

Oh, I'm sure it would not.

Yeah. It's the Jewish section.

It was a lot of Jewish, but it was very much intermixed.

OK.

Ina, we're rolling.

OK. So this is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Gertrude Chapman on September 28, 2016 in Chicago, Illinois. Thank you very, very much, Mrs. Chapman, for agreeing to meet with us today, to share your story, to share your family's experiences, and in that way to give us some insight into how all of the events of the Nazi takeover and the ensuing policies affected individual people.

I'll start our interview with the simplest questions, and we'll go from there. Can you tell me what your name was at birth?

Ksenia.

Ksenia?

Ksenia Gertrude Weber.

Weber.

Yes, with one B.

All right. And how would you pronounce it in German? Ksenia. I was called Manya most of the time.

OK. And your last name, how was it pronounced?

Weber.

Weber.

Yeah.

OK. And what was the date of your birth?

4/9/32.

That means April 9--

Right, 1932.

--1932.

Yeah.

And where were you born?

In Berlin.

In the capital.

Yeah.

OK. Did you have brothers and sisters?

Yes, I did, three older. I had a-- my oldest one is my brother Alphonse Weber, my sister Senter Weber, and my sister Ruth Weber.

OK. So you had three older siblings.

Right. But I also had younger ones.

Tell me about that.

I had my sister Renee Weber, and my sister Judy Weber, and the last one is Bela Weber.

Bela Weber.

Weber, yes.

OK. What were the names of your mother and your father?

My father's name was Alexander Weber. And my mother's name is Ilona Weber.

OK. Ilona Weber. Well, you have names that are very common in Russian, in Polish, Poland-- Ksenia, Ilona, and so on. They're not very Germanic.

I know. Like Senter. Senter is from The Flying Dutchman, De Vliegende Hollander. Yeah.

Is there a reason why your parents--

I can't say.

You don't know?

I have no idea, no.

You have no idea, OK. And so you're older siblings, were they born, then, in the 1920s? If you were born--

My brother was. My sisters Senter-- I think Alphonse was born in '27. I'm not quite sure. And Senter might have been-- but they're only 11 months apart. So my brother, which, if he was alive, he was going to be 89 this October, and he just passed away.

I see.

So my sister's 88-- not quite. In January she would be 88, because they're 11 months apart.

OK. Are all your other siblings still living?

Yes.

OK. But your oldest brother has passed away?

Just passed away, yes.

OK. Tell me a little bit about your parents, who they were, as much as you know about their families, maybe your grandparents, or aunts and uncles. And let's start with your mother's side of the family.

My mother's side, I only-- I know very little about her side. My mother was very frum. She was orthodox. She had family in Hungary. And I think she always wanted to go back. She missed her family terribly.

And I just remember one time an uncle coming to visit us, Jack or Josh, something like that. But otherwise, I mean, the family-- her father, I believe, was a cantor.

At a synagogue?

Yeah, he was a cantor. But they were very orthodox.

OK. And what was your mother's first name?

Lena.

Lena.

Lena. Lena Bander. Bander is her maiden name.

Lida-- Lena Bander. And when you said "frum," does that-- what did you mean--

Frum, very religious, orthodox. Yes. Very orthodox.

OK. And--

But she ended up marrying a man that was not Jewish, who converted to Judaism.

Really?

Mm-hmm.

So that would be your father.

Right.

That's very unusual.

Yes.

Do you know how they met? How they--

My father was a traveling salesman. He was selling umbrellas, I believe, because they had-- they owned a factory place in Paderborn. And he was traveling, and he saw her outside-- I don't know--

In Hungary?

In Hungary, yeah. Yes. And that's where they got Married

In Hungary?

Yes.

Well, I can't imagine how her parents would have reacted.

Well, that's involved with that. So that's why he converted from Catholic to Judaism.

OK.

And what do you know of your paternal side of the family?

Very little, actually. My father I know also had-- either-- at least three or four sisters. There were six children in his family, and brothers. His mother one time came to visit us. And I remember getting a spanking from her because I called my mother a bad name. So she took me over her knee and she gave it to me.

She passed away in 1937.

Your grandmother?

My grandmother.

So you were very little.

Yes, yes. Yeah, maybe four, I think, when she was there. Otherwise, I knew-- I know my mother, alav ha-shalom, used to send her cakes that she would-- my mother liked to bake, and she would send them cakes around their holiday time. But otherwise, I really don't-- I know very little about them.

I know that I was named for one-- was it her mother? I think, I believe I was named Gertrude for her mother. That was one of her names. But I--

Oh, so that is your maternal grandmother?

Right. Yeah.

OK.

Yeah, but I know very little about my mother's side of the family.

Yeah. So aside from the one uncle, nobody else really--

No. I never met anyone. And just my maternal grandmother on my father's side.

Do you know whether or not they were ostracized from both sides of the family because--

That's-- I think that's one of the reasons. Actually, my two-- my sister Senter and my brother were born in Paderborn in Westphalia, which is close to where my father comes from. And I believe--

So he's not a native Berliner?

Pardon me?

He's not a native Berliner.

No, he's not. no.

And your mother wasn't.

And I think-- no, she's not either. No, because she's from Hungary. I think that was probably one of the reasons why they move away from there. I don't think it was acceptable to the family on his side. But I mean, there was never much talk about it, so I really don't know anything about my--

Yeah. Yes, that's right. Paderborn is in the western part of Germany, pretty far from Berlin.

Yeah.

And in Berlin, you lived in the Scheunenviertel. Is that what it is?

Mm-hmm.

Was that the center of town? Was that outside the center? Do you know?

Oh, I have no idea. I don't know.

Do you have memories of what kind of home you had? Was it an apartment or--

We lived in an apartment. We attended Jewish day school. We went to an all girls' school, and the boys went to a boys' school.

OK. So was your family still very religious?

Yes, yes.

OK.

Yes.

And what did that mean? Did that mean--

Oh, we observed all of the holidays, you know. Like sukkahs, for instance, we always had sukkahs in the backyard that was put up, and we used to decorate that. I remember that.

Tell us, for those people who don't know, what is that?

Sukkahs is-- it's supposed to resemble a hut. And we used to decorate it for Purim-- not Purim. Oh, my God. I can't recall the name right now. Things, when I try to remember, they disappear.

That's OK.

Not for Hanukkah, not for Purim. I can't recall.

OK.

Maybe it'll come to me later.

Now, did your father also participate in this?

Yes, he did. Yes, my father, alav ha-shalom, he would-- you know, my mother would [NON-ENGLISH] on Friday night. And my father, alav ha-shalom always used to sing Ma'oz Tzur. Yes, he did participate in that ritual, yes. I don't

remember him going to shul, though my mother also didn't go, except maybe for the High Holidays, that she would go to shul, so.

But we lived-- the street we lived on, we had cheders on the same street, we had Jewish bookstores right next door. It was very inter-- much intermingled. And the Jewish people that lived in our street were primarily chasids. They all wore the long kittel, and they wore-- they had beards and the top hats. So it was-- and there were a lot of immigrants, probably Polish or Russian for all I know, that were living there.

Yes, unusual--

But there were a lot of Gentiles also on the streets. So we mingled-- it was pretty mixed.

Can-- you remember the street name?

Oh, Grenadierstrasse.

Grenadierstrasse.

Yeah. We lived in Grenadierstrasse [GERMAN].

31.

That's 31, yeah. The apartment was rather small for the number of people. Because not all-- I don't know if all seven lived there. Ginger was born there or in the next street, I'm not sure.

Ginger being Bela?

Oh, Bela, yeah. Yeah.

And how did Bela become Ginger?

Well, when she was adapt when we came to the United States.

OK. We'll come to that.

OK.

We'll come to that. So you lived in a section that that could be said as a place where a lot of foreigners were-- foreign immigrants.

Right. Poor people.

Poor people.

Lots of poor people. I don't think there were people there that were particularly well off.

OK. And how is it that your parents ended up in that particular part of Berlin?

Probably because they didn't have any money.

So were they rather poor as well?

Oh, yes, they were. I think they were on welfare most of the time, yes.

OK. So did your father have any kind of steady employment?

Not until 1938, he did not.

Really?

But before that, he actually was incarcerated, like in 1934, for about eight months or nine months. He became-- he was incarcerated.

Why?

Why? Probably he said the wrong thing. Who knows? I don't know.

So it wasn't-- you don't know if it was because he was Jewish, it was--

Not because he was Jewish. Not because-- well, they had their finger on him. But the name, I think, at times probably confused them.

Weber is a very--

Common German name, yeah. But I don't know if-- it's not Jewish name, to my knowledge.

Well, it's like Smith. You know, it's the name

Like Smith, right. Right, yeah. Yeah.

So-- yeah.

Yeah. Yeah, like I said, I think he didn't have steady employment till about 1938.

So after-- so in Paderborn, was it that his family owned--

They owned, I guess, a place where they made umbrellas. Yeah. They seemed to be fairly well off from what I recall.

And as a salesman, he would have--

Traveled.

He was a-- traveled, and family-owned business. Then he probably was better off at that time.

Time. Right, right. Yeah.

OK. But by the time he was married--

And I think he was educated. Yeah.

Tell me a little bit about both of your parents as far as personalities are concerned.

Well, my mother was the softy. She always used to threaten you with the end of a belt, that she was going to do something, but she never did. My father, on the other hand, could be short-tempered at times, and-- yeah, he was not so easygoing as my mother.

Were you more frightened of him?

Was I-- no. No. Although, we lived in tight quarters, I can tell you that. We had a small apartment for that many people.

Tell me about the apartment. What did it--

It was like-- it was two rooms and a kitchen. No, wait. The first apartment might have even been smaller than the second apartment. On Grenadierstrasse, the apartment was rather small, I remember that. And we always lived never facing the street. We were in back in the [GERMAN]. In front was a cheder, in front. And the front part of the building, there was a cheder, and-- which was well-attended by lots of Jewish boys going to cheder.

Of course there were Jewish stores on our street. And what I remember about that primarily is Kristallnacht.

We'll come to that.

Yeah, OK.

We'll come to that. What I'd like to ask now, about your own living quarters that you remember on Grenadierstrasse, a number of questions that may sound a little strange--

That's OK.

--but it will give us a picture.

OK.

So the first question-- did it have indoor plumbing, the apartment?

I'm not sure if it was right in the apartment or it was-- off the staircase. I can't-- that one I cannot recall.

Whether there was a toilet inside the apartment?

Right. I don't-- I don't think so, but I'm not sure.

OK. Did you have electricity in the apartment?

Oh, yeah. We had electricity, yes.

Did you have--

We had a radio.

That was another question.

Yeah.

Did you have-- what kind of heating? Was it coal heating?

Coal heating, yes.

Coal heating.

Yes.

And you had plumbing in-- like, running water?

Yes. But I don't know if it was-- I can't-- it must have been in the apartment, but I don't recall. I remember the stove, but I don't remember a sink per se. I don't know.

OK. Well, you know, these are-- in different places in Europe, there was different levels of, let's say, economic well-being.

Right.

And even Berlin, which normally you would think all apartments would have these things--

No, they didn't.

In a place like Scheunenviertel--

No, it was the old section, yeah.

Yeah. Not necessarily.

Right, right.

And so you were nine people in two to three rooms.

Right.

OK. How did that work out? I mean, did everybody sleep in the same bedroom?

Oh, just about-- you could-- [LAUGHS]

Yeah?

I think the only ones that slept separate was my mother and father, and you-- probably the baby. And I don't know if the baby was Bela, or whether it was my sister Judy. Yeah, I don't know.

OK. Was your father-- if he wasn't employed, was he involved at all with the children at home? There were seven of you.

Was he involved with the children? That's hard to say. I mean, he must've been. You know, my father, alav ha-shalom, used to always-- he was interested in electronic-- electronics in those times, they didn't have electronics. But he used to like to work with radios. I remember that. He worked on that, anything electrical.

Was he involved with us? I'm sure he must have been involved. I mean, it's almost impossible to have kids running around the room and not see them, since he was there.

Well, I mean, I'm trying to get a sense of what kind of relationship he had with the children.

Oh, with children?

Yeah. Were you all close, or were you-- was there some distance, that sort of thing.

Oh, that kind of-- no, I would say we were close. Super close? No, I don't think so. I don't have any unhappy memories of him, you know. He was stricter than my mother, that much I do know. But otherwise--

And your mother, was she somebody-- you say she was a softy.

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, she was a softy all right, you know. She cared about everybody and anything and everyone. I mean, inside the apartment or-- whether people on the outside, whether they couldn't-- I mean, my mother-- unfortunately, she, too, at times worked.

She did work. She was a, what do you call, a janitress of the building, because my father wasn't earning very much. So she had to take care of the building itself.

Like washing the staircases and--

Yeah, the staircase, and, oh, everything had to be cleaned. They were crazy clean, the Germans, as you well know. And one year, I understand from reading some of the things, that she couldn't do the work, so my father had to help her out. But in order to help her out, he had to get permission, otherwise their welfare check would have been stopped. He wasn't allowed to do-- he had to get permission for him to fill in for her while he was pregnant, I think, with my second youngest sister Judy.

I see.

So he helped. He did the work for her instead. But yeah, everything always revolved around what you earned and didn't earn.

Did you go hungry?

Not when we were younger. There seemed to be food. The hunger came much later, I would say. After '42 it was more problematic, because Jews weren't allowed-- you could go to the food store between the hours, I think it was between 4:00 and 5:00. That's the only time you were allowed to go to the food store shopping. And usually, things were pretty well picked over at that time.

Yeah. That's pretty late in the game.

Yeah.

That's pretty--

Yeah.

But you weren't hung-- I guess I asked that more out of the economic side of the question.

Yeah, I don't recall. No. I mean, food was always very important. There's no question about it. To this day, I can't throw away leftovers, because it was a sin to throw-- if you dropped a piece of bread, you had to pick it up and kiss it, because it was a sin to drop any food on the floor. Yeah, that was a big thing with my mother, oh, my gosh.

Did all the children have chores at home?

Not that I recall particularly, no. No. I think we had-- oh, we went to nursery school, and school, of course, as we got older. But nursery school was a big part.

Oh, I remember when-- well, I was rather-- I don't know how old I was. Three, maybe? Two and a half? We had a neighbor down the street, and I think my mother must have been kind of overwhelmed with having kids, so many kids. That's why the neighbor took me in. And her husband used to take me on the front of the bicycle and ride around. So I think I might have stayed with them for a while to give her some relief.

Did she have any help at all?

No.

Anybody else coming in?

No. No, not that I'm aware of that we have any help, no.

OK. Did you ever remember seeing your father helping her around the house?

The house? At times, but not really. I mean you know, how much-- the only time I remember is Passover. That was a big to-do with taking down the Passover dishes and putting away the other dishes, and getting rid of all the chametz. You know, then it was-- then he had to help with that.

We didn't have enough chairs to sit down, I can remember that. So he used to put a board across two chairs so we could all sit down at the same table. And I remember-- oh, at Hanukkah, we would light-- he would light the Hanukkah menorah. But we used an oil menorah. We didn't use candles, we used oil.

And some of the other holidays-- our neighbors would invite us when they would light a Christmas tree. They would invite us to their apartment so we could see what was going on. Because they were close with their neighbors. They always were very friendly with other people besides just our family, because they didn't have family, you know.

Can we break just for a second?

Yeah, it's getting really noisy outside. I'm not--

I didn't notice until now, but I don't like that. OK.

You had asked me about my father, but I remember, when he would work at the table with his electrical stuff, it was not uncommon for him to have a youngest child on his lap while he was doing that. So he was involved in that manner.

Did your parents-- did you see a good relationship between them?

Yes, from what I recall, yeah. Yeah, they did.

Well, I mean, both of them sacrificed a lot to be together.

Yes, they did. Yes, they did. Yes. Well, like I told you before, my mother always wanted to go back home, but of course she couldn't. They couldn't. And my father's biggest wish always was to emigrate.

Was it?

Oh, always, to want to emigrate-- anywhere, everywhere. And he tried. They tried different ways, but we didn't have money. Money stands in your way. If you don't have money, like in the United States, if you don't have money, you know, you either die well or you don't. I mean, I'm experiencing that now. Money means a lot.

So why would he want to have left?

Because I think he felt oppressed, you know, because she was incarcerated, you know, for about 10 months of his life. And he was-- I think it affected him greatly of how he [INAUDIBLE] the kind of person was after the incarceration. I think there was damage done to him at that time.

Well, when he was arrested, you were just two years old.

I know. But I heard about it always that he-- I knew about it, that he was arrested. I knew about that, yes.

Do you have memories of him after being-- he was released and how he looked?

No. No, no, I don't.

So the things that you know of his experience are things that were told to you.

Right, right. Yeah.

OK. In what way did it-- was he affected? How did--

I think his teeth were affected. I don't know if they hit him or just what they did to him. I think his teeth were never right after that. He didn't talk about it much to us. He wouldn't.

I know that they have friends that knew about his condition. And who knows? I don't know.

In the neighborhood, you mean? Friends--

In the neighborhood, or friends from outside the neighborhood that he conversed with. But personal stories in regards to that, I don't really recall. I was too young to be involved in that conversation, that's for sure, you know. I mean, some things I remember, they're from the second apartment that I remembered it.

Not Grenadierstrasse?

Not in Grenadierstrasse, no. I think in '38 or '39 is when we moved to a little bit larger apartment, just one street over, to Dragonerstrasse.

Dragonerstrasse?

Dragoner. Yeah. We lived-- that was a little, somewhat bigger apartment that we got. And we lived there, I think, on the third floor. We had two large rooms and a kitchen. It was actually a big apartment that was cut up, because there were other people living on the front end. And when you first came into the apartment, there was-- I remember a toilet being there. There was also a bathroom with a tub in it, I remember that, and a separate kitchen.

And we slept-- like I said, we slept in the front room, which was bigger, all of us. And we slept together except for my brother. He had his own bed. And the youngest child, which would have been Bela, she slept with my parents. And they had a crib in their bedroom for her. So I remember that.

And I remember seeing their wedding picture hanging above her bed. And of course, the stove was there in the corner.

Was it a coal oven with the tiles and things like that?

Right. right, Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

OK.

I know my father was like, fresh air, open a window in the morning, oh, it's good for you.

[LAUGHTER]

That's very European.

Yeah, right.

That's very European.

Yeah, I remember that. And it had a big door going from one room into the other room. And I know my youngest-- Bela once got her hand caught in the door. My mother was sitting by the table, and she didn't know Bela was there by the door, and she got her hand caught. Yeah. And her fingers, she still has a mark. Her finger's marked up for the rest of her life. Well, that's one way to remember your mother.

Yeah. She was very young. I don't know how old she was at that point. But I really forgot what I said. Oh, well, that's the new apartment, yeah, in Dragonerstrasse.

And was that still in Scheunenviertel?

Yes. It was only like-- around the corner to the next street. Yes. Yes-- oh, another thing about that area that was not too nice, we had a lot of women, loose women, living off the street.

And did you know as children what their job was?

Oh, yeah.

Oh, really?

Somehow we knew. Yeah. Oh, yeah. By the way they dressed, the way they stood around outside trying to attract the attention of guys. Yeah, we knew that, yeah.

The schools that you went to, were they public schools or private schools?

They were private, because Jewish school. We went to school on Augerstrasse, which was within walking distance. That was a girls' school. And Alphonse, my brother, alav ha-shalom, went to Kaiser-Wilhelm-strasse. That was a boys' school. And then when our school was closed-- I don't know if that was '42 or-- '42, '43-- then we had to switch over and share the school with the boys.

Our school was pretty-- a very modern school. They also had a nursery school there. And I believe that my sister Bela attended that. And I think my mother used to bring us there for nursery school.

If these were private schools, that meant there was tuition involved.

Well, we certainly didn't pay any tuition, that's for sure. Well, just like cheder, you had to pay for that, too. But somehow, my mother managed to get them to give him, you know, instructions, and I'm sure they didn't pay for it. They didn't really have any money, you know. Like I said, I don't think my father started work until 1938. So if she paid, I'm not aware of it.

Money was always tight. That was the-- there was never much available.

Did you ever see your mother relax? Did you ever see her--

Relax? [LAUGHS]

I mean--

What was that? But you know what, I shouldn't say that. She-- I don't know about Dragonerstrasse. I think on Grenadierstrasse, but I never saw. But I always heard about it, that she used to like to play cards. So she participated in that. And they had a lot of friends, I know they had. But they used to like to play a card game called 66. I don't know to this day what the heck it is, but it's a card game.

Not my father. My father never played cards. He didn't drink, and he didn't play cards. But my mother played cards. Yeah, she did.

So that was one of a few--

Things, yeah. Oh, yeah.

--sort of leisure activities.

Right. Right, yeah. I mean, they didn't go to the movies. Although, I remember going to the movie and seeing Shirley Temple.

Did you?

Yeah. I got to see that. Yeah. I don't know what year that was. I don't know. I was six, seven, eight? I don't know.

Did the older two-- what was your relationship with your siblings? Were you close?

Oh, I always used to sing with my older sister Senter. We used to like to sing and harmonize together. Yeah, she liked to do that. I remember that. And I told you, my brother went to cheder, but I think my mother had to bribe him to go. He wasn't always willing.

I can remember when he had a bar mitzvah. He had coffee and cake afterwards. I don't remember him going to shul when he went-- was became a bar mitzvah. But I know that they had coffee and cake afterwards. Coffee seemed to play a big role in their life. Yeah. So.

Would you-- would you describe your home as a warm one, or just a matter-of-fact kind of neutral place?

I would say-- well, warm. My mother was very warm. Oh, yeah. She used to say like, [NON-ENGLISH] over every kid. Oh, my God. [GERMAN]. [GERMAN] she used to call it, her swallows. We were her swallows. And she worried about all the kids.

[GERMAN], yeah.

Yeah, [GERMAN]. Yeah, yeah. She always called us that, yeah.

Well, this is-- one thing is interesting for me here. If she's from Hungary, what was her first language?

Hungarian. I don't know what else-- but, you know, she always spoke Yiddish. So she spoke many-- more than just Hungarian. She spoke other languages, too. I don't know-- I think probably some Polish and Romanian mixed in.

Well, that would be typical for that part of the world.

Right. Yeah, my father-- I mean, he spoke some Yiddish, but he didn't. He spoke German. And they spoke German with one another?

Yes. Yes.

And at home, did you all speak Yiddish, or did you speak German?

No, we spoke primarily German. Yeah.

OK. Did she have an accent in German?

Did I have a what?

Did your mother have an accent?

Have an accent? If she had an accent, I wasn't aware of it. I was used to whatever she spoke. I mean, that was her mother tongue to me. I didn't know the difference. Yeah.

OK.

Yeah, I couldn't tell the difference between them.

Well, when you said she called you her-- you know, your swallows--

[NON-ENGLISH], yeah.

Then that's somebody who was very-- somebody who knows the language, who feels comfortable in the language.

Oh, that's true. Oh, yeah. Well, yes, I mean, she could-- she certainly could communicate in German, because she had all these friends. So she-- and whatever friends had who spoke a different language, she could speak to them in a different language.

In that language?

Yeah.

Wow. So she was a sociable kind of person.

Yes, she was. Yes, she was. Mm-hmm.

OK.

Yeah. She cared too much about other people.

Why do you say "too much"?

Because I think it got her into trouble.

Ah. Is that part of your story later on?

I don't know.

Well, how would you explain-- can we cut for a second?

Of course. We're rolling again.

OK. In what way do you think it specifically got her into trouble?

Because she tried to help other Jews. And she did actively. I remember one time, she went to Cologne, which is--

Cologne, yeah.

Cologne that's-- she went there. She actually got a permanent. She never had a permanent, she got a permanent. She made off like she was one of the [GERMAN] leader, like--

A group leader of something?

Yeah, like she was in charge. She was going to-- she made off like she was one of them. And she managed to bring out a couple of people that way and brought them back to Berlin. I don't know how she did what she did. I remember her telling us going into the women's washroom, and then she went into, you know a stall, and then she called for the woman to help her, come if she needed something, supposedly. So I don't know what was going on between the two of them, if she had got the information from this woman or not. I have no idea.

But somehow she managed to bring these people out of Cologne. Where she brought them to, I don't know. I have no idea. But then she always tried to help other people, whether they came to her for some help financially, or just what-- I don't know. But she--

Well, she sounds like she was a very good-hearted person.

She was-- oh, she was. Oh, absolutely, yeah. Yeah, she was always-- and I'm sure-- one time, I remember, she came home. She had been to somebody's house. And they had a lot of kids, like nine or more, I don't know. And they were all-- had been picked up already. And so she said-- so what did she do? She open up a box of candles, and she lit all the candles.

And there was black market going on. You know, we try to wheel and deal. I remember we used to-- on Grenadierstrasse, woman that lived above us, she was a seamstress. And sometimes my mother would send me with a fur coat to her, and she would give an estimate on the fur coat. I don't know if I brought it back to my mother or not. I don't recall.

OK. Up until now I've been asking about things that are really like in the private sphere, sort of like, what is family life, who are your parents, how did you live, things like that, not asking that much about what's going on in the wider community or city. And that's what I'd like to turn to at this point. If you're born in 1932, then I can't-- you know, all of your conscious life would have been, as a child, after Hitler comes to power.

Right.

He comes to power one year later, and life changes for people. That radio that your father would tinker with, did they listen to any broadcasts?

Oh, yes. Much later, yes. We always knew when we were going to be bombed, because he knew where the planes were, how far away they were. So he could track them, and we would know when to run down to the basement before the alarm actually went off.

So that means towards the end of the war?

No, not towards the end of the war. It didn't end till '45.

That's right.

That was already in 40-- I don't know when-- I don't know when the heavy bombing started. In '41?

After '43. No, no, no, after '43.

'43? Oh. Well, that could be. Yeah, but in '43, you know, when they had-- when the really heavy bombing started, we were there, and we were being bombed, and the place was burning. I remember my brother was up on a roof. But I also remember being on the farm. When we left Berlin--

We'll come to that. We'll come to that.

Yeah, I know. I'm getting mixed up.

That's OK.

So you thing '42 is when is started, the heavy bomb-- '43?

Germany was-- yeah. I don't know that it started in '43, but I would think it would be only after 1943. Because up until that point, the war is going for the Germans. And only after the Battle of Stalingrad, when they start retreating and they lose the battle, that the Allies gain some more advantage-- and I would think that most bombing would have taken place in '44. It might--

That late? Well, '44 we were already by that time on the farm. We were outside of Berlin.

I don't know--

But I remember, we were in Berlin when we got bombed, too.

Bombed.

Oh, absolutely, because we used to go down to the shelter.

So I'm not 100% clear, but I do know that in the early years of the war, it wouldn't have happened that much. And I might be completely wrong, but simply because Germany was winning. And so how could their airspace be invaded?

Well, but we got hell-bombed I remember that.

OK.

Yeah, I do remember that.

So we will talk about that.

Yeah.

But the radio. Did your parents ever listen to--

England.

Oh, they listened to the BBC.

Yeah.

OK. And what about-- well, you would-- before the war starts, before 1939, did they listen to--

No. That time, I don't know what they-- he just worked on it, but I don't know what he listened to. I have no idea.

Did he read any newspapers?

Yeah, I'm sure they did.

OK. But you don't remember seeing him.

No, no.

Was he in any way political, your father?

If he was, I'm sure he would have been scared stiff after having been incarcerated. I don't think he would have-- not openly that I'm aware of, let's put it that way. I don't know the kind of people he hung out with. I don't know.

OK. And his incarceration is because he said something indiscreet?

Would be probably, most likely. I don't know what-- for but other reason. I don't know.

OK. So no one ever told you.

As to exactly why? No. No. I don't know if I would have understood it. I have no idea. I don't know.

OK. Did you ever see in your neighborhood any brownshirts?

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I remember them marching down the street and singing-- I can still hear what they were singing. Oh, yeah. You know, [SPEAKING GERMAN].

What does that mean?

Oh, throw out all the Jews, and cut off their legs, otherwise they'll come back. Yeah. That's [SPEAKING GERMAN]. and cut off their legs, otherwise they'll come back again. I remember that. Oh, yeah. Yeah, they used to march down the street. The Hitlerjugend-- I don't know if they were just the Hitlerjugend or the actual soldiers, I don't recall. But I do-- I remember Kristallnacht.

Tell me about that.

Did we talk about that?

Not yet. Let's do it now.

Well, what I remember-- well, there was a lot of noise, of course, in Kristallnacht, a lot of going on. I didn't know what it was. A lot of breaking glass. And I remember the next day going outside, and the store next door to us, which was a bookstore, Jewish bookstore, all the books were thrown out. And from the cheder, the Torahs were thrown on the street. And my mother, alav ha-shalom, picked up a picture, and she held it to her side, because it had the Lions of Judah on it. So she held it up against her body so they shouldn't see what she had picked up.

And I remember on the corner by us, on Grenadierstrasse-- yeah, that was on Grenadierstrasse-- there was a Jewish shoe store, and it was totally damaged. And a person showed up. It must have been the owner, because when he came, you could see he was extremely angry, because everything had been destroyed.

So it was quite a mess. The street was a mess, because there were quite a few other Jewish stores that they had damaged. They probably would have burnt more, but sometimes they knew they were other-- they couldn't burn just what they wanted to burn. Other people would be involved and the fire department might have gotten involved, I'm not sure, to stop it.

But that sticks out in my mind a lot, Kristallnacht.

Did you hear things during the night? Or is it--

Oh, yeah. You had people-- well, there was some screaming going on. But that was-- yeah, not too much there. But I remember when we had moved to Grenadier-- to Dragonerstrasse, I remember we used to have a blacksmith in the yard by us in the back of the-- you know, we lived in the back. And across from us, there was an apartment on the third floor. There was a lot of iron laying on the main floor and by the-- where they used to hoof their horses.

Right.

And I know somebody jumped out of the window and killed himself from the third floor. He fell down and killed himself, committed suicide.

That night?

That was not Crystal Night. That was later. That was later. And also, in our building on Dragonerstrasse, we had a family live below us. And one night my sister Ruth happened to be coming up the stairs, and the couple that lived below us had a daughter. And he threw her out of the apartment, and my sister brought upstairs by us and-- he threw her out of the apartment.

And she came upstairs. She was carrying on and crying. She didn't know what was going on. What happened there was they had been notified that they would be picked up in an hour. So what they proceeded to do was to try to commit suicide. He succeeded. I guess he drank something and he gave it to her, too. But then he also took-- we to have a contraption on the wall that if you put a dime in there, you would get gas to cook with. And he took that hose into his mouth.

But she didn't have it. So she survived. And she survived with that girl. Her name is Inge. I used to play with her. And she we hid her amongst our-- you know, in bed. And they came upstairs looking for her, but they didn't know what to look for because there were so few of us, you know. And she was sitting amongst us. This must have been '40-- again, '42, '43, I don't know exactly.

Oh, that could easily be-- so this was-- they knew that they were going to be picked up, and the husband and wife decided to commit suicide?

Right. Well, I don't think she knew about it. I think he probably was in charge. And he threw her out. I think she-- it might have been his stepdaughter.

Ah. And he didn't want her to see that.

Well, apparently he didn't care. He just want to get rid of her or try to save her. I don't know. You know, he threw her out of the apartment--

You don't know, yeah.

Yeah. And like I said, she survived, and with a child. She did survive. And I remember going to see her where she was in the hospital. And then we lost track. And then we had heard that the little girl-- she was in hiding, but the little girl came down with diphtheria. And then she had to turn herself in. So they didn't survive.

And I remember on Dragonerstrasse also was a Jewish couple, a family living across the street from us. And oh, they were so excited. They were going to go back home to Poland. Oh, they were busy fixing their clothes and packing. And they were so excited to go back to Poland.

Little did they know where they were going. Maybe they went-- I don't know. But that was the aim, was to get out of there.

After Kristallnacht, did things change in your own home?

No, not that-- not that I'm aware of. Except that we moved. And I don't know-- I don't know how soon we moved after Kristallnacht. I don't know.

OK. And was your father's search to leave intense at that point?

Was it what, sorry?

Was-- his search to leave.

Oh, I think that was going on prob-- at all times. I don't think it was just at that particular time. I think he always wanted to leave. I think after-- once he was incarcerated, I think after that, probably, that he wanted out. Yeah, he tried. I'm sure he went around to the different Jewish agencies to see if he could find a place.

But, you know, we didn't have the money. It would take money to get out. You needed a number, you needed visas. We didn't have that.

And was there any connection to his family in Paderborn in these years?

At that time?

Yeah.

No, not that I'm aware of, no. Because his mother already had died. And I'm not sure when his father died-- well, maybe his father even preceded her death. And she died in '37, I know that.

So if there were siblings, there was no connection to your aunts and uncles or anything like that.

No, not-- no. No. And they for sure would not have helped, because I'm sure they weren't happy as it was, with their-- I think he might have been the oldest in their family.

Yeah. Did you-- do you remember-- ah, I'm sorry. I know what I wanted to ask. In 1938, when Kristallnacht happens in November, you said that's the year your father finally found some employment.

Right.

What was he doing?

Well, you know what, we had moved on Dragonerstrasse. And on that street, at the end of the block, there used to be-- I guess you would call it an electrical outlet firm.

OK.

And somehow, my father, alav ha-shalom, was very handy with many things. He could sew. I mean, there was nothing that he couldn't do with his hand. And somehow, because he monkeyed around with those radios, he got himself hired by this man. He needed help, and he was able to do the kind of work that he needed. Somehow he learned-- I mean, he learned about it. It's all I know.

The electrical trade.

Yeah, he did. Yeah, he became a regular electrician. Yeah. And he was very good at it, because when he came to the United States, he again became-- he was an electrician when he lived here.

And the man who hired him, was he a Jewish person?

No.

So this was a Gentile.

Bensemman. Yeah, he was a Gentile. Yeah.

What was his name?

Bensemman.

Bensemman. Bensemman. Did you meet him?

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

What kind of impression did he make?

I don't know why I went. I have no idea. All I know, they were down in the basement-- I remember, one time I was in another room, and I thought there was like candy laying, it was actually soap. I tasted it. It was terrible. [LAUGHTER] It was terrible. The taste-- bleugh.

Didn't-- that's ugly candy, you know. Distasteful candy.

Yeah. I don't know what I was doing there, but I was there. Yeah, what was next to us? On Grenadierstrasse-- that was Dragonerstrasse. No, on Grenadierstrasse, or was it Dragonerstrasse? Oh, I get mixed up.

Oh, yeah. Next door to us, there was a woman in the basement. She used to do wreaths, out of palms out of the--

Well, that would be a Catholic kind of thing.

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. But she made wreaths, I remember that. Because we used to get material from her for the sukkah. Yeah, to cover the sukkah with. We used to use, you know, palms--

Got it.

--from her for that, yeah. I remember, I used to make birds out of eggs. You'd make a hole in the egg, and you blow them out, and then you put wings on them and hang them up. And sukkahs, they're decorated, sukkahs. And of course, chains. You know, kids always made things out of paper, chains, used to hang them up. So we'd have our meal there in the sukkahs.

Except for Simchat Torah. I remember Simchat Torah in the temple. We used to dance around with the flag, with the flag with an apple on top and a candle on the side, and danced around with that in shul. But that was on Grenadierstrasse. That was not-- man, I'm getting mixed up between these two apartments. But that was all on Grenadierstrasse.

That was little of that going on once we moved to Dragonerstrasse.

Yeah?

Yeah, as far as-- except we were observed the holidays. But I think by that time, my brother was through with cheder. Did he continue? I don't recall. I don't know.

Did you have any contact to non-Jewish children? Do--

Well, in school. I mean, they were all Jewish kids. That's the school we went to, was all Jewish.

Jewish kids. So in the neighborhood, where-- you said--

And the neighbor next door, if there were kids, we'd play with them, yeah. But-- and like I said, Inge, that girl that lived below us, I played with her.

Oh, and she was not Jewish?

Yes, she was.

Oh, she was. She was.

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And their last name was Bloch.

Bloch.

Bloch, yeah.

Inge Bloch.

Yeah. Inge, that was her name, yeah. But she lived below us on Dragonerstrasse.

So when your father got a job-- I mean, one of the thoughts that comes to me is that if he was hired in 1938, then I'm making an assumption that the man who hired him knew it consciously who he's hiring.

Oh, I think so.

And did so anyway, and so probably was not happy with the current political order.

That could be.

Or at least felt sorry for what was happening to the Jews.

Most likely, yeah. Yeah.

That's one of the reasons I asked what kind of impression did he make. But maybe he never showed himself, really, to--

To a [NON-ENGLISH] like me? [LAUGHTER] What's he going to tell me?

To a child, to a child. Do you remember hearing Hitler at all? Did you ever see--

Oh, my God. Oh, do I-- well, what sticks out in my mind when we were in hiding on the farm-- I shouldn't call it a farm. It's an orchard. I remember the radio. We had a radio, it was on.

And I think when they were trying to assassinate him--

1944.

Yeah, I remember that. And that was '44, '45, because already at that time we also had some German soldiers staying near where we were in hiding, on the orchard. And one of them came into the room that we were in, that we were-- in our living quarter-- and turned the radio off. Didn't say anything. I mean, a bunch of kids, in the-- you know. So he just turned it off, and then they left.

Interesting.

Yeah.

The assassination attempt was July 20, 1944.

'44, July.

So it was in the middle of the year.

Oh, so we had another whole year to go.

Yeah, you did. Almost another whole year.

Another year to go. My God. It didn't seem like they were there that long. Unless it was not the soldiers, and maybe they came later. I don't know.

That's OK. That happens, you know, that--

Yeah.

But nevertheless, even of the things that you don't know, you're still painting a very accurate picture for us of impressions, of things that you knew that happened to neighbors, of what your neighborhood was like.

Oh, the neighborhood, yeah. Yeah, that'd be-- I remember them picking-- coming around with a big truck.

Really?

And soldiers would be on the back of the truck with their bayonets and picking up Jewish people. I remember that.

Do you remember the war starting?

The what?

The war starting? It started September 1, 1939. You know, you would have been--

As per se, not that I recall.

Yeah. You would have been seven years old, seven and a half.

No, I don't recall that. No. I'm sure my parents knew about it, you know. But for myself, no, I was not--

Was there at any point a particularly intensive action taken to empty out the neighborhood, to arrest people in it? Or was this just something, a constant drib and drab?

Well, yeah. I mean, yeah, it was not a constant thing that they did. You know, they would-- some building they would go in and they'd knock on the door and give them an hour to get ready. But I remember in '38 or '39, what I remember is that everybody had a turn in their animals, their instruments, their ski equipment, their radios--

So did you lose your radio then?

No, we didn't. You know, like I said, that name Weber probably protected us somehow. They didn't come by us to get the radio. Yeah, you weren't allowed to have any ski equipment or animals. Well, you also weren't allowed to sit on a bench someplace on a park. Yeah. Jews weren't allowed to do that.

Did you experience that? Walking around?

Well, I didn't go in a park that I-- but I remember hearing about it, that you couldn't-- you were rather cautious. And I forget what year you had to start wearing the Jewish star. Because we made sure we put the Jewish star around when we went to Jewish school. But we also would take it off so that the other kids wouldn't bother us. We didn't-- you know, we took it off and hid it, because if you had it on, then they would taunt you.

I remember one time a kid got beaten up by a bunch of Hitlerjugend kids.

Did you venture outside of Scheunenviertel much?

No, just to go to school. No. No, where would I have gone? No.

So did you ever have-- go to the center of town? Did you go to cinemas there? Did you go--

No.

Did you see the wider Berlin?

Not really, no. No, we lived near Alexanderplatz, which had a big Hermann Tietz department store. I remember walking through that in order to get to school. You could walk through there. And one time I got picked up doing that, because all I did was look at stuff. We used to walk through it. It was warm inside than walking outside.

So they questioned me, but then they let me go.

And this was the police?

No, I think it was probably internal--

Store personnel?

Store-- yeah, I think that's what that was, yeah. That was a classier area, a little bit classier than where we lived, where this big department store, Hermann Tietz.

I believe it was Jewish owned.

Pardon me?

At one point, it was Jewish owned.

Oh, yeah. Yeah, I'm sure. Yeah.

And then--

I remember that. Then they probably took it over.

Yeah. So your world really was a rather-- in the middle of this capital city, it was a smaller world.

Oh, yeah. Into itself, onto itself, at least for me.

Yeah.

Yeah. I mean, other people talk about the Tiergarten. I don't remember ever going to the Tiergarten.

Which is the zoo.

Yeah, I don't-- I'm sure at one point my sisters must have gone to the beach.

On Wannsee?

Huh?

On Wannsee?

I'm not sure. Maybe. I mean, I know of Wannsee, but I've never-- was I there? I don't know. I don't recall.

Have you ever gone back to Berlin?

Never. I would never go back. I know my brother did, because he was professionally involved with his teaching. But I would never go. One of my sisters once went, and she didn't have such a good experience because then the Russians were involved when she went.

Yeah, that would have been the eastern part of Berlin.

Right, right. They almost arrested her, but-- the woman on the bus tour was telling them one thing and she says, no, no it wasn't that way. She tried to correct the woman that was giving the lecture. But I would never go back. It didn't want me. Why would I want to go back? Everybody tells me how beautiful-- OK. Go.

But no, I never went back. Uh-uh. No.

So you don't really feel any much difference because the war starts. But, you know--

No, because things were never really good. I mean--

Right, yeah. That's what I meant to say.

Yeah. Except my-- the involvement with my mother and with what was going on, her trying to help people.

Can you tell me a little more about that?

Well, what can I tell you? I mean, how can I-- I know once in a while, we'd have one person come and sleep over for one reason or another, I don't know. Then that person would sleep with my parents, because there was no other place to sleep.

Do you think that the fact that he was converted to Judaism but had been born Christian and was Gentile, do you think that was a shield for the--

Well, you know, he had-- he stepped-- he had belonged to the Judische Gemeinde. I don't know if you know what that is.

Tell us what that is.

It must have been for-- I don't know. Die Gemeinde. I think die Gemeinde

Community.

--is where they help you, you know. Yeah, he belonged to that. And I think in '39 he stepped out of it to protect us. He stepped away from that.

OK.

So.

OK. But do you think that that made a difference in that--

Well, it seemed to have helped for a while, you know. But it didn't completely protect us. I'm not sure.

OK. Well, we did get picked up, though. We got picked up. My mother must've gotten picked up first, and then we got picked up, all of us. And we were taken to this Krankenhaus.

A hospital?

Yeah. And we were incarcerated there for about a month.

In this hospital?

Yeah.

And what was the hospital called?

I think it was a Judische-- I'm not sure. Krankenhaus Berlin? I'm not--

Was it the Judisches Krankenhaus? Or the Krankenhaus die Judische Gemeinde?

Gemeinde, I think so. Yeah. They took us there, and we were incarcerated there. And then my brother-- I didn't see that, but he told me that he got out there one night, because he wanted to go back home to the apartment and hide some things that he thought were detrimental to us, which he did do. But then when they came-- when he came back to this place, he was arrested and they kept him separate. And they locked them up separately.

And then I was told-- I never saw my mother again, but my two sisters saw my mother. She came there, and I'm sure with a couple of guys that were watching over. I don't know why they brought her there.

So when you picked-- you were all picked up, was she picked up with you?

No. She was picked up before. And I'm not sure where she was picked up. She'd been picked up once before in the apartment and incarcerated, and then they let her go. She was in Polizeirevier, which was not near the Alexanderplatz.

So "Polizeirevier" means like a police station?

Yeah, yeah, yeah. They had incarcerated her there one time, and she came back. But when we were picked up, she was already-- had been picked up. And then they came for us.

And was your father with you when you were--

No. No, he was not. But he got picked up, too, later. But we didn't see that. But I know my sisters told me that my mother came, and they saw her. And they said her mouth, she was all-- that she had all kinds of blisters on her mouth. And that's the last time they saw her. Why they brought her there, I don't know. I don't know whether they were trying to get information by showing her that the kids were alive, I don't know. I'm only guessing.

But you never saw her.

I never saw her again, no.

And you weren't there when she was picked up.

No. No. Or, one time-- one time I remember somebody had come to the house, and she was very fearful. And she said to me, what should I do? And I remember-- I remember saying to her, we should pray to God. And she probably did. Who knows. What did I know?

You saw her-- you saw fear in your mother?

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. She was very much afraid. And I remember, though, also going to the-- afterwards to the Polizei with a package to bring her supposedly some underwear. And I know there was some cigarettes in there. I tried to pick it up so they wouldn't see the cigarettes, because she's a big smoker, and put it back. Did she actually receive the package? I don't know.

But they released her. So it's like, they took her in, and they released her. Not right away. I don't know. I think there was a lot of black market going on.

So you think that maybe she was picked up sometimes because of that rather than being Jewish?

I can't-- I don't know.

You wouldn't know.

But they knew-- I'm sure they knew that she was Jewish. I mean, she was registered. We were registered-- we were all registered. You had to register. You couldn't live any place without being registered, you know. When you moved a block over, you had to be registered.

Yeah, there is that policy in some European countries, including Germany, that when people move, they register their new address with the police.

Right.

And it can be very innocuous until it's not.

Right, exactly. Exactly, yeah.

And so there is this procedure, which then means the police know where to find you.

I mean, this is a strange thing to come in my head right now. I remember my father used to have tefillin. And my brother did, too. But did they lay tefillin? I don't know.

All I know is, you know, the [NON-ENGLISH], do you know what that is?

That's the oven for--

I remember then taking it and throwing it on top so they couldn't find it in our apartment.

Tell people, what is it that they had?

Oh, my God. Well, they had [NON-ENGLISH], and they had the phylacteries, you know, you wound around your arm and on your head. And I remember them taking it, throwing it on top of the-- so if somebody came to--

The house, they couldn't--

[INAUDIBLE] search the house so they couldn't find it. So that was on top of the--

And this would have been the sort of thing that very religious Jews would wear, Jewish men would wear.

Right, yeah. Yeah. Now, I can't honestly say what I ever saw my father using it or not. My brother might have, but I don't remember, you know. All I know is my father could sing Ma'oz Tzur. He could-- Yeah, he'd do a lot of--

When he converted, he really converted.

Yeah. Oh, yeah, he did. Yeah. Yeah, he did. Yeah.

So your father was being held some place while you were at this hospital.

Right.

But you didn't know where.

No.

And your mother comes by. And your sisters see her, but you do not.

Yeah, but I never saw her, no. You know, on Grenadierstrasse-- I don't know, I meant to mention-- across the street from us there was a vinegar factory. But they also had a place for-- when you go to bathe, you know.

Oh, sort of like a bath house?

A mikveh.

A mikveh.

Across the street. So can you tell-- that tells you sort of what kind of area we were in.

Yeah.

It was-- that was very religious area, even though it was mixed in with Gentiles. Wow, I'm really jumping around like a chicken with my head cut off.

That's OK. We're still getting the clearer picture.

Oh, God.

I know. I mean, the first thing that happens when you're talking about memories is that the chronology is not something that's strong.

Oh, in order?

Yeah.

No.

And that's OK. We're still getting a picture of what did Grenadierstrasse look like, who were the people who were in it, what was happening in this neighborhood, you know.

I can't remember yesterday. [LAUGHTER] I really can't. Every time, oh, my God. It gets worse.

So were all of you-- when you were incarcerated in this hospital, were you all held in the same room? Were you held--

No, I don't think so. I think they had separate rooms. I don't-- no, I don't think. We weren't-- I mean, that must have been an awful big room for all these kids. No, I don't think so. I mean, there were other kids there, too, besides us.

And what did-- what did incarceration mean? Did it mean the doors were locked?

We couldn't go out. We couldn't go out. Yeah, you were locked in.

You couldn't go outside--

No.

--even in the hospital grounds.

No. No. They probably just let my sisters out so that my mother could see, the two older ones. But we didn't get to see her.

Oh, I see.

Maybe it was just as well, I don't know. The way she looked, the way my sister described her, having all these sores--

Did they come back crying or something? Did they--

Not that I recall. No, that was later that they told us about her. No.

OK.

No.

So when they let you go, what did you do?

That's when we ended-- well, we actually went back to the apartment and that, I don't know how soon we left for the farm-- for the orchard, for the orchard. we left shortly right-- shortly after that.

Did your father come back?

Yes. My father came back. Yeah.

Did he look different?

Then he made arrangements. And he-- you know, what happened, well, we had this building on the first floor that used to have stores. And the stores were empty. And this fellow that saved us, this Herr Schmidt, he had-- he used those stores to-- as a storage place for his fruit, because he had a fruit farm. And I'm sure my father was friendly with him.

And he must have offered my father to take us to the orchard, which he did.

And the orchard was--

In his truck. Outside of Berlin, about 60 kilometers outside of Berlin. And so he took us there. And we stayed there. I thought it was for two years. Maybe it's less time, I don't know.

But we stayed there. And food was always short. We used to go begging sometimes. So you'd knock on the farmer's door--

So when he took you to this orchard, was this like a single farm, or was it part of a village?

It was outside of the village. It was by itself. It was like if you're driving along a highway and suddenly you see a tavern or something like that. Yeah.

What was the name of the village, do you remember?

I probably have it in the book. Was it-- I think, was it [NON-ENGLISH], but that's not quite right. No, it'll come to me. It might be in the story, I'm not sure.

In which book?

What I gave you--

Oh, I see, the pages.

Maybe it's in there.

We'll take a look. We'll take a look.

Yeah, maybe.

But do you know the direction that this orchard?

No.

Was it south of Berlin, west of Berlin?

I have no idea.

You have no-- whether it was in the east--

No. No, no. He took us on his truck or whatever.

And where did-- when you got there with your siblings-- and all seven children? He took all seven children?

Yeah, uh-huh.

That's a lot. And where did you sleep? Where did you live when you were there.

Well, first we were-- how can I-- I mean, it was a building that he had. But we ended up actually living in a [NON-ENGLISH].

A washroom?

A place where you do the laundry. It was strictly a laundry room. And that's where we ended up in.

All seven of you?

We had a double bunk bed. I remember that. And I had a big tub full of boiling clothes. They always used to boil white clothes. And that's where we lived.

And was this part of his home? That is his--

His home was further-- it was part of the--

Complex? The farm area?

Yeah. It's like a, you know-- and he wasn't there most of the time.

Did he have a family?

He only had a wife. I found out lately, lately, that he even had children on-- I mean, that just came out recently. We didn't even know that there were children ever. But there was a woman and her daughter living on this property. And I think they were from Poland, and they were working for him.

OK.

But that's-- yeah, that's where we stayed.

And how did you eat?

[SIGHS] Well, sometimes we would go knocking on farmers' doors and ask them if they had eggs for sale. Not that we ever paid for them. And they maybe gave you one or two eggs. Supposedly, I was told later on that somebody did drop off some food to us, or somebody else knew about us, actually-- supposedly, which I never knew about. That came up much later, that the mayor of the town, actually, had known about us.

Well, what they didn't know about-- or they did know-- or maybe they didn't know. What I forgot to tell you is that my father had made a deal with the police to have us converted.

Into Catholicism?

And I remember the day we went to do that. I kept hoping something would happen so it wouldn't happen. Because I knew how strongly my mother felt about it. But it did happen.

It did?

Yeah, it did happen. But even with all of that, we still-- you know, our [NON-ENGLISH] you know, the--

Yeah, the ration cards.

The rations cards was still stamped with a J on it. I remember, you could only go to the store between 4:00 and 5:00.

So this conversion--

When you could go to the store-- huh?

The conversion happened when you were still in Berlin?

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it did. And I don't know-- I'm sure that maybe Herr Schmidt knew about it, or didn't know. I don't know. You know.

Did your father ever visit you out in this orchard?

Yeah. Yeah, he did. He did. Not too often, but he did. Because he was working for this Bensemman. And sometimes, I think my brother went with him, too.

Alphonse?

Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah. So what was I talking about just now? I already forgot.

We were talking-- we were talking about food.

Oh, food. And about being converted.

Yeah. And then you said about how did you-- I asked about how did you get food. And then you saw a lot of people knew-- well, not a lot, but some people knew about--

Somebody. Somebody. I think maybe the town's mayor, or whatever he was, knew about-- oh, we used to cut down trees for firewood. I remember that. It was small trees that we cut down in the forest.

Were you left pretty much to your own devices, the seven of you?

Yes.

Because I get that impression, that you didn't have a very constant or strong interaction with anybody where you were in this orchard.

You're right. Oh, no, you're right. The only people that were there was this--

Polish--

--woman with her daughter.

They could have been--

Primarily.

Yeah. Polish forced laborers?

Could be. Could very well be, yeah. Yeah. And Schmidt and his wife were-- they were there sometimes, but not on a steady basis were they there, that I recall.

OK.

And I know it had outdoor plumbing, I remember that. You had to go outdoors, yeah. But that was OK.

And you did say that there were some soldiers around.

Yeah. I don't-- now you're telling me, though, it was some '44 when they were attempting-- yeah. There were. And I know sometimes we would ask when they had bread. And once in a while, they would give us a loaf of bread. But I don't know. I mean, to me it seems like that was towards the very end of the war, really, when they were there.

Because one time, I know that they had a couple of prisoners. I don't know what they did with them, I have no idea.

You saw that, though?

Yeah, yeah. But that had to be towards the end of the war, before we went back to Germany, to Berlin. Because when things really got close, we decided-- I don't know who decided-- that we should go back, because we knew the Russians were near. And we were afraid of the Russians. We didn't know what the hell to be afraid of. The Germans, the Russians.

But the Russians are the ones that took us over in Berlin. I remember that. That sticks out in my mind a lot.

Tell me about that.

Well, you know, there were a lot of air raids going on. And because of the air raids, a building around the corner from us got bombed.

In Scheunenviertel?

Yeah. They got bombed. And I remember standing and watching with a bunch of people outside trying to-- they were trying to dig out people from that building that was bombed. And while I was standing there, I got hit by a post office truck. I guess I was out in the ways, or they-- I got hit by the post office-- and then I wound up in the same ambulance with those people they dug up out of the basement. And I wound up in the hospital.

And that was towards the very end of the war. Because I wound up being-- staying in the hospital in the basement with all these people that were-- you know, they were not upstairs. They were in the-- they brought them into the basement for shelter-- being there. And I had an open leg. The back of my leg. The car stood on my leg. And I had an openness, yeah.

And of course, they didn't-- they just bandaged it. They didn't sew it up. So that leaked for about five years. And I had five times surgery in the United States on it. And it finally got tired and closed up by itself. So yeah. So it was always pussy.

And then while I was in-- while I was-- I was going to say incarcerated-- while I was in the hospital, my father did not come to see me. Why? Because already the Russians, he was afraid to come out, because they would pick up men and ship them back the other way. But then one day, he finally got up the guts to come. And he-- I think he came with Ginger.

With your youngest sister?

Yeah. I think he took her for protection to come to the hospital and see me. And then I was released. I talk too much.

No, no, no. I know it may be not easy, but-- but this is all-- it's all part of history.

Yeah, I know, but--

And it's very important for us.

I didn't want to do it. This has been a bad week. I've had two weeks-- two, three weeks. My brother died just recently.

I know. I heard.

And that's a story unto itself.

So when you were released from the hospital, could you walk at all? Or was--

Yeah, we walked. It must have been in the neighborhood. Yeah. I don't remember getting into a car. I don't remember--

Having crutches?

No, I didn't-- you mean from the hospital? No, they had to pull me in a wagon. Yeah. No, they had to pull me in a wagon. Yeah.

And do you remember what you saw on the streets then? Did it look very different?

No. Well, the damaged houses were damaged when I went in. I mean, there was a lot of damage everywhere you went. I mean, the buildings were down.

What about your own apartment on Dragonerstrasse?

That got hit at the very end.

Did it really?

It got hit when the Russians marched in. Yeah, at the very end when I wasn't there.

OK.

It got bombed.

And so where did you go after--

Now, I think they-- I think my family was in the basement when it got bombed, but it didn't go all the way down.

It didn't all the way--

Yeah. Yeah, because my-- I know my brother somehow saved-- his baby picture was still hanging. He was able to save that but not my parents' wedding picture. It's in the book, his baby picture. You'll see it in there.

But they had to pull me around, yeah, in a wagon. I couldn't-- I don't know why I didn't walk, but-- it was all bandaged up, yeah.

Now, where did they take you? To a place you'd never been before?

Oh, we went-- the building was bombed, but next door they were moved into the apartment that was empty, I think, on the third or fourth floor. And we lived there.

Did you have-- did you see any Russian soldiers in the streets?

Oh, yeah. Oh, my God. [RUSSIAN]. [RUSSIAN]. If you-- you know you had to be off by 7 or 8 o'clock at night.

There was curfew.

They would yell. It was curfew. And they would yell [RUSSIAN]. In other words, they were going to shoot if you didn't stop.

Yeah, [RUSSIAN] is "stop."

Yeah. Yeah, that I remember. I remember a bunch of Russian women standing on a corner and singing. And then if they saw a pair of shoes that they liked, they would tell you to stop and take them off. They would take them.

I'm sure there was a lot-- when I was in the hospital-- screaming going on, screaming going on. I'm sure they were busy raping people. Because I remember one time a doctor came in with a bunch-- a couple of Russians, and they would point to a girl, or they would-- yeah, the Russian with point, and the doctor would say, no, no, no, would point to their stomachs. In other words, they had been hit. And leave them alone, because they were already hit.

But there was, yeah, screaming.

Did you feel fear?

Huh?

Did you feel fear?

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Oh, sure. Oh, yeah. I mean, with all that screaming going on, you didn't know what to make of it. And God, how old was I? I was 10 then, no?

Oh, you're more. You're 13. You're 13.

I was 13 already. Oh, God. And now I feel like 110.

And after that, after that-- I'm sorry to interrupt-- did you-- how long did you stay in Berlin? How long--

Well, you know what? Well, we got out of there by-- we got here May 20.

Of?

In 1946. We came on the very first ship that left Europe. We came on the very-- we made all the newspapers in New York. But we were in a children-- we were in a camp, a refugee camp before.

Well, let's-- take me through that story. How did that happen?

Well, we went-- you know what, my sister Ruth was the one that was instrumental. I don't know where she went. She talked to somebody. It must have been from UNRRA wherever she went. And they told us they would come and pick us up and take us to a refugee camp. I mean, they knew that we wanted to emigrate, OK?

So somehow she made the arrangements. And they were supposed to come and pick us up, but I guess we must have gotten the date wrong. Because we went a day earlier, and we went by train. The trains were still running. The Russians hadn't-- we're in the Russian zone. We were taken over by the Russians.

That's right.

So we got out. I mean, we're a bunch of kids, and we went wherever we had to go.

What about your father?

No, he didn't go with us. No, we were-- oh, it was-- the arrangement was made somehow that we would get out faster if we went as orphans. And that's what we did. So we went as orphans. And my father was supposed to follow 10 days later. It never happened. It didn't happen until 10 years later.

[GASPS] OK. We'll come to that. But so your sister Ruth in this post-war Berlin, bombed out, in the Russian zone, finds her way to somebody--

Yeah, I don't know how. Yeah.

--who puts her in touch with, clearly the occupying forces.

Right.

And few Germans would ever be allowed to be in refugee camps. They were for actual refugees.

Oh, they tried. They tried. Because I remember, there were a couple of women that didn't belong there, and they picked them up finally and kicked them out. They made off like they were refugees, and they wanted to be on the transport.

So we were in actually two or three different camps. But at the very end, they decided that we shouldn't be with all those other people. And they took us to a separate place where they were just kids.

So tell me about the first camp you were taken to.

Well, there was, you know, a lot of people.

In the Berlin area, or--

No, I think-- I think already, because we took a train, so it must have been outside of Berlin.

In the western part of Germany?

Yeah, could have been, yeah. So they took us there. And then they decided that we shouldn't-- the kids should not be with all the rest of the refugees that were there. And they took us further out. And it was a Catholic place that they took us to, that they had commandeered, I guess. And British actually were in charge. The British--

So it was the British zone?

Could be, I don't know. I can't tell.

You don't know.

But they took us there. And there were lots of other-- there must have been about 50 or 60 kids there. And Jewish kids. Well, the one time-- while we were there, there was another transport of kids that came that some man brought all these kids there, about 10 or 12 of them. And they were all crying when he left, so I don't know who he was or what he was. I have no idea.

But we stayed at that-- oh, and the kids, a lot of them were real Zionists. And if they knew that you wanted to go to America, they practically spat on you. They felt you should go to America-- no, you should go to Israel.

To Israel.

Yeah, you should go to Palestine. So they didn't have any use for you if you didn't want to-- and we had a choice to where we could go. They'd ask us.

And what did you all say?

We said America, yeah.

And do remember saying goodbye to your father?

No, I really don't. I don't-- no. We left from the apartment. But was he-- I don't know. No, I don't remember that. But I know-- I mean, that's what I heard later. Within 10 days-- and actually, a telegram was sent. We sent a telegram that we got there and blah, blah, blah, blah. And he replied. But I don't remember saying goodbye. No.

But he was supposed to follow us. But he didn't. He got stuck for 10 years. And then he got married again and had another child, so.

After the war ends, did you start looking for your mother and what might have happened to her?

No. Look? Where would we have looked? Where? No.

So you just assumed she's gone.

Oh, yeah.

She's not coming back.

I believe we were notified that she was gone. Yeah, I'm sure we were notified.

OK.

I think at least my father was notified. Yeah.

Did you feel angry towards him when he arranged for you to be converted into--

Not towards him, no. I just didn't want it to happen. But I wasn't angry towards him. No, because I didn't know him as a Catholic. No, I didn't know him that way at all. No, because he was observant. No. No.

OK. The reason I ask is, sometimes when a person's a child, you know--

They have mixed feelings, I'm sure.

They have-- yeah.

Yeah. But it didn't affect me that way. No. No.

So you're in this camp which has some sort of British authority, with other children. And this was within a year of Germany capitulating. And then what happens? From this camp, what happens?

Well, we get-- we were the first transport to leave. Yeah. And we left. We arrived here as the very first-- you'll see in the book pictures. When we arrived in New York. And then we were stayed in the Bronx, I think, someplace in an old house.

All six of you together-- all seven of you together?

All of us, and besides all a lot of other kids that were with us on the transport.

Were you under anybody's care?

If we were, I wasn't aware of it. I'm sure there must have been, you know.

OK. Do you remember anything of the trip over?

Oh, yeah. I remember-- well, I remember in Germany itself, I only once saw a black person, once-- a long-- I don't know what he was there for, but he was there. But on the ship, there were black sailors. We used to say, can I have an orange? Of course, we couldn't say it so well. [LAUGHS]

We got seasick. One of my sisters never got out of bed, my sister Renee, because she was so seasick all the time. My sister Senter helped out serving. And at the end of the trip, they actually gave her a letter with \$50. Yeah.

That's huge.

What did she do with it? She bought candy. [LAUGHS] And they wrote her a letter thanking her for all her help. Yeah, because she helped them. I don't know. And some people, they entertained themselves on the ship. I don't know if it was 10 days, 8 days, 12 days on the ship.

Was it a military ship?

Yes. And it supposedly went back to Russia, was going to be going to Russia. Whether it actually did-- we came on the Marina SS Flasher. Yeah. Yeah, we came on that ship.

And we were-- because there was-- we were upstairs, upstairs. There's upstairs then downstairs in the ship. So my brother was down in the hole. But I said, no, no, no, he can't be down there. So we had him sleep with us. So we had a porthole we could look out and all.

And so once you're in the United States and you're in the Bronx, you stay in this house.

Yeah.

What happens after that?

Well, we were there-- well then, they decided since we were from Berlin, a big city, that we should go to a big city. So they chose Chicago. And apparently, they felt they had enough foster homes, which was in Hyde Park. And there were a lot of Germans living in Hyde Park. So they brought us to Chicago.

And that's when the separation came. We had never been separated until then. So that day when we arrived in Chicago to the Jewish Family Service downtown, then they put us-- we came all in a cab. And my brother would come out. Each child was dropped off at a different foster home. He would come to the door with us, and then we were left with a new family.

And did you know this was going to happen?

No. I wasn't aware of it. I don't know. Maybe I knew it and didn't take it in. I don't know. I have no idea, so.

It sounds like it would have been shocking.

Well, it-- [LAUGHS] well, it was not. Yeah, it was not. I'm sure they tried to be nice, but yeah. It was strange. There's no question about it. It was-- yeah. Then-- then-- yeah, then lots of different things happened that were not always good, you know. Because then Ginger, Ginger was the youngest so she became adopted. So that broke the family up even more. So then we didn't see her for many years.

Except that we knew where she was. We always knew where she was. Why? Because her father was a big shot doctor who was a neurosurgeon. He was well known in Chicago. And so we always knew where she was.

So you were-- by the time you were left at this family, you're about 14 years old.

Yeah. And I started-- I started in sixth grade in grammar school, summer school. Yeah. But I didn't like it. I was not happy with them. And I complained to the social worker so they moved me. And why was I not happy? Big shot. I didn't like the fact that they locked up the pantry at night.

You were hungry.

I didn't like that. So I complained about that. And they moved me to a different foster home. I moved, I don't know, about three, four times. When I wasn't happy, I would complain to the social worker, and they would move me.

And did you ever find a permanent place with a foster family?

Yeah, the last family. The last family I lived with, the woman had never been a foster mother, but the husband, the man that she was her second marriage-- that she was married to, he had-- his wife had a foster child. So they decided-- her daughter was grown, and she had room, and they decided to take me in. And that was-- I ended up living-- unfortunately, she passed away, I think, maybe after a year or two. I'm not sure which.

And then I ended up living with my foster sister. And I lived with my foster sister, then I ended up getting married from her apart-- from her place, so.

So you were of an age where it would be unusual to adopt an older child.

Oh, that-- no, but the only other one they wanted to adopt out was my sister Judy. And the family that she lived with asked me, oh, how would I like it if she was adopted? And I said no. And she had said no.

Well, then they became nasty. They wouldn't eat with her. They let her eat by herself. They took away all her toys. And she was, what, maybe eight years old at that time.

So then they moved her, you know. Because they were so unhappy, they had decided they wanted to adopt her, and my sister said no, so.

Did she get adopted?

No. No, she didn't want to be adopted. No. She lived with her-- the second family she stayed with, she stayed with the whole time. And my sister Renee also stayed with the same foster family the whole time.

And your other older siblings, what happened to them?

Well, they didn't stay-- they were older. And because they were older, they stayed for short-- one of my oldest sisters soon was moved out from the foster family. And I don't know what year she got married. But she did-- maybe she lived with them a year. I'm not sure.

And my sister Ruth, too, didn't stay too long. She did-- she had some very unhappy experiences, my sister Ruth. Not my sister Senter, but my sister Ruth had some unhappy experiences. And she moved out.

But my brother ended up staying with the same family throughout. So he was better off.

Did you meet one another?

Pardon me?

Did you ever--

Occasionally. Yeah, not too often. Once in a while we saw each other. For a while there, for instance, from the second foster family, I ended up living-- I think maybe not the second, maybe after the first, I ended up living with my sister Renee for a short time. They didn't have much room, because Renee slept on an inner bed. So I slept there with her. But it was temporary I was there.

So I stayed with her for a while. But no, my two older sisters moved out, and my brother stayed with the same foster family. And like I said, the last-- I had 1, 2-- 1, 2-- I think two. I either had three or four foster families. But the last one I stayed, yeah. Yeah, that was the best one.

And so you would keep in touch but sporadically.

Sporadically, yeah. And of course, with Ginger we couldn't. They cut that off pretty soon.

Really?

Because supposedly she always got very unhappy if she saw us.

Now, she would have been how old?

By the time she was adopted, she was seven. So she was the youngest. So. But like I said, we always knew where she was. When I was in the hospital, I know one time, her father came in to see a patient. And I knew that she-- but I didn't say anything to him. I should have. I didn't. He was there taking care of a patient, you know.

But we all-- she didn't-- she lived in the neighborhood. It wasn't like she was outside of the neighborhood. So we knew where she was. And then of course, when she got older, she actually had her own car. She used to drive around the area. We knew it, yeah, where she was.

When did contact re-establish with her?

Pardon me?

When did you re-establish contact with her?

Oh, I wish I knew the year. You know, one day I was home. I used to send her occasionally a birthday card. And then one year, I came home at lunchtime from work, and there was a phone call. I almost dropped dead. It was Ginger.

She called. And that was after her accident, about two years after, I think, her accident that she had. And so that's when we started to re-establish contact.

And that would have been about what year?

She's 75. She probably was 45 at that time.

Oh, my gosh. So you kind of lost your sister when she was little, and you just--

About 45. Well, she got married, she had children. And I'm sure her husband probably wouldn't want to be in-- she was torn, let's put it that way, between this family and that family. And you know, she's very close. She was very close with that family. They were very good to her. They adopted other children besides her, so.

But it was-- I always thought about her. I was-- I used to think of baking her a cake and burying it for her birthday.

So many losses.

Because she always used to cry. She says, hey, Manya-- that was my middle name-- [SPEAKING GERMAN]. And I don't know why she said, but she did.

Did you write to your father?

Did I what?

Did you write--

Yeah. I wish I would have kept the letters. I didn't. I don't know. I wish I would have done so many things I didn't. Yeah, we did write. Oh, yeah.

So what was his situation?

His situation was he went back-- well, he married.

So he stay-- but he stayed in the east in that Scheunenviertel area?

Yeah, he did. He did. But then he got out. But I don't know what year, either. Actually, they must've stayed there-- he

married a woman who had a child same age as Ginger, a girl. And then they had another child.

And then they moved away from there. He went back home.

To Paderborn?

Yeah. I don't know exactly there, but near there.

Well that's another-- to me, the significance is it's in the west.

Yeah, yeah.

So that he went-- by the time he leaves, he's-- and the wall doesn't come up until '61. So between '45 and '61, people still could leave.

Right.

You know, it wasn't--

Well, they left surreptitiously, because I remember her telling us, she crossed the water-- she meant in places where she wouldn't be seen-- carrying my half brother Harry on her back, so she could cross over this river to get there with her-- you know, she took her daughter first and then Harry. And then afterwards, I think he must have gone to visit his mother's and father's grave, and probably left something there. And I think the family found him.

Or I don't know if he found them or they found him, because there was property involved. And they couldn't touch it because he was not there.

That is, he or they couldn't touch it, because--

Right. Yeah, it was in the will.

Because he was the oldest one?

Right. I think so, yeah. And then I guess he ended up settling with them, at least to my knowledge, yeah. Yeah. And I don't know how many were still alive when that happened. I don't know. I know the parents were gone, but I don't know how many siblings survived. I don't know.

And did they all, all of them come here to the United States?

No. His family?

Yeah.

No, none of them.

I mean, his mother-- his wife, his new wife and his child?

Oh, yeah, she came. Yeah, yeah. She came with her daughter. Oh, yeah. We're in touch with her.

OK. So when he arrived here, he arrived with his new wife--

Family, yeah.

Yeah, OK.

They lived near the area where I lived in South Shore.

And so he moved to Chicago to be near you?

Yeah. Oh, absolutely. Yeah. And I remember taking him to-- around to find a place for work, took him to an electrical place. Oh, and he would look at it and said, yeah, yeah, yeah. He knew everything. I mean, he knew all this stuff.

And they hired him. But then they couldn't-- then he couldn't-- you know, because they would travel-- he didn't have a car. He didn't know how to get around. And my sister Judy used to work at the University Hospital in Chicago. And I guess she found out that there was an opening.

And she got him an interview, and they hired him, because they had gotten a big piece of equipment from Germany, and they needed somebody to put it together. So he knew German, so he was-- he worked on that. And he worked for them. And then he knew where he was going every day. He knew how to get by train.

I see. Did he ever get a car?

No, they never drove a car, to my knowledge, no.

What year did he arrive?

I don't know.

Was it-- well, if it's 10 years--

Let's see. Wait a minute, I'm trying to think. I had my first child. OK, so it was somewhere in 1956, because my daughter was born in '56. So it was '56 or '57.

OK. And was there-- what was the immediate reason, if you ever found out, if he was supposed to come 10 days later, why 10 days later not?

I don't know. Maybe the person that made the arrangements was moved. I don't know. We don't-- I don't know.

Did you as siblings ever feel like he abandoned you?

No. No, no.

OK.

No, that he didn't. If he did, why would he come?

Well, of course, but--

No. We never felt that, no. No.

And when he did come, did that create the opportunity for more interaction?

Yes and no. Because we were already adults by that time. We had established our own life. I mean, we saw him, but it wasn't, you know, what you would call a close-knit family. You know, a stepmother. You know, that was already beyond us to accept a stepmother.

But to-- I mean, I'm still very much in touch with my stepsister. And my half brother Harry.

And did your father ever return to Germany?

Oh, God, no. No. Why would he?

The only one who returned, like I said, it was all connected with his work, my brother. He was the one that was very much involved. He went back more than once, several times, because he lectured.

And when did your father pass?

What, dear?

When did your father pass?

Oh, time to figure out. I mean, I'd say maybe he had about 10 years here, I think. My daughter was born on '56, so maybe 8 or 10 years that he might have had here.

Was he a storyteller, your father?

If he did, I don't recall. I don't recall that, no. He loved music, I know that.

Have you told your story much to your own children?

Did I?

Mm-hmm.

Well, to my daughter, I did, the kids. Yeah, she wrote all that-- she, my daughter, she put all that book together. Yeah. And she lit into me last week. I have to tell you a story. I don't want to. I'm sick of it. I'm tired-- I keep saying, pretty soon it'll be over. I'll be gone, it'll be over and done with. I'm so tired of it. I'm tired.

This is a bad time. Bad time for this.

Well, I appreciated--

Yeah, my brother just died. I mean, my brother, I was very close to him.

Yeah.

And that's an unhappy story by itself. It's too painful. Too painful.

Well, I appreciate that you have done this even in this bad time now. We really appreciate it. You have given us--

I know, but-- well, if you can make something out of the mess, good luck to you.

It was not a mess. It was a very important piece of the puzzle. And I particularly appreciate the view, the insight you gave us, into what this life in Scheunenviertel was.

Oh, yes, Scheunenviertel.

We have very few people--

Oh, that's true, yeah.

--very few people who lived there who could tell us about it.

That's true, yeah. because most of them were classier, that's for sure.

Well, many of them perished. They're not around.

Oh, a lot of them. Yeah, unfortunately. Yeah a lot of them did. Yeah.

So I will at this point--

I know my brother went back, never found anybody on my mother's side.

Never, huh?

No, he went to Hungary to see-- never found anybody out of her family. They were all gone. Oh, God.

Did they come from Budapest or one of the other places?

You know what, I don't think it was Budapest. It tells you in the book what-- you know.

OK.

Yeah. Because the marriage certificate is in there. Right. Yeah.

Is there anything else you'd like to add to what we've spoke about today?

Add? What could I possibly add? I'm very lucky. I married 61 years. I was very fortunate. We have three children.

And OK [INAUDIBLE].

OK. Well, thank you again.

You're welcome.

Thank you again, Gertrude. I appreciate it.

Thank you.

And on behalf of the museum, we appreciate it. And I will say that in conclusion, this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Gertrude Chapman on September 28, 2016 in Chicago, Illinois. Thanks again.

Thank you.

OK.