romania and you can get German citizenship because it's the blood connection.

Oh, I see you know more about it than I do. But I don't know whether they were discouraged from getting German citizenship or they never were interested in getting German citizenship. I know their friends who also came from Poland and settled in Berlin. To my understanding, we're all Polish citizens, remain Polish citizens, and came to America as Polish citizens.

So when you applied-- when your parents applied to the US embassy, it was probably under a Polish quota.

That's exactly right.

OK. Are there certain values that you think your father passed down to you?

Many.

What would they be?

Well, I would think is-- my father took care of business. He didn't put things off. He did it. He got it done. He did his work. He worked hard. He took care of his clothes. He took care of his family. I learned a heck of a lot from him. Not because he sat me down and said Harry, you have to do XYZ. But because of the example that he constituted in his life and the way he lived it.

That's quite a tribute. That's quite a tribute. And what about your mom? Tell me about her.

My mom had a different personality. And she was outgoing and very determined. Very short. She stood under five feet, but she always claimed five feet. And she was a person of great strength and great willpower and fearless. And I remember vividly Kristallnacht.

Tell me about that.

We were coming back from the Polish embassy where we had sought safety having been alerted by a friend what was

coming down. We might get to that later. And we were on the way home. We had been assured by the Polish authorities that it was now safe to return to our homes. So we did. And on the way home, we were walking the streets. And the streets were littered every so often by the destroyed Jewish businesses and homes. And we had a notion of what had gone on during the hours that we were in asylum on the embassy grounds.

And what I remember is my mother saying, I hope when we got home everything is smashed to pieces. I hope nothing is together anymore. At the time, I thought there was a very strange thing for her to say. But I as a grown-up, I've come to understand that what she was saying that all her Bourgeois attachments to the Bourgeois values had disappeared. And we were living in a different world. As a matter of fact, when we got home, neither our store nor our apartment had been touched. And that's a story by itself.

But that was her attitude. She stood up to fate, looked it straight in its face, and moved on. Very gutsy lady.

Incredible example, incredible model.

Can we cut for a second?

Were you close to your sister?

Very, very close. My sister says and has said to her dying day that I was her first baby.

Aw.

She is the mother of four. Mother of four? Mother of three. Mother of four! My wife had to correct me. She was the grandmother of 11. And the great-grandmother of either 12 or 13.

Wow.

But I was always very close to her. And we were kindred spirits. And when she married soon after I became bar mitzvah, it changed my life enormously because my sister went off, left the house, left the family just to go off on her own. And it was something that I was happy for her, I like my and my brother-in-law, but at her wedding I cried.

Because it was a loss.

It was a change. I recognized the change forever in our lives.

Did she kind of shepherd you through your early years? You know, when you said earlier she would tell you things about your family's past because she had found them out from your mom. And she was older and she had been to Poland more.

Well, I don't know. She certainly told me when I was grown-up because we talked about it. And what she did in Germany, I can only tell you what she said. She would take me to school and pick me up from school. After school she would take me to a particular restaurant where we would get a slice of a particular cake. None of which I remember.

She's looked at me here and she looked at me there and she raised me. And my mother was busy in the store. And she tended to me. And I have nothing to contradict that in my memory bank. I don't remember any of it, but I have nothing to contradict that.

Let's go to school. And do you have any early memories of being in school?

Yes. I remember being in the Volksschule. I remember going to school there.

Was that walking distance from home?

Yes. I don't remember being particularly hassled at all. If I was it-- you know, anti-Semitism in Germany was part of the air. I mean, it was the air I breathe. I was born in '29. By the time I knew vaguely what was going on, it was already Nazi times, you know?

That's right.

And so this was part of the atmosphere. Part of the water in the aquarium. And so I don't know what I overlooked because I had already been programmed to overlook it, and what I endured. But I got to say, I didn't feel scarred by it in any way. Whatever came my way, I was able to adjust to. The only difference that I remember in the Volksschule was when it came to religious instruction, which they gave, I was excused. And as far as I know, I was the only Jewish kid in the class.

Really?

Yeah, as far as. Anyway, they didn't suffer me to be imbued with Christianity. And I went off by myself. We went to school 5 and 1/2 days, half day on Saturday. We began our career writing on a tablet.

Like a little piece of chalkboard?

Not a chalkboard. A tablet. I just can't call it to mind now. It was attached to the carrying case in which we carried our books and papers. And it dangled and hit our backside. And you wrote on it and then you wiped it clean. It'll come to me. You're too young to know what it was. But kids grew up that way. And I was a-- I have my zeugnisse here.

Your report cards.

Yes. And in the Volksschule, they weren't bad. They were pretty good. I was going up. In 1937, I was kicked out.

Do you remember that?

Yeah. Well, I remember that all of a sudden I was going to Fasanenstrasse Temple. Where in the annex to the temple the Jewish community had set up a school. One of many throughout Berlin, I believe. And I continued there. Whereupon my grades began to degrade.

Why would that be?

Well, it's all in the record. It would be from 1937 on--

No, my question is why.

--until 1939.

Why? Why would your grades go down? Do you know?

I don't know. I mean I can only reconstruct it and I don't know. These were upsetting times. I had a very attentive teacher. I remember her well-- Frau Hirsch. At least for some time. I don't remember that I had her all the time.

She was in Fasanenstrasse, in that one?

Yes. But the teacher's names are on the zeugnisse.

Do you remember any incident at all that was very personal, that crystallized for you that this was becoming a more dangerous place to be? Or that frightened you in any way that you had to go home and have it explained?

There were many incidents. On our block, the Nazi party opened up in an empty storefront, a playroom. And when they

opened it up, I went with the guys that I was hanging out with into the playroom. There was a nice young lady there, a young woman there, who spotted me and explained to me that I couldn't be there. So I left.

But based on my experience in the Volksschule, that came a religious time, I would be excused. I thought it was something like that. So next time I also came again when the same young lady explained to me that, no, I simply could never come here again. That's a specific instance. I mean, the language used by your friends and whatnot and--

Can you give me a few examples?

Nothing that I remember. I'll tell you, I don't know how this fits in. I and another friend had a third friend who was older, who was a teenager.

These are Germans? Or German Jews?

These were German Jews as far as I know. And the older kid had a collection of pornography. And he showed it to us. Only it didn't mean anything, you know? I wasn't even curious about it. And then there came a time when that teenager and his mother-- I remember the mother. I don't remember if the father was in the picture.

We were in their house. And they were rapidly getting things together and they were going to flee. The Gestapo was coming for them. And the mother gave each of us 50 pfennigs-- yeah, 50 pfennigs as a token. That I remember, OK? They left their apartment. As far we know, they never came back. Where they went, I have no idea. That was one thing.

I was always aware, even as a small child playing with Gentile kids that I was Jewish and they knew I was Jewish. And I had a certain relationship with them.

Did you have friends amongst Gentile kids?

Yes. My "best friend" in the early days was a kid named Hansen who lived across the street. My impression was that the parents were of Polish-Catholic descent. But I was in his house many times. Another family lived in our apartment house. The father was a black American musician. The mother was a white German. And the kids were beautiful kids of mixed blood.

I remember there was a daughter and there was a son. The son was older-- very handsome, very tall. He was in our circle too. They were in our circle. I remember once we were playing doctor in the house. At somebody's house with the janitor's two daughters and whatnot. And we were caught at it by somebody's mother. And there was a great outcry, and whatnot.

And one day after that I'm playing with one of the other kids who was involved in that incident, and the mother says something like JÃ¼disches schwein [GERMAN].

Which means Jewish--

Filthiness.

Yes.

Meaning that I was the--

Instigator.

Instigator, right. Well, that gave me a clue, right? Things like that. But I really have to dredge my memory to come up with it.

I appreciate you doing it because I know it's not easy. Because sometimes these are just isolated incidents that--

Yes, exactly.

How are they connected and how does one explain them. But you see, when one gets an example, you get more of a picture. Well, you know that that--

It was a very mixed bag. Our apartment was near, there must have been a barracks near us because they were frequent, these small parades. There were parades of soldiers, but they weren't terribly many of them. But they usually had some sort of musical accompaniment-- a drum, a fife, or whatnot. And people would gather to watch them as they went by.

One day I'm gathered there, and a former-- a guy that worked for my father was there with his lady friend. He was then in the army. And this had to be fairly late. And he was in uniform. And he spotted me and he introduced me to his girlfriend. And we had a very nice chat. But here was a different experience, right?

I can remember one time Adolph Hitler was going to pass in a motorcade and I went with my friends. And we couldn't see. People were all stacked there. So I climbed the tree.

To be able to see him?

Yes, and I saw him. He went by.

Open motorcade?

Open car. But he went by very fast. It must have been in London. During the Olympics, my friends and I, in the '36 Olympics--

Those were famous.

We went around collecting of the autographs of everybody we thought was a foreign visitor.

How fun.

Yeah. I don't know why we did that. We did that. We also made a catalog of auto licenses. Why we did that, I have no bloody idea. But we did that. That was one of our pastimes.

Did you go to the Olympics itself?

I did not, no.

So how did you collect these autographs?

Well, we were living in the heart of town.

So people would stay at hotels and you could--

They were walking on the street. We wouldn't go into hotels. We'd see them on the Wittenbergplatz or on the street. I remember the great Zeppelins passing over the rooftops of Berlin and running down the street following them, my friends and I, for blocks. I mean, as long as we could keep up with them.

Were your parents religious people?

No. My father came from a very observant home, but he was not. But he went on the high holy days and so forth.

Did he take you with him?

Yes.

OK. And did you keep Sabbath then?

Not that I remember. I remember our seders. I remember other times when my father would put on a tallis and his homburg and read in Hebrew. And my sister and I would giggle. But only my mother-- it was a small gathering. I don't know what the occasion was. And he was very stern when we giggled.

I remember an occasion-- I like to have a-- I love the Christmas tree. And so when we had a maid-- and we had a maid right up to the end, a Gentile who had to be in her middle 40s because otherwise she couldn't work for Jews. And so we got a tree for her, right?

So she could have a tree.

Right, so I could have it. But one year what you did in Germany for Saint Nicholas to come and reward you was to shine your shoes. And according to the quality of the shine, Saint Nicholas would reciprocate.

So my parents got very upset by this. And they dragooned me into a Hanukkah party at the Schneiderman's-- friends who in America became the Millers. And they had two kids, Edith and Benjamin, Benji. And they lived in Berlin. And there was a Hanukkah party. And there's a picture of me at the party in short pants, long hair. And Edith was a tall girl, tall woman. And so in comes a guy with a sack with toys in it with a Santa hat. You know, with the things like that. But it's supposed to be a Hanukkah, right? So that's how Jews coped.

My favorite record growing up of the record collection was one in Yiddish that I played over and over again. And its title and opening words were [SPEAKING GERMAN]. That was my theme song.

Which is I don't want to go to the Cheder.

That was my theme song. That's the way I regarded school.

I want to ask about a few material things. Did your parents have a car?

No.

OK. Did they have a radio?

Did they have a radio? I think so, but I'm not sure.

OK. As events were happening-- I mean this is actually-- I mean, if you're four years old when Hitler comes to power in '33, then all the conscious years that a kid would remember would have been times when there was no other newspaper but those of the National Socialists. So did your father read the press at all? Did the newspapers ever come to your home?

Not that I'm aware of.

OK. Did you get outside news? Did you get information about the wider world? And through what means would it have come to your home?

I have no idea. My parents traveled a lot. I went with my mother many times to England and France. Many times-- a couple of times. England and France. At least once to Warsaw. I was a sickly child and so I was sent to all sorts of camps and whatnot in the Harz Mountains. And none of that really helped me a lot.

Was it lungs or something? What was it that she was trying to strengthen?

I was sickly. I was a skinny little kid. They were worried about me I guess. And then somewhere along the line my parents were Jewish country club-- that's the only way I can describe-- it in Berlin. You know, Wannsee, that neighborhood.

And they were sitting-- it wasn't my parents. It was my mother. And it wasn't my sister. I don't know if my father was there or not. But with friends or whatnot, and they were enjoying the Sunday. And I was down at the dock playing near where the yachts were moored and the boats were moored. And I didn't know how to swim. And I got caught up in a ball game. And I lost my footing. And I fell into the--

Into the lake?

Water. Into the lake. And I couldn't swim. And I struggled. And I was going up and down, up and down. And when I was about to go down for absolutely the last time, somebody yanked me out. And this man saved my life. And he came to my father's place of business some time later. He had medical bills as a result of that. That my parents, of course, gratefully paid.

And he came to the house and I thanked them. I remember dutifully shaking his hand and clicking my heels. That's what you did as a young German kid. And my sister then tells the story that after that time my mother would disappear on afternoons taking with a wrapped package about this long, narrow. And the analysis was that she took it to a church to light candles.

Oh my.

It's a story. I don't know. But you know, there was a certain fragility to life in general, which I probably didn't understand. To life specifically-- I nearly drowned. But I got to say, with all the harassments and whatnot and sometimes vicious language and shovings and pushings-- killing was never on my mind.

I tell you when that changed. My friend Gustav, which I hope we talk about sometime, lived with his father. Boarded with his family in the home of a Jewish family in Berlin.

Gustav was a friend?

Gustav Loewenstein. And he and I were friends.

He was Jewish.

Yes. And he resided in a Jewish family. And this time we were playing in his house. And the woman of the house told us to hush up because the patriarch of the house was being returned from a concentration camp.

Was that the first time you heard the word?

I don't think so. We knew about concentration camp. And Gustav and I stood-- in Germany, there were very long hallways because the apartments are very large. And we stood at one end of the hallway, and the other end was the front door. And we stood and we saw as this old man bent over very pale very white, carried by two men, probably relatives, were lifting up to carry him.

And we saw that. And he died within a couple of weeks. And at that time, the Germans were releasing Jews from concentration camps. One, either because they were dying. Or two, because they had the means to immigrate. They wanted to get rid of Jews. So that must have showed me something, right? Awareness.

I remember walking with my sister and her friends in the countryside. And we're passing a barracks. And there are a lot of young men-- either teenagers or very young men. And they're all hanging out the windows whistling at the girls and whatnot. And I'm very upset. I'm very scared and I want to get out of there. And the girls are having a perfectly good

time. That I remember. So I was scared in a lot of situations in Germany as a kid.

News. I go back to news and newspapers and the propaganda. I mean, this sounds so stupid to say it. But did it touch you? If you didn't have-- if you don't remember radio broadcasts and you didn't read newspapers, did somebody open up the paper and then read an article? How did you know what was written in the press? Or did you know?

I don't have any memory of my being exposed to any of that. I knew about the anti-Semitism. I knew about the stereotyping. You absorbed the stereotyping. I absorbed stereotyping and I've read that other people have done the same. So we knew we were inferior, right? We had to show that we weren't inferior. But we knew that in our context, we were inferior. And we didn't have rights. And we didn't have this and we didn't have that.

But frankly, I had a loving family. Whatever happened to me outside-- I saw the billboards. I saw the placards. When the Anschluss was going on, the maid said to me-- go over to Sudetenland, when I was being ill-behaved, she said, oh, you're just like a little Chechen.

A Czech.

Czech. So this just did not allude me. I understood what was being said and why it was being said. I understood that she was full of it, you know? I understood what was happening in Czechoslovakia. How I understood-- I don't remember reading newspapers. I don't remember listening to radio. But it certainly was all over Berlin. It was no mystery.

That's good.

So in all of this, you mentioned earlier that your dad had been deported.

Yes.

Now, that was-- I mean, what happened there?

OK. This is October 28, I think is the exact date.

Of which year?

Of 1938.

OK, so it's a month before Kristallnacht. Less than a month before Kristallnacht. And it's in the middle of the night. And there's a rap on our door. And there are two plainclothes Gestapo people. And they came to arrest my father. And they were very polite. They were not obnoxious in any way. But they said they couldn't tell what it was about.

I watched as my father dressed. He was putting on long underwear. Maybe he wore long underwear every day in October. And he was talking to my mother. And I was sitting there in my pajamas. And what could it be? Could it be a disgruntled customer? Could it be this person? Could it be that person?

They didn't know because, you know, a Jew being arrested in Germany at that time was not a big thing. It was happening all the time. So they took him away and they said they were going to the police station. And my sister and I fell into each other's arms and we were just hysterical with fear.

And then my mother said to my sister as she had many times before, many times after-- go to the police station and see what you can find out. She was then, what? 16, 17?

And she followed them there. And she couldn't find my father. And she went to a policeman and asked him what was going on. And he said he couldn't tell her what was happening. But he said go home and pack a valise for your father with a change of clothes.

So she went home. They packed a change of clothes. They put in at the last minute pair of slippers that my father liked. And there was a friend there too. And they said put in a loaf of bread. And they had a big loaf of rye bread or something. and they put it in also.

And Resi ran back to the police station, which obviously couldn't have been that far. And just as she got there she saw my father in the back of an open truck with a lot of men that she didn't recognize. But as the truck was moving, she ran alongside and handed him the valise.

For three days we had no idea what had happened to him. On the third day, we got a telephone call. It was my father. He was calling from Warsaw. He was in my mother's older sister's apartment and he was safe. And he had been very lucky.

Let's cut. I'm so sorry.

Trains. That the Poles are permitted to cross their frontier. These trains were full of Polish Jews. Citizens of Poland. When the Germans were deporting, they were having some sort of flap I later learned about some visa things.

The many trainloads of Jews afterwards that then the Poles did not accept but just passed through their frontier of their own citizens. And they were discharged into the no man's land, the borderlands on Poland, Germany line. And they suffered grievously both from the climate and from hostile German and Polish soldiery.

Let's cut this. I'm sorry.

So the trains that were permitted through, they didn't have to stop in this no man's land.

No. But my father afterwards told me when he came back to us what he remembered from that train ride.

What did he remember?

And what I remember from and he told me, which is maybe not the same thing. He remembered that he was looking for his slippers. He wanted to change out of-- they were crammed into these cars. And it was really terrible. And he looked up. He was down-- either on the floor or squished down. And he looked up and the belt of the German soldier or SS man, on the buckle was emblazoned the motto, Gott mit uns. With a swastika.

God is with us.

Right. And my father's-- he had negligent views of religion to begin with. But when he saw that, that's sort of hammered it in. And he thought his shoes were hurting him, so he wanted to change it to slippers. So he opened up the suit-- the little valise that Resi had brought to him. And he saw the bread. And with that bread for the three days of the journey, he fed himself and a number of people around him on the train ride. Otherwise, they got no food.

Unbelievable.

What's my train of thought here?

What happened with your dad? How he got to Warsaw?

Then he got there. He stayed there and he remained there until we got our quota number in Berlin. At which point, the German authorities authorized him to return to Berlin to accompany us out to the United States. Because they wanted to get rid of Jews.

So he was part of the quota number? It wasn't--

When we, the family, received the quota number. And he was a part. He was returned. When the Germans saw that we were getting the paperwork done, they permitted him to return. He had to fill out God knows what formulas about

before they could give return and before they could leave Germany. And I have some of those papers. They showed that he was a decent citizen. That he had no criminal record. That he paid his taxes. Everything like that.

He came back. By the time he came back, we had sold the store. My mother had closed the store. She had sold the furniture. I remember a young German couple coming in. A young couple nicely dressed, looking at the furniture. They would never in a million years have been able to afford that furniture under normal circumstances. They got it for a song.

But my parents also were not foolish people. During the years between '34 and '39, when they traveled abroad, my mother my sister would take with them extra fur garments. These garments would be sold. And the money deposited in an English bank. We had relatives in England. So that when we came to America, my father had more savings than his American siblings had by far. And was able to go to business for himself. He wasn't wealthy.

No, but he had--

He had thousands of dollars that my relatives did not have, having lived through the Depression.

Can you tell me I want to make sure I got the chronology right he is arrested in October '38. Kristallnacht happens in November. And you get your permission to leave a year later.

In March.

In March of '39.

And we leave in April.

OK, so all of this takes place within half a year.

Right.

OK. Was there something you wanted to say that I interrupted you from saying?

We're not doing this chronologically because I'm jumping ahead and back.

It's OK. It's OK if we don't do it chronologically, as long as at some point we can [? anchor ?] a particular incident with a certain time frame. That's OK.

I remember my sister remembers that when the store was closed-- we took rooms, we rented rooms in an apartment building directly opposite our store. So we looked down on it. And we could see that after we left the premises, the people from the neighborhood just swarmed in the pick it over. And there was nothing left to pick over. She said old hangers and things like that. So if they tell you about German people knew who didn't know-- they knew.

The landlady where we resided--

The original address on Ansbacherstrasse?

No, after we moved out of 56 Ansbacher. Went across the street and rented the rooms where my father came back to the rented rooms. He never came back to the apartment. He was very depressed. I remember him sitting by the window looking silent. Utterly solemn.

And the woman was a widow and she had been married to a Jewish man. And they had a son who was in his 20s. I think he was a musician. And she implored my parents that she should let her son marry my sister so that he could accompany us to the United States. Well, that was an impossible situation because you could never get the paperwork done.

I should also say-- that reminds me, that when my father was deported, my mother-- we were constantly going to the consulate, to the embassy to see where our paperwork stood. And all Jews were there. There were always long lines there. And my sister was sent many times. She spoke English.

She had learned English in her Gymnasium. I think there was Victoria-something. Victoria Augusta Gymnasium which she had been forced to leave. And she spoke English. She spoke French enough to handle herself.

She was sent by my parents. Again, my mother, when we ship goods out of-- before we closed our apartment, we shipped huge duffel bags of our possessions out of there.

To where?

And because you couldn't take money, my mother had feather beds made and things like that. She even had a bathrobe made for me. A custom-made bathrobe. I've never had one since. And all of that was shipped with crystal and [? dresden ?] and whatnot. And my sister was deputized with one her Gentile girlfriends to go to a railroad station to get it shipped out. And she had to stare down the Gestapo guys that were giving her a hard time-- not my mother, not my father, my sister.

Where did they ship it to?

The railroad station.

No, where did they ship it to?

The US of A.

To whose address?

To our arrival with our uncle's address.

OK. OK, so they had someplace to ship it to.

Oh, yes, yes, yes. We had relatives here.

Did it arrive?

Yes, everything arrived.

OK.

So I get ahead of myself.

That's OK.

When my mother unpacked these things, she told me, and out come these crystal things or whatnot. Well, our American relatives, their eyes were this big. And she gave a lot of this stuff away because they had none of this stuff. We came from a much more opulent lifestyle than they enjoyed in America, much more.

And to back up one-- Resi was, again, the one that does the heavy lifting. I've lost my train of thought.

You were talking about staring down at the apartment below-- no, the storefront. And saw the neighbors pick over the stuff.

And they saw they sold the goods. They sold that.

Now, one question that I had. I'm sorry, I want to stay on this just for a second to make sure I'm clear on it. The storefront and the workshop and the apartment in back-- did you own them? Or were you renting them? Were your family renting them from--

I don't know. I think we owned them, but I don't know.

OK, OK.

I think at those times, you owned apartments.

OK. But you had to leave your apartment as well as give up the business. Is this the thing?

Yes.

Was the business nationalized? Or was it sold? Or was it simply confiscated?

I don't think it was sold. It was just abandoned. It was shut down.

OK, and is that-- when did the business-- you mentioned German customers coming in through the back door. That was after Kristallnacht up to the time that the store was closed, up to the time that we left the premises.

OK, so that would have been within that six months.

Right.

That's when they would-- so you still operated because the store hadn't been vandalized during Kristallnacht.

And the reason-- well, I've always wondered why.

Yeah, my next question-- why?

We were the only store in the neighborhood that wasn't. And my sister says the neighbors liked us. I think it was a couple-- yes, that could be true. Because it was the first store, it had a shot at it came down at the end of the night, at the end of the evening right, right? From top to bottom, totally shielded.

Now, Jewish stores in Germany at that time had to have the proprietor's name in a certain size lettering in white in front so every German could see it. That was a Jewish store and they shouldn't patronize it. OK, so with the shutter down, you couldn't see from the outside that it was a Jewish store. You couldn't see that it had an apartment from the outside in back of it.

That may have been a reason. When I came to read about it afterwards, the instructions Goebbels gave was to leave foreign Jews alone. Not to bother them. As a matter of fact, the first Jew killed of the 100 or so that were killed that night was a Polish Jew. But the instructions were not to bother them. That could have been. But who knows why it wasn't done. It wasn't done.

But it was-- it could have been a variety of educated guesses. One or a mixture of those. The one that you mentioned also has a logic to it. You know, the name is covered. The shutters usually of that type are quite strong.

Yes, they are. And they are total. They go literally from the top to the bottom, and they're locked in. You can't just raise them up.

So after Kristallnacht, the store is intact. Did you ever raise the shutters again?

Never.

And the inside of the store stayed as it was, shuttered, and people would come in through the back door to then buy furs or do business or whatever.

Right, right.

All right. And when you left, why did you have to leave your apartment?

We were leaving.

Because you were leaving to the United States.

Yes.

But why wouldn't you stay in your own apartment? Why would you even have to rent rooms across the street, is my question.

I don't know.

OK.

Maybe they sold it.

Maybe. I don't know. If it was a co-op, which was possible, even likely, then they had sold it.

OK. And at some point when you left, you must have raised the shutters.

No.

So how did--

We never raised the shutters.

So how did you see from the other street side as you were looking down?

We saw the shuttered store, and we saw people running in--

In the back.

In the back-- well, I don't know. You couldn't see in the back either because it was in the courtyard. The answer is I don't know.

OK. But you did see them coming out with stuff.

I did not personally see. I'm taking what my sister said happened.

OK, OK. But they came out with stuff.

Well, there wasn't stuff worth taking out.

OK.

But they were looting and trying to--

No, they were trying to scavenge. I wouldn't say loot.

Whatever was left there.

Whatever was left, they were taking.

OK. All right, why don't we break now. No. OK, fine. So we roll it?

OK, so before the break we were talking about that final half year that was so packed with so many frightening developments. And tell me then, what did your father look like when he came back from Poland?

I don't remember him physically being that much different, if at all. But I remember his moodiness. His sitting quietly, looking out the window. And not doing much of anything else.

And your mother, was she the one who was holding it together?

Yeah, but I don't have any specific recollection of her doing one thing or the other. I don't think that time period lasted very long. It must have been, at most, days or a couple of weeks. It wasn't a long time before we sailed.

But I wanted to say that I think it was before my father came back from Germany, or shortly after he came back to Germany or after, we went to the American embassy to receive our papers. I remember we were very upset because I had had a tooth pulled or a toothache and my cheek was blown up. And we were very concerned that that would cause an impediment. It didn't, as a matter of fact. But I also have a vivid memory of that visit when we finally did receive our papers.

Tell me about that.

And that was that the American official, who must have must have been a consular official of some kind. A young man who was sitting at his desk and the people would come in one after the other. A long line of people waiting for him. His feet were on the desk. He was sitting back like this. And during the whole interview, his feet were on the desk in a very contemptuous posture under any circumstance. But especially at that time with these terribly frightened people.

Everything went smooth. I should also say that I want I want to tell the whole truth. Earlier when my father was first taken, my mother went to the American authorities and said, well, maybe she and my sister and myself should go to Warsaw and wait for the paperwork to clear there.

And a different consular official said to her-- or diplomatic person-- don't do that. It's just going to screw up the works. That's a bureaucratic thing, and just don't do that. That is just too dangerous. And my mother listened. And we remained in Germany. And I can say with confidence, that saved our lives.

So you have on the one hand an American official who was compassionate and thoughtful and helpful, and another one who was arrogant and contemptuous to the point of offensiveness. The last day-- I know this from the paperwork-- that we were in Germany was the 16th of April. We left that morning-- I think it was morning-- from the Port of Hamburg. I think we had arrived there the night before.

By train?

By train. I think we spent it at a hotel. We must have. And I remember eating our last meal in Germany. It was delicatessen, which my father and mother had purchased. And we're sitting on this park bench that adjoined the departure point of this boat that would take us to England. And we had the sandwiches. And we then went on board.

And as we were going, the German official's checking us out. And he's asking me a casual question. Something like, how do you like? Are you sorry to leave? Anyway, I begin to answer that and my father sees the manner in which I'm

beginning to answer and keeps me from speaking my mind, which I was about to do. And telling him in effect that I couldn't wait to get out of this that place. And he shuts me up. He shushes me in mid-sentence and we go on board the ship.

And we sail to Hull across the North Sea. Which, as you know, is a very ambitious sea. And within a few hours, everybody on board is seasick except me. And it had very few passengers. I would say it may have had 10 or 12 or 20 people. Small, small boat.

And we made it to Hull. And by next day, we were in the Hull, England. And from there we went to London where my mother's aunt lived with her extended family. And we spent from April-- we must've spent four weeks or five weeks in England. And during that time, Hitler makes his famous speech in which we listen to on the radio in which he says if there's a war, the Jews will be wiped out. And this and that. He just recites to the Reichstag a whole litany of things that are going to happen.

And my sister and I remember saying that she wanted us to change our boat reservations to an earlier departure. She was that upset. And Resi was not a person to get upset easily. Anyway, we didn't leave earlier. We left-- it must have been in early May or late April. No, it had to be in May.

We left in May. And the night before we left our place in London where we stayed in Clapham with our family and we were assigned to a hotel near the ship. And the hotel had very rough sheets. And I broke out in a rash, in a really bad rash all over my body. And the fear was that for sure they wouldn't let me emigrate to the United States that way. And a decision was made that in that event my mother would stay behind with me in England.

By morning, whatever it was had cleared up and we went on board. And we sailed on the SS Aquitania, which was then a major luxury liner plying the Atlantic trade. We were in second-class cabins. And we ate-- my parents chose to eat in a kosher dining room, although we were never kosher at home.

Were there many Jews on that boat?

I assume there were. It was 1939. I think there was every Jew that possibly could was trying to get out. And I remember in my school at the Fasanenstrasse Temple, we were talking about this. Who's going where and who's going there. And people were talking, or the teachers were talking about that Siyam, as it was then known, was giving visas to Jewish people to come there. I remember that.

Did you know of other people who went to countries that wouldn't normally be thought of as a destination?

I did later.

Like Cuba or--

I did later, but not then.

Harry.

My family, the-- Yes, dear?

You had relatives who went to Portugal or were living in Portugal.

Oh, that was before the Holocaust. They went they went earlier. I had relatives from Poland who settled in Portugal. I had relatives who settled in Palestine, as it was then known. And the Lautenbergs, who were very close to us in Berlin, moved out before us. But they moved to France and they settled in Paris. And they barely escaped with their lives during the Holocaust.

I came to find out people who moved to China when I was a grown man and spent time there and then came to the

United States. But no, I don't remember anybody else going to any exotic location.

Was there anybody that you said goodbye to in Berlin before you left? Was there anyone to say goodbye to?

You know, I don't remember saying goodbye to anyone. Which tells me that most of our friends had already gone. Or the goodbyes we said in a setting in which I was not present.

Before we talk about--

I must have said goodbye to Gustav because--

Was Gustav your best friend?

Yeah, I guess he was. And although, my sister did not remember him. So he was a friend, very much a friend to me. I spent time with him. And in time, I forgot his name. I always remembered him. And many, many years later I'm living in this house. I'm retired.

In Albany, New York.

In Albany, New York. And it's August, 2005. I get a phone call. And man, calm voice said are you Harry Rosenfeld? Yes, yes. Do you know my cousin Gustav Loewenstein in Berlin? I said, I'm sorry I don't recollect the name.

But he said I have a letter from Gustav saying-- to his parents saying that my friend Harry Rosenfeld left-- this is April 1939-- left Berlin with his parents to go to New York and I have nobody left to play with. And so I said, well, I'm sorry I don't remember him.

He said, well, Gustav was living with his father, et cetera. Then it clicked to me that my friend whom I couldn't name-- had always remembered, but couldn't remember his name-- lived with his father. And then I described him physically as an apple-cheeked boy. And Roger Lowen, who called me-- the Loewensteins having Americanized their name to Lowen in America-- and said to me, that's your friend Gustav.

And then tells me the very terrible tale about how Gustav and his father came to die. And I was really, really so thunderstruck. But I wasn't thunderstruck. I wasn't in the least bit surprised. I was I was tormented. I was grief stricken the way I hadn't been in other situations because I knew what had happened in the Holocaust. It wasn't news to me. But this somehow made it extra special for me.

Do you want to share those details of how you found out about what happened to him?

He told me, first he said he would send me material. And he sent me a picture of Gustav. The picture you saw in our family album. I put it next to the picture of mine from the same time period. He sent me a copy of the last reisepass that the Nazis of government had issued with a big "J" stamped on it.

And he told me that-- Roger Lowen told me that they had been deported to Estonia. And they're both killed. They were both killed. The two aunts that remained in Germany had been deported to death camps in Poland. It was just, it was just a horrible wound to me.

But I vowed that I would never forget his name again. And as long as I have memory, that happens. And I invoke his name.

Harry.

At every Yom Kippur, at least. During Yizkor.

So in what way did the family acknowledge--

OK, so after a while, after we have this exchange, I write this story. It becomes my column illustrated with photographs and the reisepass and everything. And it goes on the front page of the Times Union section on the Sunday section. And a huge display. And never, ever of all the things I've written did I get the response that I got to that.

Did you?

Yeah. Including a letter from the Roman Catholic bishop of the Albany diocese. And of course, I sent copies of the article to the salon who shared it with his family. And he has an extensive family in America. And a while later, I got another call from a different branch, a different uncle. And his son is going to be bar mitzvahed in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

And the program at his conservative synagogue there's a twinning arrangement with children who elect to do this can we come bar mitzvah along with a child who was killed in the Holocaust who never had the chance to become bar mitzvah. And he wanted to be bar mitzvah with his cousin, Gustav, sometime removed. His grandfather and Gustav we're cousins, I believe.

And so I said fine. He said, please tell me everything you can about Gustav. So I told them everything I could about Gustav. Wished him well. Sent him a bar mitzvah present. No, wished him well. And a while later, a different relative calls and says, we have a problem. What's the problem? Gustav mother was not Jewish. The parents were divorced. That makes Gustav not Jewish, at least some people are telling us. And he can't be bar mitzvahed along with our son, Simon.

So that infuriated me. And I said, look. I don't know from Mosaic Law and I don't know from Talmudic law, but I know from the Germans that Gustav was a Jew. He lived as a Jew. I know him living as a Jew. He identified as a Jew. And he died as a Jew. Gustav was a Jew.

And they went ahead and they had the bar mitzvah in the Tulsa synagogue. And it was a big success and all very well and good. Umpteen years later, nearly 10 years later I write my book. In the course of which I'm invited by a University in Tennessee to speak. I speak to a group of about 60 people. They're very nice.

And afterwards, there's a book signing. And the first person in line is Simon Lowenthal.

Oh, my.

They had moved from Oklahoma to the Nashville area. And they came because they saw it in the newspaper this was nearby in Murfreesboro. They came. Well, I jumped up and embraced him. And he was there with his mother. But that was the ending of-- well, not the ending. That was the note of-- I was so moved by the fact that his cousin wanted to be bar mitzvahed with him, along with him. And I was so touched that I even got to meet that cousin.

You're right. It is, in a horrible story, at least a note of some beauty in it. For the camera, for people to know, could you say Gustav's name again and then spell out his last name.

His name was Gustav Loewenstein. In German, it would be spelled L-O-umlaut-W-E-N-S-T-E-I-N.

Thank you. I've got to get my train of thought and then we'll go on again.

I'm going to just change course just a little bit to ask one question that I forgot to ask earlier. You had mentioned that throughout the '20s and '30s--

So your father had already, for different reasons in the 1920s, late 1920s or so, wanted to move to America. And your mom thought that life was good and you should stay.

Right.

Did they ever talk about this when things got pretty bad?

No, not in my hearing or not in my memory. But it was very plain to me just looking at the family album from those years and remembering even during Nazi times how they would dress up to go out, which my sister said was routine, that they were enjoying life. I mean, so--

So but your father never threw it to your mother and said, see, if you'd only listen to me we would have been able to spare ourselves.

You're asking me to say something I have no knowledge of.

OK, if it didn't happen or you don't know of it--

I don't know it. I can't say it didn't happen.

Because I have talked with some other people where one partner was very prescient for whatever reason and was convinced by the other partner not to do it. And it was sort of like a deciding moment. But OK, we'll get off of that. And before we leave Europe altogether, I want to talk a little bit about the family that was left behind in Poland.

Not everybody had left Poland to go to various corners of the world, from what I understand. Some people remained there--

Many, many.

--from your family. Can you name some of them? All of them?

I can name Uncle Felix and his family. Not all of them because some of them [INAUDIBLE]-- had emigrated on their own.

Uncle Felix's last name was what?

Rosenfeld.

Also Rosenfeld, OK.

My aunt on my mother's side. Her married name was Kirschenbaum. They were there. Oh, there were many. Brandel was a sister of my father's who never came out, the youngest sister. Oh, I don't remember the names, if I ever knew them. The married names of the daughters.

What do you know of what happened to them?

Well, we know that they didn't survive. And there's a story that goes-- again, I have no evidence. My father would receive a postcard or two during the war years with very simple messages on it. And it was passed by the Germans. It had all sorts of swastikas on it and whatnot. But where he got this from or not, but when the Warsaw uprising occurred that Felix's daughter was supposedly one of the people involved in that. And that she died in the Warsaw uprising.

The ghetto uprising.

The ghetto uprising against the Nazis, where they held out for about a month.

That's right.

I have no substantiation for that. And I never asked my father, how do you know that? I would never have had the temerity to ask my father how do you know that? It may not be true. But what is true is from this whole family on both sides-- the dozens, if not hundreds, of people-- none remained alive that hadn't gotten out. We never heard from them.

OK. Let's go back to the ship. And you're crossing the Atlantic.

And I enjoyed myself very much. From the moment I was on that ship, I ran all over it and I explored it. And we had a good time. We all had a good time on the ship except my father, who was terribly seasick and spent it on a chaise-- on a wooden chase on deck, miserable as could be. And the rest of us were having a good time. And I remember coming into New York Harbor. And I remember, as we all should, seeing the Statue of Liberty. And knowing what it stood for, in some superficial way.

And then, I remember being at dockside. In those days, you did not stop at Ellis Island anymore. The immigration official came on board someplace before you got into the harbor. And all that work was done aboard ship. And I was issued my identity card. And everybody else was issued their identity card.

And then, we pulled up to the pier on the West side of Manhattan, the Cunard Line pier. And I'm standing next to my mother at the rail. I'm looking down at the pier. And my mother's going, there's Dr. Frida. There's Uncle Izzy. There's Uncle Wolf. There's-- you know.

And then we got into a taxicab that went along--

With all the tantes and the uncles?

Well, not in one cab. And we went up to my Uncle Willie's apartment in the Bronx where we stayed for a week or so, a week or two. And my father went out on his own without my mother, which she never forgave him for, and rented an apartment two or three blocks East of where my Uncle Willy lived on 184th Street. And there they lived--

In the Bronx or in Manhattan?

In the Bronx. For all the years that I was in the household until they moved after I was out of the household to Kingsbridge Road, vis-a-vis Poe Park. They lived in that walk-up apartment on the second floor. Well, first in a smaller apartment. Then, in a larger three-bedroom apartment on the second floor in this really shabby building all the time that I was being raised.

My father opened his first-- tried first to work with Uncle Willie, who was also in the fur business but worked downtown in the wholesale trade. He took my father with him to go to work. My father didn't like what he saw there-- how people worked and what kind of work was done. And he took the capital that I described earlier and he opened the store in the Bronx on the Grand Concourse on the West side of Grand Concourse on the same block as Alexander's. And that's where he made his living all his years in the United States. A very small, modest store. But that paid for all our living expenses. It paid for my college education. It paid for my sister's wedding. Paid for him to live and my mother our life with sufficient economic dignity.

That's quite something. That's quite something.

Yes.

To be able to make such an adjustment and to--

And not having the language. He never had terrific control the language. Most of his customers in the Bronx, if not everyone, were Jews.

From Germany.

No.

No?

Heavens no. They were Jews. My father had no particular empathy for Germans as, you know--

I meant German Jews.

He didn't feel himself a German Jew. He was very much an East European Jew.

And he spoke Yiddish, of course.

In America, my parents spoke Yiddish. I spoke English and they spoke a form of English. My sister, in the early days, again, was their key because she spoke English. And so she was in the store helping them with customers.

How is it that you don't have any trace of any European accent at all?

Because I was lucky enough to come here at the age of nine. Had I come at the age of 14, I would have had an accent. My sister to her dying day had a slight continental accent.

OK. What are your first memories of going to school here?

My first memory-- my sister tells me she took me to school, as she would, because she knows English. She can deal with the teachers and the principals. I was then 10 years old. We came in May. I began school in September. I had acquired some English in the streets, of course. I think quite a lot, as a matter of fact.

I lined up with the class 2b. I was the tallest kid in the class. The first and the last time of my life I was ever the tallest in any gathering. And I was, as far as I know, the only refugee kid in that school. P.S. 115, Elizabeth Barrett Browning in the Bronx, which was literally one block away from our apartment. And my sister started me off there.

They put me into 2b, but they didn't just leave me there. They watched me. And they moved me up. They were very caring, thoughtful teachers. None of whom was Jewish, by the way. As far as I know, none were Jewish. Who moved me along and advanced me as my fluency in the language increased.

But I always lagged. I graduated high school approximately a year older than most of my peers. But I caught up all but that final year. And it was only because of the quality and the integrity of those teachers. And there were no programs for non-English speakers. There was no special help classes. There were no special curricula for students in my predicament. It was just teachers paying attention and moving me along.

Before I finished with even Elizabeth Barrett Browning, I became a member of the street patrol. The school was so large it straddled the whole city block. It was what-- one side was on Valentine Avenue. The other side was on Ryer Avenue. And we had patrols for each side. And we had a shield to wear on our arm. And we wore Sam Brown belt made out of plastic, or something like that. And we kept kids from crossing illegally and all that good stuff.

And before I was finished with P.S. 115, I was the commander of the Valentine Squad.

Wow.

So there you go.

Wow.

America's the land of opportunity.

Did your parents' old personalities-- did your father ever regain a sense of-- come out of that dark feeling?

Oh, yes. He came out of it in England, when we were in England. My sister remembers that. And I remember going out

with him in England. Both of us non-English speakers going all through London. And he purchased something. And our relatives wanted to know how much we paid for it. And I couldn't remember. And they [INAUDIBLE] remember-- can't you remember something? I said, yes. I remember "each."

[LAUGHTER]

And by that time, he was-- once he was out of Germany he regained his former self.

OK, OK. Did either of your parents ever go back to Germany?

No.

Was this conscious? A conscious decision?

I guess so. I suspect so. I made a conscious decision I wouldn't. My sister made the contrary decision. The only time that I went back was for work. By that time, I was in the foreign news business. And I twice visited Germany when I was with the Herald Tribune on business.

And this would have been what years?

The first one was 1964.

OK.

That's right. I was pregnant with Stef.

And the second one was-- I was still with the Herald Tribune. It was later. It was after the '67 war, I know that. So it was probably '68.

Was it Berlin that you went to? Or was it someplace else?

No, it couldn't have been '68.

We were in Washington in '66.

Right. But it was after the '67-- oh, that's when I was with the Washington Post. And it was after the '67 war. And I was a Foreign Editor of the Washington Post. I was there-- yeah. And that came later when I was by myself without Annie.

And this was-- did you go back to Berlin? Or was this another part of Germany?

Both times I was in different parts of Germany, but I was always in Berlin as well.

OK, OK. You revisited your old place.

Right. When Anne was with me, I was with the Herald Tribune. And the capital of West Germany was then in Bonn.

That's right.

We spent a lot of time in Bonn. And then I went to Germany where my correspondent traveled from Bonn or from Paris, wherever. And he was with us. And we went and saw the wall. And we went into East Berlin. And we saw the big Soviet cemetery there.

Yes.

And we saw the Bernauer Strasse, where the wall ended. And I remember Don Cook, the correspondent, said it took Germans to do this to Germans. And in the second-- and I met Adenauer. And I met Gerhard Schroder.

Gerhard Schroder?

Gerhard Schroder. He was then the foreign minister. And my correspondent was Mike Kendall. And then in Berlin, we had Don Cook. And we went where we went. And in the course of which, we were staying at the Hotel Kempinski. And the Fasanenstrasse Temple is right across the street. And of course, it was no longer a temple, but it was the Jewish Community Center. And the relic that remained of the temple was a bit of wall. And we saw that.

I tried to find 56 Ansbacherstrasse. I remember it was nighttime. Annie remained behind with Don Cook as we were walking as I rushed down the street to try to find it. And I couldn't. To my best judgment, there was a hole in the ground.

So it might have been bombed.

Yes. My sister disagrees. But she's wrong on so many things, including the street number where we lived, that I couldn't trust her memory about these things.

Did any of your German counterparts know your own history when you met Konrad Adenauer?

Oh, yes. They were all aware of it. And I have to say, I took great-- I was impressed. They didn't say too much and they didn't say too little. They acknowledged it, and then they walked away from it.

So you went back only for business?

And did you leave as soon as you could? I mean, was it someplace you just didn't want to be more than you had to be? Or was it that you--

When we were in Berlin, Annie and I, we didn't want a dinner. So we got into a cab. And we said take-- and we have enough German to talk to a cab driver. Take us to a place where there isn't-- you know, it's a simple thing. So it took us to a bierstube. And we sat at a table.

They put out a wooden platter with a lot of-- the best German delicatessen there is. And we were just enjoying. And in the back room behind the curtain there was a group of men, obviously. And all of a sudden they began to sing songs. And the songs reminded both of us of the Nazi singing. And we just got up and left. That was the end of it.

Did I want to be-- No. I mean, I don't-- I'm very torn when I think about Germany and Germans. But I'm also sensible. I don't hold accountable people who are in no way accountable. I don't forget what has happened. I didn't want to partake of those programs by the city of Berlin and other well-meaning people to bring back their former Jewish citizens and residents and show them hospitality.

And you didn't want to do that because?

And I didn't do that. I didn't avail myself of that. My sister did. She enjoyed it. She reconnected with her Gymnasium friends. That was not for me.

OK. I want to ask you a question on more of a thought question than a life story question, but it really, it touches on journalism. You know, I asked you before when you were growing-- when you were still in Berlin, from where did you get your news. And you say it didn't-- you didn't get it-- you knew of it, but it wasn't from the newspapers or the radios that you could remember.

I'd kind of like to ask your thoughts on, did you ever think about the propaganda that was coming out of Goebbels' ministry and the StÃ¼rmer, the newspaper that was published. And what kind of effect it had on people. Through the eyes of a newspaper man, as well as the eyes of somebody who was its target.

Well, not when I was a child.

No. When you were already--

Not even when I was very busy building my career. My major and most energetic reflections occurred once I had the chance to look back in retirement when I was writing my memoir and thinking about things the way they were. Trying to think about things the way they were and what my situation was at the time. And trying to put myself into that situation. Very difficult.

And it became clear to me-- lots of things became clear to me. They were always clear to me, except I wasn't thinking about them. I was thinking about the next job. I was thinking about climbing the ladder. I was thinking about feeding my family.

That the quality of my childhood very much affected the kind of person I became. Now, that's true of every human being. But I began to think about, well, why this? And why that? And why the other thing? Because I was fully aware. I didn't read the newspapers. I'm not aware of the radio. We may have had one, but I can't remember sitting attentively listening to a radio. But I was fully aware of the Jew-hating environment in which I was raised. And what would astonish me, if anything, would be with its absence.

And when I came to America, that Jew-hating environment was absent. Although, Jew hatred was here. I mean, there were enough anti-Semitic incidents in my life. But the government wasn't the sponsor of it. The whole world didn't conspire against you. It was just those Irish kids chasing you down the block and calling you a Christ-killer, right?

That's different. And I've came to learn about the anti-Semitism that afflicted the Jews and in the decades before our arrival. And even while we are here and the sort of second-class category that we were often put into. But again, it wasn't the same. It was something that we could overcome. Or at least we could fight to overcome. And that's what much of all our lives is about. And to not become professional Jews in the sense that we're always going to feel afflicted when just somebody doesn't like us for us, never mind that we're Jewish. That kind of thing.

But looking back, it became very clear to me-- one, that the idea of going doing something in public service. Not going into business. Not going into the professions. I found myself totally unqualified for both. But wanting to become a journalist as a way to spend a life that would be meaningful for me. Way before I understood really what a journalist actually did, I understood the superficialities of it.

And then, as I did my work and I continued to do my work and I began to specialize what is important in journalism and what isn't so important. Looking back on it, I realize that the function of the press in America is to validate the governmental structure. That in other words, without a free press in a position that would blow the whistle on the powerful, you cannot have a flourishing democracy.

And I defy you to tell me-- there are many places that hold elections, but I don't think they are flourishing democracies without a free press that manages to look at the institutions of the powerful and say, hey, you're committing misdeeds and something's got to be done about it. And that became clear to me. And that relationship became vivid when I looked at it.

And that's why I became the man I became. What mattered to me was doing this, and doing this in a way that it had integrity and it had credibility. And that meant you didn't mouth off about things you didn't know anything about. But you found out what was going on, and then you wrote about it.

So that when people would read it and get that information, they could believe that what was being presented to them was in good faith.

Not only in good faith. It's accurate information, and they could take the next steps. And they could take the steps that result in political action. And that would then result in political remedy. Or for example, I don't expect you to you read a

story in a newspaper about a new and upcoming company, I don't expect you to take $1,000 out of your pocket and call your stockbroker and say, because I read the story I want you to buy this stock. What you can do, however, is look into the stock and see whether that newspaper story was valid enough for you to do just that.

You empower people to take action. It isn't the newspapers that make the changes. It's the people that make the changes empowered by the information that newspapers have provided. I use newspapers for the media.

As a generic word for the media. Well, certainly the media were used in very different ways to have people take action in very different ways in Germany.

Exactly.

In the Nazi time.

Exactly.

In the Nazi time. And how to influence--

That's what it needs to be independent. These were all government publications. They were licensed by the government. They were controlled by the government. And they did what the government told them to do. And so that's why Egypt couldn't be a democracy, you know, until it had a free press. Morsi could be elected. But Morsi wouldn't behave like a Democrat until there was that other component which forces him to pay attention. Forces him to abide by the rules.

I want to-- this is a topic that, for me, is very, very important and valid. And one that goes beyond a life story, but one of how do people's minds get affected? How people get manipulated? And so on. But we have to go back to your story. And after you finish high school, I'd like you to give me a sense of where did your direction go? You say you became a newspaper man. But did you go to college? What did you finish? What did you study? And so on.

I was lucky enough to go to Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, which was then-- perhaps even more so now-- the premier public high school in the whole country. And while I was in high school, they made us take a paper in our home room. It would be delivered in the home room desk every morning. And of course, the strongest impetus was for the New York Times. This was a New York City high school. Mostly left-wing teachers. Mostly left-wing students.

I like the Herald Tribune out of obstinacy. So I asked for the Herald Tribune. And I got to read the Herald Tribune, and I loved it. And I knew by this time I wanted to be a journalist. And when I graduated high school, I looked for a job, because I was starting-- I graduated in January of 1948. And I wasn't going to start college until September of '48.

So I looked for a job. And now I wanted a job in a newspaper-- any newspaper. But I was acquainted with the Herald Tribune, and I loved it. And I also knew where it was located. I knew that because it was at that time located across from a bus depot-- across the street from the bus depot where you took the buses to Union City in New Jersey where they had burlesque shows. And in one or two times in my life, I attended those burlesque shows. I attended only for the comics, you understand.

Of course.

And so I know where the Herald Tribune was. And I knew I liked the Herald Tribune. So I went to the Herald Tribune and I said, I'm here and I want a job. I thought I'd get a copy boy's job. But they were fresh out of copy boy jobs. But they said there was an opening as a clerk in the syndicate department. So I took it. One, because it was a job. And two, because it was a foot in the door. I have seldom made a better decision.

I worked there those like six, seven, eight months. Got to know a lot about the newspaper business, and a lot about the Herald Tribune. I made lifelong friends and connections. And I went off to Syracuse University, where I decided to go to school. I decided. I went to the Bainbridge branch of a public library. I took out that big compendium that tells you about all the colleges. I assessed my qualifications and decided on two schools. One was Syracuse. And one was

Northeast.

Northeastern University.

Northeastern University. Northeastern University was attractive because they had a five-year combination study/work program. But I decided that Syracuse would be best for me. I decided to talk my boyhood friend, Don Horowitz-- who lived across the street. Who I went to elementary school with. Maybe even junior high, I'm not sure-- to come with me. And we became roommates.

And I went to Syracuse with the thought of studying journalism. I was not really taken by the quality of the journalism instructors, with the exception of two professors. So I changed my major to American Literature. I think it was called American Studies. It combined literature and political science. And summers, I kept working at the Herald Tribune. They always took me on. I even delivered the paper, at my insistence, trying to compete with the New York Times on the campus. That was a battle I lost. But I tried.

And when I graduated during my college years, the Korean War broke out. As chancellor Tolley told us at our convening conference in 1948 that war would break out before we graduated. And sure enough, it did two years later. But I got a college deferment. Was graduated. Annie came to my graduation.

I got a job. This time the best job, up to that point, that I had in newspapering. I became an editorial assistant at the news service.

At the Herald Tribune.

At the Herald Tribune. And in a couple of months, I received my draft notice. And I was into the army. While in the army, I married my girlfriend now of some years standing. At least five, six years.

Who is this?

Four or five weeks after our wedding, I was shipped to Korea. And there, I wound up in a military history section at a [? higher ?] headquarters as a clerk typist. And I managed to pass the test by trying very hard. I had gone to clerk typist school in the states during basic training. And I did pretty well there. Taught for a while at Fort Dix. But then they shipped me out. And I wound up in the military history section.

And in time, I got annoyed with just sitting there typing. So I kept on nudging them to give me some more work. I had a terrific commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Haskell of West Point, who encouraged me. And he let me write reports. And I did that.

And finally, I became a full-fledged historical analyst. Finally getting that military occupational specialty, which is a rare one for an enlisted man. And I kept on writing during the war. And then the war ended. And we were no longer writing monthly reports, but we wrote quarterly reports. But that had to be done and reported. And people would feed us information, and we would put it into a form to send to the military history section in the Pentagon.

And before my-- then the army wanted to get rid of us because the war was over. And they gave us an early discharge if you would go to college. At first I thought that meant, oh my god, I got to go back to undergraduate college. I'm not going to do that. Which, by the way, my commanding officer was twisting my arm to do, to do graduate work. And I said never again.

But my devoted wife got out of a sickbed and got me admitted to Columbia and NYU. And I was discharged three months early. I came home a corporal, bearing one battle star for the one time that I was in a war zone and a Commendation Medal that they gave to soldiers who did a good job. And that was the end of my army career.

And what did you-- did you go to grad school?

I went to NYU to fulfill my obligation to the army that summer. And I began to work at the Herald Tribune. And the only job they would give me was as a typist to cut stencils of the columnists that would be run off on mimeograph machines, which I used to do as a shipping clerk. And I did that. And as I was sitting there, I'm a married man now but with a wife who is employed.

And I keep pressing them. I volunteered for this and I volunteered for that. And I guess just to keep me from pestering them, they let me do some editing. And I would edit the copy from the London Observer, which is a very classy publication in London. It's actually called The Observer. And they had a terrific foreign staff, including some notorious spies, including Kim Philby. Whose copy was very good, by the way. And I would Americanize the English, and also take some of their tautologies out. And that was my first exposure to editing.

So this was all on my own time. I was volunteering this. And when an opening occurred on the news service desk where the editors were called wire filer's because they would prepare the copy for teletypists that would send it out to papers that subscribed all over the country to the work product of the Herald Tribune.

They gave me a crack at it. And I became the low man on the totem pole. And for 18 months, I was a temporary hire. But I turned out to be their best editor. And I kept moving up. And as there were some positives and some negatives. There was a point when I was tempted almost to leave because of a very disagreeable boss.

But I hung in there, mainly because I didn't get any better offer. And I outlasted the boss. And a new boss came in. And when he looked around, he decided to make me the managing editor because I was the best man available in his estimation. And other people.

And I became the Managing Editor of the Herald Tribune news service at a very tender age. And that's where I learned a lot about the quality of what-- the news service was not competing with the AP or UPI, which were journal service. They covered everything. Every sparrow that fell, they covered.

The news service made its living by filling in niches. By doing insightful articles or explanatory articles or investigative articles or feature articles, amusement. Something that was different. And so you had to be of a mindset to look for that and convert it into material for the news service.

That was invaluable to my development. And I began to value exploratory and explanatory and investigative stories for their value. And for their distinguishing value.