

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017
RG-50.030*0927

PREFACE

The following interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

DOROTHEA FINGERHOOD

April 27, 2017

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mrs. **Dorothea Fingerhood**, on April 27th, 2017, in **Manhattan, New York City**.

Thank you very, very much for agreeing to speak with us today, and for agreeing to share your story and experiences. We are going to start the interview with the most basic questions, and build our story from there.

Answer: Okay.

Q: So, the very first question I have for you is, can you tell me what was your name at birth?

A: **Dorothea Hulda**(ph) **Coen**(ph).

Q: **Dorothea Hulda**(ph) **Coen**(ph).

A: Right.

Q: And what was your date of birth?

A: 2-10-1928.

Q: Does that mean February 10th, 1928?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And where were you born?

A: I was born in **Hamelin**, where the **Pied Piper** comes from, but we moved to **Berlin** by the time I was a year old.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: So you have no memories of **Hamelin**?

A: None.

Q: No.

A: Absolutely none.

Q: Do you have memories of **Berlin**?

A: I do.

Q: Do you remember what part of **Berlin** your family moved to?

A: Well, we lived in what is actually now east **Berlin**, but it was called **Bierstich(ph) Gardner Strasse**.

Q: **Bierstich(ph) Gardner Strasse**, okay.

A: And my sister and I went back, and tried to retrace our steps, and it – it was a drugstore, but there was basically nothing there any more.

Q: This is where – did you live near the drugstore?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And how is the drugstore figure in your story?

A: Well, my parents had – they were both chemists, or druggists, whatever you call them.

Q: Pharmacists.

A: Pharmacists.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A: And they had three stores. And one of my mother's brothers took care of one, and I guess they took care of the other two. And, interestingly enough, my father was a very assimilated German Jew. He was not taken to a concentration camp. Like, the only person that I know. And, in a way, I think if he had been, my mother would have gotten him out.

Q: We'll come to that part of your story –

A: Oh, okay.

Q: – later. Right now, what I'm trying to get a sense of is what was life like in pre-war **Germany**, in your childhood. Who are the people – I'll – I'll – I'll ask these questions –

A: Sure.

Q: – in turn. But the purpose is to paint a picture with words, of what was the environment in which you grew up. So, since we're talking about –

A: Right.

Q: – pharmacies, tell me, did both of your parents go to high – higher education?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. Which places? You don't know.

A: I don't know.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: That's okay.

A: I think my – my father came – I'm – I'm pretty sure it was an arranged marriage, and I think my father was the pharmacist, and when they married, my mother got her training.

Q: Are both of your parents from **Hamelin** originally?

A: No.

Q: Where were they from?

A: My mother came from a place called **Fulda**.

Q: I've been there, yes, **Fulda**, mm-hm.

A: And came from a very large family. And my father had two brothers, and came from a much more elevated background. And he li – when I visited his mother, it was in **Breslau, b-e-r-s-l-a-u**.

Q: So that would be in e-eastern part of **Germany**, near **Poland**. And **Breslau**, I believed –

A: I – I don't know.

Q: Okay. What were your parents' names, first names?

A: **Leo** was my father's name.

Q: Okay.

A: And my mother was **Rosetta**.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: And her maiden name?

A: **Lump. L-u-m-p.**

Q: **Lump.** When you say that they came from different social strata, what do you – what do you mean specifically, in the sense of what – what did her parents do to support their family, what did his parents do?

A: I don't know what my father's parents did, but as a kid, I mean, I was 11 when I left, so I just have vague memories. They, to me, seemed to live quite elegantly.

Q: Also in **Berlin**?

A: I think it was **Breslau** where we visited.

Q: Okay.

A: And my grandfather was a cow dealer.

Q: A lot of people dealt in cattle.

A: And – in **Fulda**. And to me, he was very forbidding. I mean, he was very Jewish, he had a long beard. He – he was – I think I was always a little afraid of him. His wife was a wonderful woman, my grandmother. She had cancer, she lived – they lived very modestly. But I remember – and I used to visit a lot, because I think my parents were always working. And she sort of lived in her bed in their living room. But she was very wise, and I remember really loving her.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Was she the person who you could run to, for example, if you had a problem, or

–

A: I don't know that I actually did that, but I –

Q: Okay.

A: – I just was aware of her being –

Q: Okay.

A: – very brave, and old and you know, kind of wonderful.

Q: Okay.

A: But my mother came from 11 children.

Q: That's a lot.

A: That's a lot.

Q: That's a lot.

A: So when I used to visit in **Fulda**, there were a lot of siblings, and I always remember having good times there. We did very simple things, like pick blueberries, you know, but I – I – I loved visiting, and I'm told that we visit – I have a sister – that we visited a lot, because my parents were working a lot.

Q: Well, when you have a store, you know, it – it's almost like a f – it's more than a full-time job. You can't leave the store.

A: And they both – and they both worked.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Yeah.

A: But we did have somebody in the house, which I don't really remember, you know, there was some kind of help, but not –

Q: When you vi –

A: – mainly for – to me.

Q: When you visited your grandparents, did you go by train, did you go by car? Do you remember?

A: I don't remember.

Q: That's okay.

A: I don't remember.

Q: It's just that **Fulda's** not very close to **Berlin**, you know.

A: I know.

Q: It's a bit of a hike, you know.

A: I know. I don't remember.

Q: Okay. You say your grandfather looked forbidding, on your maternal side. Was he somebody who was a very religious person?

A: Yes, very.

Q: Was he Orthodox?

A: Yes.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay. Had they come from – from some part of **Germany**, or from **Poland**, or something? No.

A: Sorry, I don't know.

Q: That's okay. I ask these, but it's okay if you don't know. It's perfectly fine. I'm trying to get a sense of what was the background, what were the roots, you know, and sometimes –

A: Right.

Q: – people know about these things, and sometimes they don't.

A: I don't have any memory of the family, my grandfather and grandmother really being together. I don't think I ever saw them together. I remember her being in the bed, and my aunts and uncles –

Q: Okay.

A: – being there, and they were – we did things together.

Q: Okay.

A: But I really don't remember any family –

Q: Okay.

A: – dinners, or anything like that, with all these children.

Q: Do you remember the names of your aunts and uncles?

A: Yes.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Could you tell me?

A: I hope I remember them.

Q: That's okay.

A: Well, they were – my mother was the second oldest.

Q: Okay.

A: The first one was **Tilly**.

Q: Okay.

A: Then my mother, **Rosie**.

Q: Okay.

A: Then **Berta**(ph), who was wa – she is the one who brought my sister and I here, and they – they were like parents, and absolutely couldn't have been more wonderful, in every way. They were really – you know, I think they allowed me to grow to be happy, and successful.

Q: That's huge. That's huge.

A: They were totally wonderful.

Q: Okay.

A: Then – I have a photo of all of them in that file. Now I have to think who came next. **Thelma** is another one. Then the youngest were twins, and their name was **Henny**(ph) and **Hannah**(ph).

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: These all are girls.

A: All girls.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: There were three men.

Q: Okay.

A: **Leopold** was the essence of the family, he was – stu – **Steven**, do I have that right? Was it **Leopold**?

A2: I think so.

A: It – he was a lawyer, and he took care of his sisters, like he got my Aunt **Berta**(ph), who became a legal secretary, or something. But he – he was like the – the head of the family, he took care of everyone.

Q: **Paterfamilias**.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: And a part of the family went to **Shanghai**, including him.

Q: Oh, that's an interesting aspect.

A: That was the only place left open.

Q: Okay.

A: At the point.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: We'll talk about that. We'll talk about that.

A: But, so he went to **Shanghai**. Then there was a black sheep, whose name I can't remember, and nobody ever hears of him.

A2: **Julius**.

Q: [indecipherable]

A2: **Julius**.

A: No.

Q: **Julius**?

A: No, **Julius** was – **Julius** was another one. I can't remember the black sheep, but he – he nev – his name never came up.

Q: Okay.

A: And then there was – oh, the one who went to **Cincinnati**. I should remember his name.

Q: That's okay.

A: Not coming to me.

Q: That's okay, that's okay, you didn't live there, you visited there. And there were many of them, so –

A: There were a lot. So there was – let's – I think there were four sons.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay. So we have **Leopold, Julius**, the black sheep, and the one who went to **Cincinnati**.

A: Right.

Q: Okay. I'm up to nine children. Did all survive, that is, birth?

A: No, one – one who had – who took care of one of the drugstores, got killed trying to leave **Germany** through **Switzerland**, and he –

Q: Didn't make it.

A: – was lo – he didn't make it.

Q: His name was what, do you remember? It may come to you later, if you don't remember.

A: It may.

Q: Okay.

A: I'm so sorry I can't remember their names.

Q: Don't worry, don't worry.

A: But my niece, I – if it's important I can get them for you.

Q: That's okay.

A: Cause my nieces are good about that.

Q: Okay. We can – yes, we're –

A: We can fill in. I can get you all the names.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Yeah.

A: Sorry, it's just not coming.

Q: That's okay. Did your father have brothers and sisters?

A: My father had two brothers.

Q: Okay.

A: One was an attorney, and he – he was like – you know, very German. I mean, he wore spats and a cane, and he looked like, you know, he stepped out of – one of those original –

Q: Yeah.

A: – elegant Germans. And – and the other, I think maybe was a pharmacist, too.

And his name was **Edward**.

Q: **Edward**.

A: And he went to **Shanghai**.

Q: As well?

A: As well. And he discouraged, from the little I remember, cause I was only 11 when I left, he – and I do remember vaguely, this conversation, saying to my parents, don't come to **Shanghai**, people are dying in the streets here. And that was the only place that was open to Jews at that point. So my Aunt **Berta**(ph), that was

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

so good to us, she and her husband went to **Shanghai**, came here, and brought me here.

Q: They were from opposite sides of the family, however, yes?

A: Yes, they – they're from my –

Q: Yeah, father's side.

A: Mother's side.

Q: That's right, **Berta**(ph) is, but the uncle who went to **Shanghai** was from –

A: Was from my father's side.

Q: Did they have contact with each other, these two sides of the family?

A: Y – I'm not so sure, but I can tell you, the one that – you know, the fancy one.

Q: The one with the spats.

A: The one with the spats. I just remembered his spats. And – was one of the first people to go to **Israel**, and hated it.

Q: Really?

A: It was too rough for him. So he came back.

Q: Oh.

A: I think he went with **Herzl**.

Q: Wow. What a way to go, you know.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: And – and he came back, and his – he had one wife, and one son, and they were killed. And he was in **England**, and we visited him. And from this elegant man, he was totally broken.

Q: Oh.

A: I mean, it was really – he was broken, is all I can say. Now, the other one, interestingly enough, who went to **Shanghai**, came from **Shanghai**, worked for my Uncle **Hans**(ph), was **Berta**'s(ph) husband's name. He was incredible. He took – he used to meet the boats, and take anyone who came, to work for him. And he – is it sidetracking to go to that story.

Q: A little bit, a little bit.

A: Do you want to come to that later?

Q: Yeah, I would –

A: Okay.

Q: Thank you, thank you –

A: Cause that's an interesting story. Anyhow, the bottom line is, he came to **America**, worked for my uncle, was offered, you know, restitution or whatever. He and his wife went back to **Germany**. My sister and I could not understand how he could possibly do that. But he was offered, you know, whatever reparation, or he

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

was offered a – a better life there. And he – they went back to **Germany**, and left us a little money. His two nieces, because they didn't have any children.

Q: This is your father's brother?

A: Second brother.

Q: And when you say **Breslau**, to me that sounds like it was in what became **East Germany**.

A: I think it –

Q: I – I think it is, because it has a Polish version as well, of the name.

A: I think so. I think so. Did it then come under **Germany**?

Q: Well, I'm a little bit va – foggy on –

A: I am too.

Q: – the geography, but I do know that these cities changed –

A: They did.

Q: You know, they – the borders changed.

A: Exactly.

Q: The cities stayed where they were, but sometimes they were **Germany**, and sometimes they were **Poland**.

A: And that's what happened here.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Yeah. When they went – just a side note again – when they went back to **Germany**, did they go back to –

A: No, they went to **Berlin**.

Q: – **West Germany? Berlin**. They went to **Berlin**, okay. And you say that your – yo-your parents lived – you lived with them in what was east **Berlin** at one time, on a street called **Bierstich(ph) Gardner Strasse**?

A: Right.

Q: Okay. And do you – can you tell me what it looked like, what the place that you lived, the house that you lived in? Was it an apartment?

A: It – it was an apartment.

Q: Okay.

A: And I don't think it was very large, but you know, it – it sort of had a deco feel. And there were two portraits in the living room, one of my sister and one of me.

Q: Oh.

A: Sort of distinctly remember, you know, these two paintings. And I think there's even a photo of the family.

Q: Do you remember – do you remember how many rooms there were?

A: I'd be guessing.

Q: Okay, guess.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I th – I'm not sure if we shared a bedroom or not, I – it – it was pretty attractive. I mean, it had a living room, it had a dining room, and of course my parents' bedroom, and my sister's and my bedroom.

Q: So, at least four.

A: So at least four.

Q: And a kitchen.

A: And a kitchen. And it was above the store.

Q: So the s – the – the drugstore was underneath.

A: Right.

Q: The pharmacy was underneath, so you literally lived above the shop.

A: Right.

Q: Okay.

A: [**indecipherable**]

Q: And what was the name of the pharmacy? Was it **Coen's(ph) Apotheker**, or something like that?

A: No. But I think there's a photo, so we can look.

Q: Okay. We'll look later. We'll look later.

A: Right.

Q: Did your parents have any household help?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: Yes, we had somebody. But she didn't make a big impression on me.

Q: Okay. Was this a nanny, or was this a maid, do you know?

A: Probably both.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: My mother worked a lot.

Q: Okay. Tell me about what they both did, your parents, i-in their work, as much as you know.

A: All I know is that they were in the drugstore.

Q: Okay. And did you visit them a lot down there, it's a what – you know, one flight down.

A: I don't think so.

Q: Okay.

A: I – I – I don't remember going there much.

Q: But do you – you did go there sometimes.

A: I think we must have, but I don't have a memory of it.

Q: Ah, that was my question, do you have a memory of what it looked like, the drugstore?

A: Not really.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: Sorry.

Q: That's okay. That's okay. Was the – was the apartment in a – an apartment house that had several stories, or was it just the two stories, the ground floor, and the second?

A: I don't remember other floors there.

Q: Okay. Do you remember neighbors?

A: So I think it was a small building.

Q: Yeah.

A: No.

Q: Was it a residential part of **Berlin**, or in the city center?

A: It was actually a little outside of **Berlin**.

Q: Okay.

A: Like almost a suburb, I think.

Q: Did the neighborhood have a name? Okay. That's okay.

A: I – I think it was in **Berlin**, but just a little out.

Q: Okay. Okay. So certainly not city center.

A: No.

Q: Okay. Were there trams who – which went by, or – what was the transportation like?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: That's a good question. I don't know. I don't know how I got to school. We must have walked.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Did you go to the **Berlin** city center much?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, special occasions, my father would take us to.

Q: Did he have a car?

A: No.

Q: Okay. Did you have electricity in your home?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have telephone? It's okay. That's okay. Did you have a radio?

A: We must have, but I don't remember.

Q: Okay. And now some question that a li – sound a little bit strange for **Germany**.

When I ask them about **Poland**, maybe not so strange, but did you have indoor plumbing?

A: Yes.

Q: All right. And did you have – how did you heat the home? Was it coal, was it –

A: It was warm, so there must have been some kind of central heating.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay. Do you remember coal ovens? You know, the kind that have tiles on them?

A: No.

Q: Okay. Was it a fairly modern building then?

A: I think so.

Q: Okay. Okay. And was – was it in a neighborhood where there were other Jewish people?

A: You know, I don't think there were too many Jewish people in our neighborhood.

Q: Okay.

A: Which I think is part of the reason my father didn't go to a concentration camp. I think, you know, he had a good relationship with –

Q: All of his – all of his neighbors, yeah.

A: – with the –

Q: Non-Jews, yeah.

A: – Germans there. It's very unusual that he wasn't taken to a concentration camp. He's the only one I know.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay. We'll – we'll come to that. We'll come to that part. So, when he did take you on the rare occasions, to **Berlin** city center, you know, whether this was **Unter den Linden**, or someplace else.

A: Right. It was a treat.

Q: It was a treat, huh? Do you remember any particular instances that stay in your memory?

A: I think we went to the zoo.

Q: Oh, yeah? Yeah.

A: And we must have gone to some cultural events, cause I do remember, you know, there'd be treats like, we'd go out. And then there were family outings, with my mother as well.

Q: Okay.

A: Where we went to – I think we went to – was **Martin Luther King's**?

Q: It was **Martin Luther**.

A: **Martin Luther**.

Q: Yeah.

A: To –

Q: **Würzburg**? That – that was in what became **East Germany**, where he wrote his – I think it was his theses against the Catholic church.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: We went to that.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I don't know why I remember it.

Q: Or **Wartburg, Wartburg**, it's a – it's a castle on a hill.

A: I don't know why I remember that, but we went there.

Q: Okay.

A: And then we must have gone, because I have photos. Little picnics.

Q: But do you remember the picnics, or only because you have the photos?

A: Only because I have the photo.

Q: Okay. Tell me a little bit about their personalities, as much as you remember them.

A: It – my mother is what I've been told, and I – that's what I remember, was the principle character. She was very dynamic. I mean, she got her degree in pharmacy. She had – she was friends with the rabbi who got us out. She – I remember her as being much more active.

Q: Okay.

A: And I think my father was more sedentary.

Q: Okay.

A: And –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: She was an extrovert?

A: I would think.

Q: Okay.

A: She was much more dynamic.

Q: And what about your father, then?

A: I think he sat a lot. And – but he was very loving. Not in a super demonstrative way, but you just felt that he was a kind, loving person. But he didn't have a strong influence.

Q: That's interesting.

A: On me, anyway.

Q: And – but your mother did.

A: Yes.

Q: In what way?

A: I – I just felt she was very active. She was always, you know, doing something.

Q: Was she very involved in your life, and in your sister's life?

A: I don't think she was that involved.

Q: Okay.

A: I had the impression she was more involved in business.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I th – I think she made things happen. It was a terrible time for them.

Q: Of course, of course.

A: And –

Q: We'll talk about that.

A: And I think sh – a – my memory – as I told you, I've denied a lot and I don't know what I'm remembering. But she was quite dynamic. She was doing – she took care of my grandfather.

Q: In **Fulda**?

A: He came to live with us.

Q: The imposing one?

A: Yes.

Q: Had his wife died by that point?

A: Yes.

Q: Oh. Okay.

A: And I think she was much more involved with her sisters and brothers, cause they come to visit us.

Q: Okay. So it wasn't that you went to **Fulda**, it was also that **Fulda** came to you, you know –

A: Yes.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: – in **Berlin**.

A: And then there was this one sister, **Berta**(ph), the one I – who was so good to us.

We – we spent a lot of time there, too.

Q: Okay.

A: So we – we were farmed out to my grandparents, and to **Berta**(ph).

Q: Okay. Tell me a little bit about your sister. We haven't talked about her yet.

A: It –

Q: What was her name?

A: Her name was **Hannah**(ph).

Q: **Hannah**(ph). Was she younger or older?

A: We were 15 months apart.

Q: Okay.

A: And it – and we were very different also.

Q: Okay.

A: But we were separated a lot in **England**. So, while I loved her dearly, and we were very close, we weren't close in terms of having the same interests, or – she was much more – I became very American.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I mean, the minute I set foot, and my aunt and uncle and other aunt and uncles met us on the boat, I knew this was for me. And I've – feel like I have German friends who are much more German than I am. I am totally American. I mean, I've – you know, it –

Q: A-And some – that's true. Some people –

A: It's exactly how I feel.

Q: Yeah, okay.

A: **Hannah**(ph) stayed much more with the German background. She married a man who came from **Vienna**, and she didn't feel as American as I did.

Q: Was she older or younger?

A: Fifteen months younger.

Q: Oh, she was younger even, than you. So you're the older one –

A: Mm-hm.

Q: – of the two of you. Were your parents religious? Your grandfather was, but were your parents?

A: My mother was, my father not at all.

Q: Okay.

A: My mother made the connections with the rabbi, who got us to **England**, and you know, I think she absorbed her background –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A: – a lot more. My father was very assimilated. I mean, he was the kind of German that thought **Hitler**, from my memory, and I think it's accurate, he thought **Hitler** was a temporary madman.

Q: Many people did. Many people did.

A: And, you know, he had a comfortable life. And when I think about it – there was a 10 year difference. And when I think about it now, to pick up and go totally to an unknown place must have been almost impossible.

Q: For many people, it was terrifying. They couldn't –

A: My mother would have done it.

Q: Did your father ever tell you about his World War I experiences?

A: He was in the German army, and I think he was very proud to be there.

Q: Did he tell you about his experiences in it?

A: No.

Q: No. When – when I asked about religious affiliation, did that mean that you and your sister also, you know, practiced? That you – did you go to synagogue, did you keep kosher at home?

A: No. It was more me. My sist – at one point, because of the influence of the rabbi who brought us to **England**, I was really quite religious. But my sister wasn't.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: But when you were still in – in **Berlin** –

A: **Berlin**?

Q: – with your parents.

A: I don't really remember going to temple.

Q: Okay. Was there – were there Jews in your part of **Berlin** that you associated with?

A: Not really.

Q: Okay. Who were your friends? Your friends, as children? You didn't have any?

A: I don't – I guess kids at school.

Q: Okay, but when I say that, it's –

A: But I didn't have a close friend.

Q: You didn't have someone who stays in your memory.

A: No, no.

Q: That's – that's the thing. And at what age did you start going to school?

A: I think six.

Q: Okay. So, at age six, **Hitler** has already come to power. And did that make itself felt in the classroom?

A: It – you know, I think I was pretty oblivious, but I rememb – cause I looked more German than anything else –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A: – coming home from school, and you know, that they were passing out German flags or something, to give to me.

Q: Oh, so you would get flags with swastikas on them.

A: Right.

Q: Okay.

A: But I – it was meaningless to me.

Q: Okay. Well, what about school itself? I mean, you were a little girl, so I don't know how teachers would have, you know, brought that –

A: I don't really have much of a memory, but I can tell you when we got to **England**, I was much advanced, from going to school in **Germany**, to **England**, which was very surprising to me.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, must have –

Q: So, you learned.

A: So it must have been pretty good.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Cause I had no trouble switching.

Q: So, how long did you go to school in **Berlin**? You started at age six?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: Til I was 11.

Q: So you never were thrown out of school?

A: I don't think so. I don't remember being thrown out.

Q: And –

A: It's kind of vague, I have to say, but I don't remember being thrown out.

Q: Okay. And did your sister **Hannah**(ph) have a similar experience?

A: It – **Hannah**(ph) had more friends.

Q: Okay.

A: And I don't – I don't remember her talking about.

Q: Okay. Okay, that's fi – I mean, it's – in some instances, school made an impression.

A: Right.

Q: In others, it didn't.

A: Well, like when you see **Kurt's** book, I mean, he remembers every detail. I don't. I remember funny things, like this uncle, who used to come and visit, he had a car, and –

Q: The one with the spats?

A: No, this is my mother's –

Q: Okay, th-the lawyer, who was –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: The – the one who -- **Berta**(ph) married **Hans**, who was a real character.

Q: Okay.

A: And I hid in his car and didn't go to school, cause I wanted to go with him. That was like a daring – I – you know, I remember funny things like that.

Q: Yeah, it is, it is.

A: So those were my adventures.

Q: Yeah. At home, did you have the sense that your home was a happy home, or a cold home? How would you describe it?

A: You know, I mean it's a very good question, but I wasn't unhappy. I just don't remember it being much of a family home.

Q: Well, you – the reason I ask this is, you say that – you said that you thought your parents had an arranged marriage.

A: Yes.

Q: And I wondered where that comes from. How –

A: I think that's what they were doing in those days.

Q: Okay. Okay. Because they do come from different parts of the country, you know, **Breslau** and **Fulda** are not close to each other.

A: And their backgrounds were very different.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay. Your grandfather who came to visit you – and live with you after his – after your grandmother died, how long did he stay with you?

A: Well, we left, and I remember my mother saying she couldn't leave him, that's why they weren't leaving **Germany** –

Q: Oh, I see.

A: – yet. But I had all – we were already in **England**.

Q: So tell me a little bit – you mentioned also earlier that there were – that they had real difficulties in the pharmacy, that she had a lot on her mind, you know, before. What would that – what did that involve? What do you know of?

A: W-Well, **Kristallnacht** was in '33.

Q: No.

A: Wasn't it?

Q: Thirty-eight, '39, I think. We could look it up, but it's 19 – you would have been already –

A2: It was '39.

Q: Thirty-nine.

A: Thirty-nine.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because then they didn't have anything, I mean, cause the store was gone.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Do you – were you there during **Kristallnacht**?

A: Yes.

Q: What do you remember of it?

A: Just a lot of shattered windows.

Q: Were you in the apartment above, when it was happening?

A: I don't remember that night.

Q: Do you remember the next day, and what you saw the next day?

A: I just re-remember coverage in the papers, and seeing these broken stores, but I don't know how it affected us. I just don't know.

Q: So you didn't see your parents own pharmacy?

A: You mean shattered?

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't think so. I don't know why, but I think I'm blocking a lot.

Q: Could be.

A: Because otherwise I'd have a clearer memory.

Q: Did your mother and father talk much at home, about **Hitler**, about Brownshirts, about – you know –

A: No. What we did do is, at that point, I think there were a lot of schemes to get people out of the country. And I – I know, as a family, we – they were supposed to

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

go to **South America**, and we were taking language classes together. And I think that money – you know, was just a scheme. So we – we went through several – they were going through several efforts to try to get us out.

Q: To get all of you out.

A: Right. And we would – and I think they must have paid money to what were really schemes, because I do re – the one thing we did together was take language classes together in preparation for leaving.

Q: By language, do you mean Spanish?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: But nothing ever happened. So I think they were trying, I think at that point. But it was all too late.

Q: Did you understand it, in those years, that **a**, you were Jewish, and that **b**, that was a dangerous thing to be, in **Berlin**. Did you feel a danger –

A: Not so consciously.

Q: Okay.

A: I know it's strange, but not so consciously.

Q: Well, it could also be that your parents tried to protect you.

A: Probably.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: You know. If when – they tried to often shelter children –

A: Right.

Q: – from what was fully going on.

A: Right. And I think they did that.

Q: And there were no incidents on the streets that you yourself experienced?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: Other than being handed German literature.

Q: Nazi literature.

A: Right.

Q: Yeah. Did you ever hear **Hitler**?

A: No.

Q: So, over the radio, you never heard him? Did your parents read newspapers?

A: They must have.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, they must have.

Q: And did you ever see any young people that are part of the **Hitlerjugend**, or any men who would be Brownshirts with wha – swastikas on their arms.

A: I saw them on the street.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: You did?

A: But I wasn't fearful. I mean, I just –

Q: And did you see them do things, or did you just see them walk by?

A: I didn't see any physical –

Q: Okay.

A: – hurt that they imposed on anyone.

Q: And when your uncles and aunts would be visiting from **Fulda** to **Berlin** with you, what was the talk? Do you remember? Were they also – because you mentioned so many of them left.

A: Yes.

Q: You know. Was this the discussion that was going on, that was my que – question.

A: Well, you see, I –

Q: You don't know.

A: I don't know.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, we didn't sit around, and there were no open discussions.

Q: Okay. Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: In talking to you, I realize my parents must have really, really – not wanted us exposed. I mean, that's what I'm getting from this conversation. Kwi – otherwise I'd know more, wouldn't I?

Q: Yeah, yeah. Absolutely, absolutely. So they – their job to try and protect you, worked, you know, as much as possible.

A: I mean, the only conversations I remember are when I overheard the one about don't come to **Shanghai**.

Q: Yeah. What about your paternal grandparents? Do you know what their fate was?

A: You're talking about my mother's?

Q: Your father's.

A: No, I don't know what happened to them.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: I assume they died of old age.

Q: Okay.

A: Cause my father was 10 years older than my mother.

Q: You said that your mother became friends with a rabbi.

A: Yes.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: And yet, you didn't belong to a temple, or weren't really part of a Jewish community.

A: [**indecipherable**] seemed to be her connection. I – my father was not involved in that, but she was very close to this rabbi, who brought us to **England**.

Q: So –

A: And that was her doing.

Q: And did this rabbi – was he from the neighborhood, or did he come to your home at any time?

A: I don't remember him coming to our house, but he must have.

Q: Do you remember who he was – his name? Okay. Do you –

A: But I know it was my mother's thing, definitely not my father's.

Q: Okay. Do you remember meeting him?

A: Yes.

Q: What did he look like?

A: Like a typical rabbi. I don't know how to describe him.

Q: Well, you see, you described your grandfather –

A: Right.

Q: – as very religious, and having a long beard, and – and so on, and being Orthodox. Now, was the rabbi having – did he have an assimilated look?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: No.

Q: Did he – okay.

A: He looked more like a rabbi rabbi.

Q: Okay. Also Orthodox?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Because he, for a while, I mean, I was doing the prayers in the morning, and I wore a handkerchief, I didn't carry any – I was influenced.

Q: Okay, this is when you were in **England**?

A: Yes.

Q: All right. But when you're still in **Berlin**, did you meet him, when you were still in **Berlin**?

A: We must have, but I don't remember.

Q: Okay. So, bring me up to the point where, you know, when you're discussing things earlier, it sounds like it was as a family that you were trying to fi – everyone was trying to find a way to get out.

A: Yes.

Q: All right. How did things progress that it ended up being just the two of you, the two girls?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: Well, if – as I recall, totally my mother’s doing, cause we were – I thought we were the last children’s transport, but I’ve since learned we were the one before.

Q: Okay.

A: But my mother did that with the rabbi. And he met us when we got to **England**, and we were put in what they called the hostel, but what it was, that they had these homes where usually a couple, which is where we stayed, they took in.

Q: We’ll come to that.

A: Oh, okay.

Q: [**indecipherable**] I – I’m – I’m thinking more of before you’re leaving. At what point did the decision come that it will just be the two of you, and not your mother and father together?

A: Because they couldn’t get out.

Q: Okay. And was your father okay with you and your sister leaving?

A: I guess, because we did.

Q: Do you – did they ac – do you remember when you said goodbye to them? Did you remember?

A: Very vividly.

Q: Tell me about that.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: They – I mean, it's just so unbelievable. You know, it all happ – I think it all happened pretty quickly, actually.

Q: Okay.

A: And they took us to the train station, we got on the train, and at the –

Q: Did your – mm-hm?

A: – at the time, we were hoping we would meet them again, because there was a plan that they were supposed to come to **England**, meet us, and then come to **America**. We wer – there – there was such a plan. And when war broke out, of course, a month later, I mean, everything stopped.

Q: Then it means – excuse me, I'm going to step back a bit, you're right. War broke out September 1st, 1939, which means **Kristallnacht** was ni – November '38.

That's –

A: Right.

Q: I keep getting mixed up with those two dates. So, when did you leave **Berlin**, at what point was this? Was this still '39?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, so it must have been –

A: August.

Q: August of '39.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: It was August of '39. It was right before the war.

Q: Right before the war, right before the war. So – so yes, you were – you were there during **Kristallnacht**, and then it must have been all of the efforts to try to get you out.

A: Quickly.

Q: Yeah, quickly. And – and then they would come, and of course, if war breaks out September first, then –

A: That was the end of that.

Q: Okay. Did you have letters back and forth with them?

A: I have a couple of letters, and the last one is in the papers that I have for you –

Q: Okay.

A: – from the Red Cross.

Q: Okay. How long did the letters – and what were the final dates of those letters?

A: I – we'd have to look.

Q: We'll look later. We'll look later. I mean, when I ask for things like dates, I know that most of the time, one wouldn't remember. But I ask anyway.

A: Right.

Q: Those are the – the hardest things to remember.

A: Well, it's one other, I think, important element.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A: Which is, my parents were in hiding, and they survived til – I think it was '45, wasn't it?

A2: Forty-four.

A: Forty-four.

Q: Your parents survived until 1944.

A: They did. That's what's so tragic. They would – they almost made it. And they were in hiding by non-Jews.

Q: Do you know who?

A: No. And then another Jew told about their hiding place, hoping it would save his life, and they were all taken, including the people who hid them. So the tragedy is, they almost made it. I mean, they survived.

Q: Yeah. Yeah. So when you were saying that your father was never sent to a concentration camp, i-it was – it was that he went into hiding, so that –

A: Well, fir – we just learned that first, when **Kurt [indecipherable]**

Q: Wrote that, yeah.

A: And saw them last, he – they took my father to work for the war effort, in a factory.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: Because he was a chemist, he ended up working in some – some chemical company that was considered part of the war effort.

Q: So your fath – okay, let's repeat that so that we hear it on – on tape, is that your father was actually not only not deported, but taken to work as a chemist.

A: Right.

Q: And was your mother in hiding as he – when he was doing that?

A: Well, my mother was still living in the apartment when **Kurt** went to visit them.

Q: So tell us now about **Kurt Roberg**, and how his story intersects with your parents.

A: His –

Q: Who is **Kurt Roberg**?

A: **Kurt Roberg** was a close friend of my aunt's, and his mother. They lived in this relatively small town, **Celle**.

Q: **Celle**, uh-huh.

A: And they were very close.

Q: Which aunt?

A: **Berta**(ph).

Q: **Berta**(ph).

A: The one who was the most important person in –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A: – my life.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they remained friends, and he – his mother and my Aunt **Berta**(ph) were very close. And their lives kind of intersected. And –

Q: And **Kurt** then, how did – how did he come to be in **Berlin** to visit your parents?

A: Because they were friends.

Q: Okay.

A: And he was mo – leaving from **Holland**. He left after the war –

Q: So he did –

A: – started.

Q: Oh, he left after the war started.

A: So he was in **Holland**.

Q: Okay.

A: And then trying to get to **America**, and en route, he was in **Berlin**. And that's what we were reading about yesterday, and you can read it in there.

Q: Tell us about what it was that he writes, so that we'll have it on camera.

A: Well, could – **Stephen**, you could – do you mind doing that?

A2: I think they want to hear it from you.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: My reading is –

Q: It is – do you remember the details of it?

A: Only what he wrote.

Q: Only what he wrote. Okay, so let's do that, at least. Okay.

A: I hate to tell you, my eyes aren't that great.

Q: Well, as much as you can, you know.

A: Okay. “[**indecipherable**] the news from **Amsterdam** about our transit visas was not very encouraging.”

Q: Let's cut for a second.

A: Yeah, I think I want – [**break**]

Q: Okay, okay, during –

A: “My first weeks in **Berlin**, when we had already become – when it had already become clear that I would not leave according to my original schedule, I planned to visit the sister of **Berta(ph) Solomon(ph)**, **Rosie Coen(ph)**, my mother, who lived in **Berlin**. Remembered how helpful the **Coens** had been to my father when he and **Hans Solomon(ph)** – many siblings were – were married to **Leo Coen(ph)**, my father. It – a pharmacist, the **Coens** had two little girls, **Doris** and **Hannah(ph)**, who they had managed to send to **England** with the last Kindertransport, in August

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

1939, days before the outbreak of the war. **Rosie** and **Leo Coen**, unable to leave, remained in **Berlin**, and so now that I was here, I planned to visit. My mother had stayed in contact with **Hans** and **Berta**(ph), who like my release from **K2**,” whatever that is, “the only place opened to them was **Shanghai**, and through the **Suez** canal to **China**, I had gotten their address from my mother, before she left for **America**. You never knew where you would end up, so it was good to have contacts, and keep up connections with **landsleute**.”

Q: Yeah, people from your country.

A: Right.

Q: Yeah.

A: Fellow countrymen.

Q: Yes.

A: Overmen. “So, one afternoon, I made my way – my way to **Berlin**, **Bierstich**(ph) **Gardner Strasse**, and the pharmacy was, of course, no longer owned by **Leo Coen**. It had been Aryanized after **Kristallnacht**. So when I came to the apartment, only **Rosie** was at home. She was surprised to see me, because I had come unexpected, but had brought along some tea that,” oh, his mother, I guess “had sent to me. Remembering my mother always reminded me never to come empty handed. And ...” I – I’m sorry, my eyes –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: That's okay.

A: – are not so good with this. “When our respective family histories, **Rosie** was happy to hear that my parents and brother were already in **America**, and that I was on my way as well. Of her 10 brothers and sisters, **Rosie** was the only one who had not been able to emigrate. Her husband **Leo**, a trained pharmacist, was now working in a chemical factory that was making war materials. I understand that, as such, he would never get a permit to leave. He was now a member of the war essential work force, assigned to work far beneath his qualifications, at wages set arbitrarily – arbitrarily by the Nazis. Since the war had started in September 1939, **Rosie** had heard only sporadically about their two girls, **Doris** and **Hannah**(ph), since they had left for **England**. Direct communication between **England** and **Germany** was no longer possible, and it will come directly through friends or relatives in neutral places, like **America**, or **Shanghai**, or some South American countries. I had met **Doris** about five years earlier, when she was visiting her Aunt **Berta**(ph) in **Celle**, and I was happy that she and **Hannah**(ph) were safely in **England**. I was also glad to have made this visit to her mother, because she and her husband had helped my father.”

Q: So this is the last – this is the last sort of witness report –

A: Yes.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: – about your parents –

A: Exactly.

Q: – from **Kurt**.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Okay. And then after that you learn that – you learn after the war, that they went into hiding.

A: Yes. My father had a friend who worked for the American government.

Q: Okay.

A: And it was really much later that he – he was able to go to **Germany** before, you know, a lot of the history was discovered. And he's the one – but we were already here.

Q: Okay.

A: And it was much later. He's the one who found out what happened, and let my aunt know, and us know.

Q: So, it was years later. Do you ever – did he ever tell you the name of the – there is a German term for the Jews – and there were some very famous ones in **Berlin**, who, in trying to save their own lives, would betray other Jews in hiding. Whether it was **schnauper**(ph) or – some sort of a – a term for them.

A: Right.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Did you ever find out the name of the person who betrayed them?

A: No, no.

Q: As well as – you never knew the names of the people who had saved them?

A: No, no.

Q: And then, do you know what happened to your parents, in the sense of how they died?

A: When, years later, my sister, her husband and I, we went to **Berlin**, and we – we tried to find, you know, the records, and we learned that they were sent to **Auschwitz**. And we have the dates, that's in – in the papers there. My sister found that out.

Q: Okay. And then that was pretty late.

A: That was late. And that – I have that for you, in the papers.

Q: Thank you. Thank you. It takes such a long time to piece just these few fragments of details.

A: I know.

Q: You know? I can't imagine what it was like for you not to know.

A: Well, you – you know, a couple of things happened when we went to **England**.

It – because war broke out, they evacuated the entire school. So all of the English kids who were in our school, were in the exactly the same position as we were. So it

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

wasn't as traumatic, it wasn't like we were the only ones who were separated from our parents. It was, they put the school on a train, they sent you to these remote places, where mostly really poor people had volunteered to take the children, and they got some money. So, you get off the train. They walk you down – down the street, knock on the door, here are two kids, here are two kids. And we – we were all – the English kids were in exactly the same position.

Q: So it's a shared experience in some ways.

A: So it wasn't like we were the only –

Q: Yeah.

A: – non-English speaking German sad little girls, because all the other kids were in the same position. And then – so – and then we still had hope that, you know, my parents, we were going to get together.

Q: Yes. That's early on?

A: It was early on, and there was hope that they – we would meet, and all come to **America** together. I think that kind of saved the total shock. The other thing that happened is – course, we didn't speak the language. So, there were a few German kids, and they sent us to whatever the local school was. I practically had no education.

Q: You're talking about in the countryside.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: In the countryside. So the German kids stuck together, and then the teacher separated us, so that we would speak English. And the funniest thing happened. Because one of the German kids, somebody said to her, where – you know, where did you get your accent from? She picked up my accent. So, you know, was really funny, because she sounded more German than –

Q: Than you did.

A: – than I did. And of course, we had to learn English.

Q: Of course. Of course.

A: And then it was a crazy time, because – I don't know whether you've watched any of this, or this German stuff coming back now. We spent half our time in air raid shelters. We basically had no education.

Q: Let's – let's loop back a little bit then, to the very beginning of your time in – in **Germany** – in – in **Britain**. You went by train?

A: By boat, and then by train.

Q: Okay. So –

A: I think we went to **Le Havre**, isn't –

Q: Yeah, well, that could be. So you went by train to **Le Havre**, and then by boat?

A: Right.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: And then – do you remember the train journey, were you accompanied by anybody?

A: We were just a bunch of –

Q: Children?

A: – children.

Q: Okay.

A: There must have been, you know, a –

Q: An adult.

A: Right.

Q: Okay.

A: **HIAS**, I think is what brought us here.

Q: For those who don't know, please tell them, what is **HIAS**?

A: **HIAS** is an organization –

Q: Okay.

A: – that handled refugees.

Q: What is – what did **HIAS** stand for?

A: I give them money, I should know. Do you know, **Steven**? Hebrew association –

Q: Let's cut the camera, for a second. **[break]** So, before the break –

A: Is it better with or without?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: You can keep it either way. If you'd li – if you're more comfortable with glasses, then let's do it with glasses, yeah. Before the break, we were talking about your – your journey from **Berlin** to **England**, and your first impressions there. Before we continue with the bulk of our story in **England**, I want to step back a little bit, and revisit some of the questions I asked about your childhood in – in **Berlin**.

A: Okay.

Q: Okay. One of them was that, off camera, your son told me that i – your interactions with Brownshirts on the street, sometimes went even beyond just being handed a flag. That people – that sometimes they would talk to you.

A: I think he's making that up.

Q: Okay.

A: I'm not sure. Th-They assume that I was German –

Q: German.

A: – cause I looked that way.

Q: Okay. So you were blonde and blue eyed, is that it?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Yeah. So you don't remember any more than just being handed a flag and sometimes some propaganda literature.

A: Right.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: All right. Then, the next point is, at the **Berlin** train station, is that where your parents said, we'll see you again? Was it at that point, was it before?

A: And I – I think we were all optimistic we'd see each other again.

Q: And did you think so too?

A: Yes.

Q: You thought so –

A: Never occurred to me that I was saying goodbye.

Q: Okay.

A: Just never occurred to me.

Q: Okay. So you said that when you arrived in **Britain** –

A: Right.

Q: – after you had the train and a boat and another train.

A: We came to this house which was called a hostel.

Q: And what – where in – where was it? Was it in **London**?

A: It was in **London**.

Q: Okay.

A: And they had – it had a matron and a husband, who was sort of taking care. The rabbi arranged for all of that. And he must have met us, cause, you know, I saw him at some point. And it was like a little boarding house, I guess is what you – we had

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

our meals there. I shared a room with my sister, and there might have been a couple more beds, I don't really remember. And then we were enrolled in school.

Q: Were all of the children in the hostel from **Germany**?

A: No, there were some from **Vienna**.

Q: But they were all Kindertransport?

A: They were all Kindertransport.

Q: Okay.

A: And then we were enrolled in school. We were there very briefly, cause war broke out.

Q: That's right.

A: And the next thing I knew is that they literally took the whole school, and paired us off, sent us to the country, and knocked on doors, and shoved –

Q: Children.

A: – shoved children in.

Q: So where did you end up, where did you land? In whose lap did you land?

A: The first one was in **Bishop's Stortford**.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: And they were a young couple, and I don't think we were there that long. And then we were transferred to this older couple. And it was very primitive. It had an outhouse.

Q: Still in the same place, **Bishop's** –

A: Same place. I don't know how they arranged, you know, what –

Q: Okay.

A: – you did. And they – they were an older couple, they had one son, who might have been marginally disabled. I know he was a little strange. But they were so wonderful to us. They gave – was my sister and I – they gave us part of their rations. I mean, that's how generous they were. And we didn't do much. We went to school, such as it was, and would take walks.

Q: What did the countryside look like?

A: I think it was quite beautiful. Very simple, rural. Little houses with a front parlor. My then hus – we went back and visited these people, and it was very dear.

Q: What was their name?

A: **Waterman**(ph).

Q: **Waterman**(ph).

A: And for many years, my sister and I would send them Christmas packages, but we did go back once to visit with my then husband.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A: And they couldn't – I have to say, they couldn't have been lovelier. For – very simple, but you know, we felt quite comfortable.

Q: Did they – did you speak any English by that point?

A: I was beginning to.

Q: Okay. And tell me –

A: At first, not at all.

Q: Okay. Can you describe their – their home? You said there was an outhouse, it was primitive.

A: There was an outhouse.

Q: Was it a single cottage, a sort –

A: It was like – it had a front parlor, which you hardly ever used.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's – that was very English, I think. And a living room, kitchen, and we must have had our own bedroom, cause I don't remember anyone else being there. And then – and that was it.

Q: Did they have a farm?

A: No. I think they were old, already.

Q: Did – were they retired?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I don't remember them working.

Q: Okay, okay. So – so, did you stay there for the duration?

A: No. We stayed there – now, I'm a little foggy about how long we stayed there, but then we moved – my parents had a friend who came from **Germany**, and lived in **England**. And then we went to live with her. And this was in **Staines, Middlesex**.

Q: Okay.

A: They moved. And stayed with them for a while.

Q: And what was that circumstance like?

A: She was younger. Married to somebody whom I can't really remember. A-And I do remember that was – when there used to be air raids, and there was this big, metal sort of cage in their living room, where we slept in case of bombing.

Q: In the middle of the living room?

A: In the middle of the living room.

Q: How odd.

A: I –

Q: It must have looked really odd.

A: It was very odd. You climb into that thing, and you know, it had a – it was a metal cage.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: A metal cage.

A: In the living room. And then my sister went off to a trade school, I don't know how she got there.

Q: Younger sister, yeah.

A: We separated, yes. And she was a cook.

Q: But for heaven's sakes, she was a girl, still.

A: She was – of course. Well, we had no education. I mean, really. And I met, when I was living in **Staines**, at school, a friend. I went to live with her parents and her. I don't know how that happened, but I – I moved.

Q: You – so it was on your own.

A: On my own.

Q: Own, okay.

A: Left the friend of my –

Q: Parents.

A: – parents.

Q: Do you remember the friend's name? It's okay. It's just – okay.

A: Can't really remember.

Q: That's okay. That's okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: A-And – she – they didn't have children. I have the feeling she didn't have a happy marriage. I mean, it – it was not a home environment. I think that's why this friend I met at school took me in –

Q: Okay.

A: – to her parents.

Q: Okay.

A: And I lived with them until I came to **America**.

Q: Wow. So what was their name?

A: I don't know.

Q: That's okay. And did she st – was she sort of like your best friend at school?

A: She was a good friend.

Q: Okay.

A: And I think it was pretty – very generous of her parents to take me in. I think they felt my environment with this woman, wasn't very good. I have a feeling it wasn't. I mean, he wasn't there much, and she – she was hardly a motherly type.

Q: Uh-huh. Well, a child need adults. There's just – you know, you're a child. And you were –

A: I – and when I moved in with this other, it was a family, you know.

Q: Yeah. And about how old were you, when you moved in there?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: Well, I was 16 when I came here. Probably 13 or 14.

Q: So, you arrived –

A: When I was 11.

Q: – eleven. So it was two years of –

A: In –

Q: In between.

A: – **Bishop's Stortford**.

Q: Yeah. Something like –

A: That's about the right age.

Q: Okay.

A: I think I was two years in **Staines**.

Q: And do you – did you say that you didn't go to school, or you did, but there was no real education?

A: We went to school, and – but it wasn't really – I mean, we learned English.

Q: [**indecipherable**] that's something, yeah.

A: And – and we must have learned, you know, something. But there were a lot of air raids, so you spent a lot of time going to the shelters.

Q: What do you remember from –

A: We were bombed once.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Really?

A: Yes.

Q: In **Staines**?

A: Uh-huh. But then they put the house back together.

Q: So the house was a direct hit?

A: Yes, or –

Q: Part of it.

A: At least it was – part of it.

Q: Okay.

A: You couldn't go in for a few days.

Q: Okay. Did you see **British** soldiers? Was this a part of **Britain** that had a lot of military presence?

A: Not really.

Q: No.

A: Was very remote, you know.

Q: Okay. Did you – did you have homesickness?

A: I'm sure I did, but I denied it.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I – I think I always had this optimism that I would see my parents again. You know, if I had felt I was never going to see them again, I think my life would have been entirely different when I was in **England**. But I absolutely had the feeling that we were going to see each other again.

Q: And you were getting letters.

A: Up to – did you see a couple of letters?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: What was it, '45, I think was the last one?

Q: Oh, let me see. Can we cut, just for a second? [**break**]

A2: You and **Stan** went back to visit, did you visit them?

A: No, we visited that older couple who were so dear.

Q: Okay. So that – you were talking with your son right now about – about the same things we were just discussing.

A: Yeah.

Q: About the woman who wasn't very motherly, who was from **Germany** –

A: Right.

Q: – but married a British man. And also this family that you lived with.

A: Right. And they were more normal, because it was a family.

Q: Yeah. Besides the girl, were there any other children?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I don't think so.

Q: Okay.

A: I was trying to remember that.

Q: Okay. Well, I looked in your file, and the last message that – that you get, is from the – your parents on March 10th, 1943, and it looks like it's delivered on April 5th, 1943, so almost a month later.

A: Right.

Q: Which is pretty fast, considering it's wartime.

A: I think so.

Q: You know? I don't know if you can – if you can read it out, but I would love it if you would read this part, it's written for – from your parents, to you and your sister.

It would be very touching to hear that in German.

A: You see, that's the problem. That is what is translated.

Q: I understand.

A: [**indecipherable**] the translation.

Q: Could you read the German part?

A: No.

Q: No. Then read the translation.

A: **Kurt** – **Kurt** did that.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A: Because he's the only one who could read it.

Q: Okay.

A: So, you want me to go from **Leo Coen(ph), Berlin, Germany** –

Q: Yes.

A: – and parent to child **Hannah(ph) Coen(ph)** in **England**. “Loving dolls, I’m happy to have received your answer to letter from September.” Something, main thing is – “the main thing is you’re well. Do you still go to school? Regards to, or **congratulations**,” I don’t know what that –

Q: Congratulations, yeah.

A: I guess. “And **Hannah(ph)**, my dearest,” something – “is to be together again – my dearest wish is to be together again with you all. All the best, kisses, and remember us. March 10th, 1943, Father and Mother.”

Q: And that’s the last time you get some word of –

A: And then there is the most wonderful translation.

Q: Okay.

A: Which is this.

Q: Okay. Please –

A: Did you read that? That was so –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Please read it.

A: – touching.

Q: What is this?

A: They – this is – they must have given that to us when we left in 1939.

Q: Okay.

A: And it was written in German, and **Kurt** translated it to English. And it says, “Our Jewishness. Of being a Jew. This is the torah, this is the word that God gave us, that we retain on and on, and **beared** all through life. My beloved little **Hannah**(ph),” now I’m going to cry – “learn suffering without complaining. Your **mutti** loves you very much.” And then, **Berlin** 31-7-’39. “Live for your parents’ joy, and never cause them sorrow. Then God’s blessing will also rest,” oh dear, this is so sad – “on you at all times. Dedicated by your **vati**, dad, in **Berlin**. As a Jew you were born, as a Jew you shall die. Jews are never lost, and Jews shall become free. As a hearty remembrance of you and your sister.”

Q: Thank you. Excuse me.

A: And that is thir – and I will take it back. And it’s very poignant, isn’t it?

Q: Very poignant. Very poignant. And these are written on March 3rd, 1939.

A: That’s what they must have given us.

Q: March 4th, and July 31st, ’39.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: So that's as we were leaving.

Q: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. When – when you were with this family in **Staines** that had, you know, more children, and you stayed there for the duration of the war, can you describe what a typical day was like for you? What would you do?

A: Not much. We went to school. Course, I was going to school with their daughter.

Q: Okay.

A: And I think we used to have dinner together, which was nice, I mean, because I hadn't –

Q: Sure.

A: – really been doing that. And then we just, I think walked. Maybe rode a bicycle. Didn't do much.

Q: And so how was **Hannah**(ph), who was younger than you, taken to work, to be a cook?

A: She got some kind of scholarship, and she lived with a whole other family.

Q: But it sounds like she was working, rather than going to school.

A: She was.

Q: Was she close by?

A: No.

Q: Do you know where she was, what place she was in?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I have her papers. I could show them to you.

Q: Okay. Did you ever visit her, or she visit you?

A: We would see each other through an aunt –

Q: Okay.

A: – who later came to **America**.

Q: And was this one of your mother's siblings?

A: Yes.

Q: And which aunt was this?

A: **Henny**(ph).

Q: This was **Henny**(ph). And how did **Henny**(ph) end up in **Britain**?

A: I think they – at that point, I believe, to leave **Germany**, they got jobs as maids.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: But she's the only one who came to **England**.

Q: Okay.

A: The rest came here.

Q: Okay, to the **United States**. So, was anyone – was your father's – one of your father's brothers in **Britain**?

A: He was, but we only saw him once, and he was the guy who was –

Q: Broken.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: – totally broken.

Q: Was he living by himself?

A: Yes.

Q: In **London**?

A: I think so. We only saw him once the whole time we were there.

Q: Whatever happened to him, after you saw him.

A: He must have died.

Q: So you didn't have any contact after that?

A: No.

Q: Well, it could have been that having lost his child, having lost his wife –

A: And lost his everything.

Q: Everything. And –

A: And he couldn't – I mean, some people could handle it and some couldn't, and he was –

Q: Yeah.

A: – a person who couldn't.

Q: That happened. That happened quite a bit. Are there any memories that you have of this family, that you were with, what their parents did, you know, how they made

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

a living? Did you ever see them, you know, at their places of work? Anything you can tell me about the family?

A: Not really.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't know what he did.

Q: Okay. Okay. And –

A: I don't even know if they were Jewish or not.

A2: But your friend, do you remember what she was like? The girl that you –

A: Yeah, we were – we were friends, like –

Q: You were friends at home and friends at school.

A: Right.

Q: Okay.

A2: Was she – was she Jewish?

A: I can't remember, **Steven**. I never thought about it.

A2: Do you remember her name?

Q: Yeah. And you stayed there, though, about two or three years?

A: About two years.

Q: Two years. And how is it that you were able to leave **Britain**? What happened?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood

April 27, 2017

A: Well, my aunt and uncle, particularly this Aunt **Berta**(ph), she – I mean, I'm close to her daughter now. They treated me like a third child. Apparently my aunt went to immi – she did whatever she had to do, almost daily. I mean, she – she was very tenacious, and she got us out of **England**, to **America**, as quickly as possible. I mean, the war ended, what, in '45?

Q: That's right, May '45.

A: And we came in '46. And sh-she arranged for all the papers.

Q: And she herself was new?

A: They went to **Shanghai**, and then to **America**.

Q: Okay.

A: And then, when we got to **America**, at least four of my aunts and uncles met us at the boat. It was very sweet.

Q: Do you remember the boat journey?

A: We were all very seasick.

Q: Was it a passenger ship, or was it a military one, do you know?

A: Well, you know, wa – it wasn't military, but it was very primitive.

Q: Okay.

A: We – and it had a first class, and a third class, and I-I just remember being really quite sick, and my sister was even sicker. But there was a man in first class, who

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

used to come and visit me. He came to **Brooklyn**, to pick me up, I guess. You know, so I mean, it was just –

Q: At that point you were 17 years old?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: And so he – he made the trek to **Brooklyn** –

Q: To see you.

A: – to ask me out.

Q: Yeah.

A: Don't remember much about it. But my aunts and uncles were very dear. We lived in a two family house. So I went upstairs with **Berta**(ph) and **Hans** – this is in **Brooklyn** – and my sister went downstairs, with **Hannah**(ph) and **Ralph**.

Q: And what part of **Brooklyn** was this?

A: **East 22nd Street**.

Q: And is that – what neighborhood would that be? Is that **Bensonhurst**, or – or **Flatbush**, or –

A: **Flatbush**, I think, isn't it?

Q: **Flatbush**, okay.

A: My geography is not very good.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Yeah, okay.

A: And then my uncle – this – it gets better.

Q: Okay.

A: My uncle came – well, f – he came from **Celle**. This is **Kurt's** –

Q: Relative.

A: – friend –

Q: Okay.

A: – you know, th-they all came from **Celle**. And he – he was very entrepreneurial.

So when they went to **Shanghai**, he opened a grocery store, feeling that they could eat, you know –

Q: That makes a lot of sense.

A: – if it didn't work out.

Q: This makes a lot of sense, yes.

A: So that's what he did. Then they ended up in **Seattle**.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, I – this is all before I met them. Then – now we come to a good story – then he came to **New York**. And he went from picking up clothes at ki – **Klein's**, do you remember that department store?

Q: Mm-hm.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: To going public for four million dollars in the camera business. Then. I mean, that was a lot of money. And he lost it all.

Q: Well, explain to me, how did he make this money? I didn't understand it.

A: Selling camera equipment oh – he was just a born salesman. So we moved from this two family house, to a very nice one family house. I stayed with them, and they were just so good to me.

Q: This is **Berta's**(ph) husband?

A: Yes.

Q: **Berta's**(ph) husband is the born salesman –

A: Right.

Q: – who first started a grocery store in **Shanghai**.

A: In **Shanghai**, came to **America** –

Q: **America**.

A: – picked up clothes, went public for four million dollars, and then lost it all. But in between, **Hannah**(ph) stayed with my Aunt **Hannah**(ph) and **Ralph**.

Q: Right.

A: Continued to live in this two family house. And **Ralph** was also in the camera business, but modest. But **Hans** became –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: And how did he lose it? Who knows? It could have been investments or something.

A: One story I heard is that he went to **Japan**, and paid cash in advance for a 40 line of cameras, and when it got here, it wasn't any good, and –

Q: He lost it.

A: – he lost it.

Q: He lost it.

A: Now **Kurt** –

Q: Yeah?

A: – worked for **Hans** for 10 years. It's all very connected.

Q: I see.

A: And **Hans** used to meet, as I said, the boat. Everybody worked for him. Most of my aunts, my uncles worked for him. My father's brother worked for him when he came from **Shanghai**.

Q: But you know what's amazing in my mind, is how he was able to establish himself so quickly.

A: He was incredible. He gave me two great weddings. And by the time it came to his own daughters, no money, no weddings.

Q: Oh.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: And I had two fantastic weddings. You know, he was so proud to have made it, and he liked **George Laporte**(ph), whom I married. And he – you know, he felt that he had arrived at a really good, American family.

Q: Yeah.

A: He was also very generous to the temple in **Brooklyn**.

Q: Your Uncle **Hans**?

A: Yes.

Q: Tell me how I – this reminds me of something you said earlier. You said in the beginning, when you were in **England**, you became religious.

A: I did.

Q: How did you practice that? How did – how did that manifest itself?

A: Well, I – I certainly observed the Sabbath. I didn't carry anything. You know, people walked around with a handkerchief in their pocket. I prayed every morning, and –

Q: Was there a temple to go to?

A: No, I did it by myself.

Q: And were there other Jews to do this with, to –

A: No, I did all this by myself.

Q: All by yourself?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And this was the rabbi's influence?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember how he influenced you in this way?

A: I think I just observed him.

Q: Okay. Okay, cause it wasn't even any formal teaching or training or anything.

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: And how long – did this last your for –

A: Not that long.

Q: Not that long.

A: But I definitely did it. I mean, I was – did it by myself, and went through that phase.

Q: And –

A: I think I even learned Hebrew at – for a while.

Q: Okay. Well, your parents, in their note to you, talk about being Jewish.

A: Yes. I thought that was very touching.

Q: Yes. And – and –

A: That was my mother, though.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood

April 27, 2017

Q: Yeah, okay. And I can imagine that this kind of – it's – it's a legacy. It's sort of like this is your legacy, this is your – who you are. And –

A: I was so touched. I mean, it was translated by **Kurt**, cause I couldn't read the German script. But I was very touched when I read that.

Q: Yeah.

A: Course, it – you know, it – I didn't feel it that much at the time. But obviously it was her.

Q: Are you a person who is religious today?

A: No.

Q: Do you have a belief?

A: I definitely believe in God, and I am glad I am Jewish, but I – I don't really –

Q: You don't observe the hol – the various rit – okay.

A: Very loosely.

Q: Okay. Well, many people, you know, are – many people fall in that – in that group, you know? But it spoke to you at the time?

A: Yes, very much so.

Q: And it probably – I'm interpreting here, but I'm – probably helped you during this – these times when you didn't have your parents.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I think so. Cause there wasn't much – you know, wherever we lived in **England**, they were all non-Jewish, I mean, all the families were not Jewish. I think the only Jewish family is the girl that I lived with in the end. I'm sure they were Jewish.

Q: Okay, okay, yeah. But when you get to **New York**, that changes. When you are the –

A: My aunt was definitely – spiritually, she – wouldn't you say **Berta**(ph) was a tremendous influence on me, and she was – she was religious, but she was a religious human being, you know, in – in her essence. I mean, she – she is –

Q: Tell me about her personality.

A: She was – we – she was Bat Mitzvahed at 93, that'll give you some idea. There's a whole – there's a whole story –

Q: Okay, tell us.

A: – in – I – I have those papers somewhere. And she – she was tiny, but she kept the entire large family together. And she was never going to go to **Germany**, hated everything German. But then she got this offer to go to **Fulda**, where they were recreating the Hebrew school that they went to. There weren't any Jews left, but – but **Fulda**, and the mayor, and you know, they're part of the restitution. And a whole lot of us went. I –

Q: Do you remember about what year this was?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: **Steven** went, my other cu – there were a bunch of us, and it's in the book.

Q: I know. But do you remember what decade it was? Was this the 70s, or the 80s?

A: We just went through that.

Q: I think we did, but I'd like to ground this chronologically. Was this where you said your daughter was three years old, and now she's –

A2: It was 1987.

Q: 1987. Okay. So 19 eight –

A: And that was actually very meaningful for everybody.

A2: It was – we went back in May of 1987.

Q: And did you – was this the first time you were back in **Germany**?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. Okay. So tell me about that trip.

A: Well, first of all, it was really interesting, because my aunt, who said she'd never go, since I was free, and – her family was going. There were a whole lot of us. A lot of her sisters and brothers of my family. We – we were a whole group. And it – it was very meaningful to the family as a group, because you know, **Steven** came, my cousins from – **Berta's**(ph) own children came. Other children from these 11 offspring came. And – and it was very well organized. I mean, we met in the **schloss**, which wasn't hurt at all. **Fulda** is very historic, so –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Yes.

A: – it was interesting.

Q: Yes, it's a pretty city.

A: Because, you know, it wasn't really demolished, I mean, so it had a lot of the original history. And so many people came from **Israel**, from all over the place.

And then there's just a small, funny aside, and a lot of religious people cou – course it was – the mayor, and another person who'd come from **Israel**, I mean, they – they worked it out. And the people who went to this school were paid for, but all the relatives who came, we all paid for ourselves.

Q: Okay.

A: So it turned out to be a much bigger group than they were expecting. **Lufthansa** ca-catered the kosher food. That to me was such an irony, because they were unprepared for, you know, the many people that would show up.

Q: Wow.

A: And I think for **Steven** –

Q: Your son.

A: – it was really important. And –

Q: How was it meaningful for you?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: For me it was meaningful because I had refused to speak German. In fact, I didn't – I never talked it. So when we got the first day – I had a ca – bad – my aunt had a daughter who was very interested in keeping in touch with whatever groups there were. Unfortunately, she's not alive any more. But she had written to **Judith Miller**.

Q: An author of a book called, "**One by One by One.**"

A: Right. Who happened to be in **Germany** covering the **Nuremberg** trials, or something. And she showed up the next day, came up to me, and said, can you tell me who **Nancy Kamp**(ph) is, my cousin is, and I said yes, she's over there. So **Judith Miller** talked to **Nancy**. Really liked **Steven** because he was young, and not an old refugee, and cottoned onto him. I think he – he – you were at **Harvard** at the time, right?

A2: Yeah.

A: So – you know, so she held onto me, and to **Steven**.

Q: Okay.

A: And they started the speeches. So **Steven** is saying, what are they saying, and **Judith** is saying, what are they saying. My German came back. And suddenly – I couldn't read it in the paper the next day, but I was able to translate.

Q: And you hadn't spoken it?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: And I hadn't spoken it.

Q: Since **UK**?

A: Right.

Q: Since you learned English in the **UK**?

A: Exactly. And it just – it came back.

Q: So when you were now living –

A: Do you remember that?

A2: Very, very well.

A: So I was able to translate, but I hadn't talked – I hadn't talked it. And when I went to – the paper was full of it, I mean, we had reams this thick. I couldn't read the German, but I definitely was able to translate.

Q: It's interesting too, that when you went to live with your relatives once you arrived in **Brooklyn**, that that means you didn't speak German with each other at home. You must have spoken English.

A: We did.

Q: And that's a switch, because you had spoken German with each other when you lived in **Germany**.

A: Right.

Q: Okay. But it didn't feel –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: And to this day, I hate speaking it, but I can tell you I was able – I was able to translate pretty well, wasn't I?

A2: I – I was shocked, because I'd never heard you speak German.

A: I know, I couldn't believe it.

A2: You didn't just translate, you spoke it, too.

A: I just couldn't believe it.

Q: Okay.

A2: So that was 1987.

Q: It was – yeah.

A2: You left in 1939, so '49, '59, '69, '79.

Q: Forty – almost 50 years.

A2: Almost – right? Cause it was 1987, you left in '39. So let's do this.

Q: Almost 50 years.

A2: Almost 50 years, and suddenly.

Q: It comes back to you.

A2: You were speaking perfectly –

A: That was astounding.

Q: And so then, did you commu – with the locals –

A: No, then I gave it up.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay, okay. But you were there in **Fulda**, and what other parts were meaningful for you?

A: Well, primarily, seeing the rest of my family, whom – you know, they were scattered all over –

Q: Ah yes.

A: – the country, and we had family talks, you know. I don't – I don't know how many there were. And – there were a number, because my aunts and uncles and some of their children. It was a big group. And it was very meaningful. Don't you think?

A2: Mm-hm.

Q: What about connections or contact with the local Germans? Did anything like that happen?

A: It – there was a lot of – more people that were my aunt's vintage.

Q: Okay.

A: Cause you know, I was really –

Q: A child.

A: – much younger. But the whole experience was very positive. I mean, the Germans did a great job arranging for these groups. Oh, then the other thing that

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

was very meaningful was, we went – again, the members of my family, including – we went to my grandparents' house.

Q: Where you used to live.

A: Where – where –

Q: Or where you used to visit.

A: – where they used to live. And I remember distinctly going into this living room where my grandmother, who had cancer, used to be in bed all the time. And here was this huge cross.

Q: Who owned the house now? Who owned the house then?

A: Germans.

Q: Did you have any discussion with them?

A: I think they were quite reluctant to let us in, weren't they?

Q: Okay, okay. Okay.

A2: [**indecipherable**] that woman.

A: She wasn't very happy about us showing up, right? But I also remember the big cross. They just took over. You know, they – the Germans? You know this story, the – they took.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: And this, you think, is the original people who would have taken over, not sold since then to somebody else?

A: No, I think it was the original.

Q: Okay.

A: Don't you?

A2: Absolutely.

Q: Okay.

A2: Can I –

Q: Of course, **Steve**.

A2: Do you – do you remember the story about how she – she turned to you and me, and said, but you're not a **Lump**. You don't look like **Lumps**.

A: I don't remember that.

A2: Because my mom is one –

Q: Well, why don't you come on camera just for a second, **Steve**.

A: Yes.

Q: Just come on camera for a minute, okay?

A: I would like that.

Q: And I will – even though we're – you're not miked up, you might be able to – we might be able to capture it. [**break**]

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay. So we've brought you on **Steve**. You are **Dorothea's** only child.

A2: Yes.

Q: **Steve Fingerhood**. Did I say that right?

A2: Yes.

Q: Okay. And you were with your mom and your aunts, and the large family, when they went back for the first time, to **Germany** in 1987.

A2: Yes.

Q: And your mom wanted also to have you share what your experiences were at that point, and particularly in the home that used to belong to the **Lump** family, because that was your grandmother's maiden name. Okay, so take it from there.

A2: Okay, great. [**break**]

Q: Okay **Steve**, so tell us. What do you remember from that?

A2: Oh, so this was 1987, so how long ago was that?

Q: Thirty years.

A2: Thirty years ago. I remember – I remember it pretty vividly. There was a large group, and the town, and the press really beyond the town, in **Germany**, I guess this was a time when there was a lot of interest in **Germany** about Jews coming back to visit. And I remember getting off the plane when we first arrived in **Germany**, and

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

departing off the plane with my mother and the whole group. And there were news cameras recording us getting off the plane, and it was a little jarring, and –

Q: You didn't expect that.

A2: Not at all. And then – and then the next day we looked, and you know, the – the local **TV** station, and I think even beyond the local **TV** station had, you know, news reports about the Jews of **Fulda** coming back. And I must say, it was quite arresting, because I-I have never really f-felt so much like, you know, the Jews coming back, it was just weird to be –

Q: In a group like that?

A2: – in a group like that, and I guess the – **Fulda** had had a large Jewish population before and during the war, that there were –

A: Very Orthodox.

A2: I think when we came back, there were 60,000 people in the town of **Fulda**, and maybe 30 Jews.

Q: Who st – who were local there, and lived there.

A2: Yes, in other words, the population had gone from 1200 to 30.

Q: Twelve hundred in 19 –

A2: Probably 1200 to zero, and then some came back, but –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: All right. So 1200 pre-war, and to the – okay. Did you meet any of the local Jews who – who stayed and lived in **Fulda**?

A: No.

A2: I don't remember doing that.

A: I don't think there were any.

A2: Yeah, I don't – I don't think there were –

Q: Okay. Any of the 12, for example.

A2: I – I – my belief is that there were no Jews that survived in **Fulda**, that some had come back –

Q: Okay.

A2: – between the end of the war and 1987. But 30, that's not a huge number.

Q: No, 30 is not a lot.

A2: And the town made a big effort, and the mayor of the town, who I think later had a more prominent political, you know, career in ger – in modern **Germany**, had – one of his initiatives was to try and rebuild a temple in **Fulda**, as a way of emphasizing, you know, a new – a new post-Nazi view, and – and I think he was the one behind organizing –

A: Right.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: – the Jews in **Fulda** to return. But it – it was – it was very intensely personal for my mother and her family and our family, but you couldn't miss the fact that it had this political significance. The way it was covered by the press. Frankly, the security. It was a little eerie, because everywhere we went, it was fairly subtle, but there was –

Q: Coverage.

A2: Well, there was coverage, but we had armed military, not just local police, but –

Q: To protect you?

A2: T – yes. Because there was the belief – I think **Germany** felt that there was all – you know, in 1987, there were a variety of –

A: Anti-Semitism left, do you think?

A2: I think there was that, I think there was just terrorism.

Q: Yeah, it could have very well been, yeah.

A2: There was a lot of –

Q: There was the Israeli – I don't know what year that – that massacre happened in mu – in **Munich**, but it might have been in the 80s, during, I think the Olympics?

A2: Well, that happened previously –

Q: Previously.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: – but there were – there was – it wasn't necessarily German anti-Semitism, I think there was a fear that –

A: A lot of unrest, I guess.

A2: Well, in midde – there – you know –

Q: Mideast terrorism.

A2: Exactly. So, and I think **Germany** felt, and the mayor felt that, to invite the Jews back to **Fulda**, make a big statement about reconciliation, and have a terrorist incident, would not be a good thing. But the – but the level of security, maybe it wasn't necessary, and – but it was – it added a level of –

A: Drama, I think.

A2: – drama, to something that was already pretty dramatic. But, for example, when we went to the –

A: Castle?

A2: Well, not the ca – when we went to the ceremony, to dedicate the reopening of the synagogue in **Fulda** – I don't know if you remember that, there was – it was – there was an open street, and they – they had – they had a – you know, si – I don't know if it was buses, or cement trucks, but they had – they had obstacles closing off the street, to make sure that – th – you know, if you looked – it was subtle, but if you looked carefully, the level of security was –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: It was there.

A2: I-It wasn't just local police, it was way beyond that.

Q: Okay.

A2: And, you know, it was – it was – you know, it wa – it wa – it was a f – it was just int – it was just a little unnerving, really. So I remember that. I remember being shocked, because I thought I knew my mother. How old was I? I was probably in law school at the time, so in my mid-20s. I had never really heard my mother speak German. I didn't think she spoke German. And the second –

Q: And then all of a sudden –

A2: All of a sudden, as she said, I –

A: As **Judith** saying was – what's he saying, and **Steven**, what's he saying?

A2: And then my mother started translating. And then people – we would be going somewhere, and we would try and be lost, and my mother would stop and ask someone in German what the directions were, and seemed to converse –

Q: Wow.

A2: – completely in German.

A: You know, that was really a shock to me.

A2: Yeah. It was kind of amazing. So I remember that. I think – you know, it was a little – I-I-I think for a lot of the people in the family, i-i-it's almost as if they –

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

there was this mind shift, where suddenly, you know, you felt what it must have been like to be there Juden, you know, and like different in this place. And you know, it was touching, but it was just – it – it was just – I think it affected everyone very deeply. The way you suddenly started speaking German, you know, everyone reacted differently. **Batta**(ph), who my mother was talking about.

Q: Aunt **Bertha**(ph).

A2: Aunt **Bertha**(ph).

A: She was interviewed in the radio.

A2: Yeah.

Q: Oh, was she?

A: Yes. She was prominent, this **Judith Miller** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – covered her.

Q: But she was the one who was so set against going.

A: Yes, totally.

Q: And when she actually did go, and was interviewed, what was it that she said?

What was it that she – did that change, I mean, clearly?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: I think the local radio station wa – you know, she was one of the people they interviewed about coming back. You know, **Bertha**(ph) was very – is – was – as my mother said, very slight.

Q: Yeah.

A2: Very magnetic, big personality. And – and she wasn't trying to be a big personality, she was – she just –

Q: She was being herself.

A2: She was being herself, and it wa – it was, you know, magnetic. She wasn't bitter, but she was very straightforward about things, and she didn't sugarcoat it. I don't remember the interview, cause it was in German, and I didn't understand that. But I – I remember very well that we were in a coffee shop.

A: Listening to her.

A2: We were sitting around a table with her, and it was just a small group, and she was describing a – a very bad incident, in which –

A: Her sister was – not raped, but – by a German. Is – isn't – isn't that what it was?

A2: The one I remember is where just the Jews in – in **Fulda** were being rounded up, and that the local people, they had had good friends, but their – the local – there was a mob that was sort of –

A: Not – not sympathetic.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: Just sort of cheering on the Nazis, you know.

Q: As they're rounding the people up, mm-hm.

A2: Yes. And **Bertha**(ph) was speaking about it, you know, very directly, pretty you know, angrily, but just matter of fact. And I remember it was just jarring, because he we are sitting, listening to her, and there was like a table adjacent to it, with like a –

A: I don't remember that.

A2: – a – a German woman, who was of sort of a similar age. And she just had this like stricken look on her face. You know, just sort of horribly upset to be hearing this, and it was just interesting. Bat – **Bertha**(ph) was not aware of this other person who was like overhearing and listening. But it just struck me that **Bertha**(ph) was telling her story, and this woman was – I don't – I couldn't read her mind, but it seemed like some combination of just being horribly upset – but not necessarily sympathetic, just upset that someone was stirring up the pot, you know. D-Do you understand?

Q: [**indecipherable**] talking about that, yeah.

A2: So I remember that.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: And then the one other memory – many, but one memory I have is that my mother had spoken so much about visiting her grandmother, and in the bed, in that house. And – so I remember at some point –

A: A group of us went.

A2: – said, well let's go, I mean, let's see if it's still there.

Q: Let's see the old house, yeah.

A2: Is it still there? And s –

Q: Do you remember the street it was on? What the name of the street it was on?

A2: You know, it was chronicled in this book, so I'm gonna – I don't know if they have the address, I don't think so.

Q: Okay. They may not.

A2: So we went there, I think we took a cab there, maybe –

A: I know a group of us went.

A2: – was bi – might have been even two cabs. And we went out and we went and we got out and found it. And it was not – there was plenty of local press in **Fulda** about this event, and the mayor inviting the Jews back, so it was –

A: This we just did on our own.

Q: Yeah.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: But it was na – it wa – it wouldn't – it would – you know, it would be ob – it would be very likely that any resident would know that this group had come back, you know.

Q: Okay, so it would have been in the news.

A2: Yes, absolutely, **TV**, news –

A: But it wasn't.

A2: No, the Jews of **Fulda** coming back was in the news.

A: Oh yes, of course.

A2: So we get out of the cab, it's maybe – I don't remember that – I remember it was a morning.

Q: And what did the house look like?

A2: It was a nice enough house, it was big.

Q: Stucco?

A2: I think it was stucco, but I don't remember it very well. What I remember is, there were shutters.

Q: Single family?

A2: Yes.

Q: Garden around?

A: No.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: No.

A2: No.

A: Course I think the – the animals were in the back.

A2: Yeah, I think there was barn –

Q: Okay, so this is not the center of **Fulda**.

A: Well, it wasn't very big anyway.

Q: Okay, okay, I'm just trying to get sen –

A2: It was not in the center of **Fulda**, no.

Q: Yeah, I'm trying to get a picture. Residential area?

A2: Yes.

Q: Okay. So you get out –

A2: Residential area.

Q: Single family, two-story type of house.

A2: Does that sound right?

A: Yes, I – it had stairs.

A2: Yeah, it definitely had stairs.

A: Well, they had 11 children, so it had to be pretty sizeable.

Q: Yeah.

A2: It definite – it – it – I think it was two-story.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A2: Single family. So I remember we were like looking, and peering around, and I remember someone went to the back and said, oh look, the barn's still there, or something like that. And then the shutters open a little bit, and someone looks out from the second floor, and then the shutters close again. And then that happened like two or three times. And I think we rang on the doorbell. No one answered. And then we rang the doorbell a-again, and a woman opened the door, and she was – it – the whole dynamic really suggested that the person there just really didn't want these visitors and would – would like them to go away, and –

A: Right.

A2: – didn't want to have anything to do with this. And I don't remember who –

A: One of my uncles, I think.

A2: – said hey, you know, we don't want anything, but we – you – this used to be a family house, we have a lot of memories from the house. Would it be okay if we just –

A: She was very reluctant.

A2: She didn't like that idea at all, and she finally allowed, I think, a – a f – the group to come in, in like stages. And I – I remember going in with you, and first of all, to me – well, I didn't really remember the details of the house. I remember the

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

details of the reaction this woman had, because you – you couldn't fail, just based on her age and her reactions, to think that thi – that this was the person who –

A: Who took over.

A2: – who owned the house after –

Q: After you all either were thrown out or left, or whatever, however.

A2: When it was taken.

Q: – was taken –

A: Everybody would – everyone had gone my – to the contra – concentration camp.

A2: And I think that the local Gestapo, or local party, you know, would – you know, designate who could take over, so it was often people who were, you know –

A: Connected.

A2: – friends of the Nazi party.

Q: These are suppositions, but this is what comes through your mind as you're –

A2: No, I remember someone telling me at the – cause I remember after it, thinking like – asking like, how is it – how di – when a house got vacated, who determined who got it.

Q: Got it, okay.

A2: And so someone se – told me, well, this is how it usually worked.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: That it – that it was – the party would allocate who got it, or it was put up for auction, but the auction was rigged, you know.

Q: So how did this lady react?

A2: So, this is the part I remember. And then, if it's all right, because this was a while ago, this reporter my mother mentioned, did write a book about it. We found the passage. So I'll tell you what I remember, and then I'll – I'll read you what –

Q: The passage was.

A2: Yeah.

Q: Sure.

A2: Which hopefully –

Q: Yeah.

A2: – matches up a little bit.

Q: Okay.

A2: I remember going to the room that my mother had described – cause I would ask her, well what – what's your memory of your grandmother. And this was –

Q: Yeah. The one she thought was so – she felt so warm to, who was so sickly.

A2: Right.

Q: And a wise lady –

A2: In her bed.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: – in her bed, yeah.

A2: Exactly.

A: There's a photo of her –

Q: Yeah.

A: – in – in your papers.

Q: Thank you.

A2: So I remember going to that room, that living room. And I remember you kind of reacting very greatly to like, this is exact – it doesn't look anything like – all the furniture is different, it doesn't look anything, but this exactly –

Q: The room.

A2: – the room. This is the room where I would say –

A: And this big cross.

A2: Yes. And you told me, the one thing that's different is, there is – there was this huge cross that would have been like, over the bed –

A: Right.

Q: Right.

A2: – you know. So I remember that, but the thing that I remember the most is that you know, every – the group – everyone was aware that this woman didn't have to let us in, you know, we had asked if we could see it, and everyone was trying to

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

kind of – and it was clear that sh – who – di – who – everyone sensed that she had this feeling like oh, they're going to take it away, they're going to take the house away from me, or something. So we were trying very hard to be like reassuring, and you know, kind of very appreciative that she was letting us see the house. And the rest of my mother and the relatives were sort of going back, looking through the house, and she kind of turned to me, and I was kind of more wa – I was kind of running interference. I was like talking to her, and letting everyone else see the house. And there wa – and I said, thank you for letting us see the house, it really means a lot, you know. And she said, it's okay. And then there was a silence. And then she looked at me, and she looked down, and she said, you know, these shoes are terrible. These shoes hurt so much. I cannot get a pair of shoes that fit me, and I have a ki – you know, my feet really ache, it's very hard to walk. I'm so uncomfortable, my – it's very uncomfortable my f – terrible, my shoes really hurt.

A: I don't remember that at all.

A2: And I said – I said, oh yeah, it's a shame, I'm sorry, you know, that happens.

And she kind of went on with shoes, it's terrible, these shoes, they –

Q: Well, there's a significant moment. She realizes who the people are who have come back, and instead of somehow or other acknowledging this significant

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

moment, this is what she is – this is what – how she is able to handle it, in other words. Or not handle it.

A2: I – look, I – we couldn't read her mind.

Q: Of course not.

A2: But, I-I believe that she was –

A: She was asking you to give some money for shoes?

A2: No, no, no, I don't think that at all.

Q: I mean, that thought crossed my mind, too, maybe.

A2: No, I – she – I didn't think she was asking, I think she was feeling extremely uncomfortable. I th – I took it that she felt – well, let me go on, and then I'll tell you what –

Q: Sure.

A2: – how I – how – I'll – I'll just tell you the facts.

Q: How you – how you took it, yeah.

A2: And then I'll tell you how I took it.

Q: Right.

A2: It was very odd for us to be there, and for her to be – she wasn't saying, give me money for a new pair of shoes. She was saying, it's terrible, these shoes, they –

Q: Yeah, they kind of hurt, yeah.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: – they don't fit, it really hurts. And then I said, well, that's a shame, you know, thanks again, it's a very nice house. And then she said, oh, the house. It's – it's very hard to maintain. There's lots of difficulty. It – you – there's always something that has to be fixed, and –

A: All this is in German, and you understood it?

A2: It was broken, you know, but I understood it. And I – must have been in broken English, cause I didn't speak German, so –

Q: Okay.

A2: It must have been English. But she was sort of ex – she wa – the two things she communicated to me was, her shoes hurt, she was very uncomfortable, and the house is – is really a burden, but what can you do? And I was sort of ext – I was kind of nodding and, you know, kind of saying that, gee, that's a shame. And I was thinking to myself, you know, you're – you seem – oh, I remember, there was one other thing. I said like, oh, you know, how long have you lived here? And she said, oh, you know, a very long time. And I said oh, like when – like, since when? And she said oh – she didn't – she said a lon – you know, had it for a long time. I do – and then she said something very vague. And so I combined that with her obvious discomfort, and her saying that the house was a burden, and I thought it was – I thought she was – I took it to mean that she was dealing with, you know,

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

ambivalence, and guilt, and discomfort at the part – I believe that somehow, some way, she was part of stealing the house. Or with – you know, or was complicit with the Nazis, and that now the people who had been the victims of this act were back, and you know, she –

Q: Unexpectedly.

A2: – unexpectedly.

Q: Yeah.

A2: And I think she was feeling – and I think that she realized no one was going to be making a claim against her. This was simply us remembering the – the place where we had been harmed, and exiled, or my family had been. And I don't think she could handle it. So I think the way she handled it was to say, this is really uncomfortable, these shoes really hurt. Och, it's terrible. My poor – I –

Q: My poor feet, yeah.

A: I don't remember that at all.

A2: And I remember just being floored by it.

Q: Well, ee – as I said, it sounds like a very – such a bizarre kind of statement at the significance – even if it's not her significance, but significance to people who have come to her door, and that her mind would not be on, why is this significant for them, but on something like this.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: You're going to uh-oh, who –

Q: Yeah.

A2: And then I remember one more thing, she said to me, so – and you know, my mother mentioned that the Nazis very often thought she was a good Aryan girl.

Q: Yeah.

A2: And – right –

A: Yeah.

A2: – when you were –

Q: Yeah.

A2: – when they would hide – hand you the fliers.

A: Right.

A2: And I've had that experience, cause I am told I don't look particularly Jewish, whatever that means. And so, she did turn to me, and said, but you're not a **Lump**.

Q: That is the ma –

A2: You're not a **Lump**, are you?

Q: That is the maiden name of your mother.

A: Right.

Q: You're not a **Lump**.

A2: You're – you're not a **Lump**.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: So, clearly –

A2: No, you're not. You're not one of them, right?

Q: So she knew who was the family who lived there before.

A: Yes.

Q: She knew that it had been the **Lumps**.

A2: She said, but you're not – you're – you're – you're just taking them, right? And I said no, no, that's my mother. And then she didn't know how to answer that.

Q: Okay.

A2: So, may I read this? Would that make sense?

Q: Please. Please read this, mm-hm.

A2: Because I just think it'll –

Q: Sure. [**indecipherable**]

A2: – add a little color, and then I'll leave you, you know.

Q: So this is – this is from **Judith Miller**, her book, "**One by One by One.**" She was a "**New York Times**," reporter –

A: Right.

Q: – who [**indecipherable**] on this.

A2: She – she wrote – she wrote the book in 1990.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: So it came out a little after this.

Q: Right.

A2: But at the time in **Europe**, there was a phrase that a lot of people used, called Holocaust amnesia, because there were in the – in the social discussion and in the politics of **Europe** at that time, there was – not holo – you know, there was amnesia about it. And so **Judith Miller** – th-th – the premise of this book was that, to counteract Holocaust amnesia, she would tell not the large historical story, but specific detailed stories.

Q: Individual stories.

A2: That's why it's called, "**One by One by One.**"

A: And she was covering some trial in **Germany**, and my cousin had written to her, and that's why she came.

Q: Okay.

A2: And so, a chapter in the book chronicled her accompanying this group to

Fulda.

Q: Okay.

A2: So that's kind of the background.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: And so I'm just reading from it, because it's the same incident with – but a little more contemporaneous, I guess.

Q: Okay.

A2: So it says: “But with the surfacing of good memories, came the bad and the ambivalent. One day, for example, some of the **Lumps** mustered the courage to visit their former home. It had been occupied for years by a woman, now very old, whose husband had probably bought it at auction from the Nazis.” Presumably, the author of this book researched it, and got her own information. “She let us enter in stages, said **Doris Fingerhood**, **Rosie**'s daughter, who had left **Germany** for **England** when she was 11 years old. The house looked physically much as I remembered it, only much smaller. I kept thinking, where did my parents put 11 children? But I had remembered the house as full of character, now it was peculiarly devoid of any. The woman who owned it,” – this is my mother speaking – “the woman who owned it was 80. She kept saying that she had lived there for 20 years, but knew nothing about how her husband, who was dead, had acquired it. She was crusty, and very formal, typically German. I didn't know what to believe, and that made me uncomfortable. She comp – she complained about her health, about the cost of keeping up the house. It was so expensive to maintain that she couldn't travel, **Doris** said. Finally, she looked at **Steven** and me, at our blondish hair and

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

blue eyes, and said, you don't look like the **Lumps**. There was a final shock awaiting them. **Regina's** bedroom was virtually unchanged from the day she had died there, with one exception. Over what had been the **Lump** family's old double bed hung a large wooden cross. I'm glad my mother could not see it, **Doris** said softly." And then it goes on to talk about other things.

Q: That's true.

A2: So that's the history of –

Q: That's the history from different voices, your voice, your voice –

A: And her voice.

Q: – and jud – and her voice – and **Judith Miller's** voice.

A2: Yeah.

Q: I mean, one of the things that I'd like to ask both of you, and this touches – I mean, your – your story on this touches on that, and that's that theme of, what do contacts with Germans, ethnic Germans, non-Jews, what kind of contacts are there, so many years after the war, and what kind of feelings do they leave you with? And I'll preface that also with a thought. I usually try not to be leading, but I get the impression, after talking to so many people, that one of the most difficult aspects in this story is – the large story, is the loss of trust, and can trust ever be regained? And I wonder if that plays a role here. So there's really two questions.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: Well, I don't think I can answer that, but I can tell you for my aunts and uncles, like **Julius**, who was a big football player, and –

A2: Soccer.

A: – older – or soccer, or whatever he did. But they met Germans whom they knew, and they made it possible – they had teas, or coffee, or you know, they had – they met that older group, with other older groups, and they actually interact – acted. Now, I wasn't part of that, but they had the opportunity to meet people that they knew when they were younger, and growing up.

Q: During this trip to ful –

A: During this trip to **Fulda**. Th-There were definite meetings, when the Germans could meet the people like my relatives who had lived in **Fulda**. How it went, I can't really tell you.

A2: You don't remember any comment?

A: I think some were quite positive.

A2: I think so too.

Q: Okay. And what about your own feeling?

A: Well, I just – my own feeling was that the mayor, and whoever the powers-to-be who had arranged this, did a very good job, because it seemed successful.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: That's true, but you're not answering how – the question is like, how did it leave you, in terms of feeling you could trust people or not?

A: I was just glad I wasn't there any more. I mean, I – I didn't like **Germany**, I didn't like the atmosphere.

Q: Even then, in 1987, in **Fulda**.

A: Right.

Q: Okay.

A: But I was glad I was there, that I could absorb. Like we went to my grandmother's grave, and that was very important to me. I was glad to have the connection more personally, but I wouldn't want to be there.

Q: Okay. So, in that sense, what was broken couldn't really be repaired.

A: No.

Q: What about you?

A2: Well, I kind of had to somewhat –

Q: And I'm not just talking about the **Fulda** trip, but if that is the catalyst, if that's the only time you were there –

A2: No, I've been there s-since.

A: But not in that context.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: No, not in that context. You know, I think that – I think that it's – I don't – I-I think two things. I don't think it's a – I don't think it's nearly as simple as, the Germans did something bad to the Jews. That's certainly true, but it's also true – although it's horrific to say – that there were Gentile friends of **Rose** and **Leo** who risked their lives to save – to hide them, until 1944. And the – they – they perished instead of surviving the war, because of a f – fellow Jew, who – who ratted them out, you know.

A: So it's very complicated.

A2: So I don't think – I – if there's an us versus them, it – it's not Germans versus Jews, you know. So I'm – but, you know, I don't think – it's one thing to read about horrible things in the paper, or in history books, but when you see it through your own family, or your mother or grandparents, it's very dark. And the idea that neighbors didn't know what was going on, to me is –

A: Hard to believe.

A2: – is nonsense. And – and it – to me, it was the little things, like the reaction of this woman, that just betrayed the fact that – you know, there was lots of complicity in – in bad acts. And so, I don't feel like, oh I can't trust Germans. And I've been to **Germany** a lot, and –

Q: Since then?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A2: Yes. And you know, in the modern wor – I mean, the interesting thing, by the way, is that one big contingent of visitors on this trip to **Fulda** were Germans who had emigrated to **Israel**. And they – and you know, **Israel** and **Germany** have a very functional relationship right now. And **Germany** is important to **Israel's** economy. And what I found interesting was that the Israelis had – had gotten over this a long time ago. Israelis did not exhibit a lot of ambivalence, or –

A: Interesting.

A2: – you know, emotional complication. American Jews did. Israeli Jews had other problems.

Q: So, that's also interesting.

A2: So I-I guess – first of all, [**indecipherable**] fascinated –

A: That's very interesting. I didn't even think about that.

A2: But, I mean, what I want to say is like I – I found it scarring. I found the experience scarring, you know, just kind of feeling like I was reliving through my mother, you know, or her relatives, like what had happened. I think it was a hugely traumatic thing. And I think everyone has, you know, lived remarkably good lives, given such a rip in the entire family support system, fabric. And look, that happened to a lot of people in that time, but this was really acute.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: One reason that I ask that, is that willy or nilly, we are having this conversation several generations after the events. And the fact that we have it so many years, decades after the events, when there are several – that influences us. How you speak of something – you don't have different facts, but how you speak of the facts 10 years afterwards, two years afterwards, and 50 years afterwards, changes somewhat, is influenced by things. And today, there are young Germans who, I've heard often say – and it's not the only voice. It's not the only voice, but they say, this happened such a long time ago. This has nothing to do with me. Why can't I be taken by who I am –

A: Right.

Q: – rather than by all this? Why do I have to apologize for something that even not my parents did, but maybe even my grandparents didn't? And part of why I'm asking these questions is to provide a window to what makes – if that is the case, or not, you know? Does that –

A2: Let me take that point and narrow it into like a very specific mini-example, cause I understand that feeling. So when we were on this trip, my mother said, this at the beginning, **Lufthansa** provided transportation, or was part of it, and there was a sizable contingent of people who were kosher, who were Orthodox and kosher. And the – some of the events that someone in **Germany** catered was, they had to

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

provide kosher food. Well, there are, you know 30 Jews in – in – in **Fulda** at the time, and it was a – it was a production. And I don't really know how they did it, cause we don't keep kosher, but I think it involved getting food from, you know, further away places. And I remember at one of these events, speaking not to a dignitary or anything like that, just to some – some kind of a guy who was working – I forget if he was part of the catering, or part of **Lufthansa**, but he was one of the people that arranged for this food to be provided to the kosher people. And I was making – you know, I was sort of just having casual conversation with him, sort of, because it was – I w – it was just interesting to me that thi-this was like a very – I was part of this visible, the Jews of **Fulda** back there. And I said something like wow, quite an event, and I think he spoke reasonable enough English. And he said yes. And he said, you know, it's – he basically said it's really very expensive, and very difficult to have to get this kosher food. And it's really a big production, and we – he – I don't think he – he basically said, we have better things to do.

Q: Ah, so it was with this kind of attitude.

A2: It was like – and – and I don't think he was being angry, but it was very interesting, because his perception was exactly what you were saying about like why – I'm not res – his whole perception was, look, I-I'm a young person, I'm not responsible for whatever happened in the past. Somehow or another, we have to run

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

all over the place to get this kosher food, for this group of people that are visiting.

Why do we have to do this, you know? It's a big – it's a big –

Q: Pain.

A2: – burden. It's a big pain. And I don't get it. And so he was not, at all, welcome back, you know, I know a bad thing happened, we're making a huge effort. It was more like, why the hell am I doing this? And I thought to myself, well, you know, if – if this group hadn't killed, or exiled these people, they would have their own thriving community, they could get their own kosher foods, so it's really the least you can do, to be inconvenienced.

Q: Yeah.

A2: So – but there are both sides, you know. I don't know what to say.

Q: So you could see – you could see his point of view.

A2: I c – I understand someone saying, we didn't do this. Hell, you Americans, I – what are you doing for the native American Indians, or you know, or – that's your promise? And – so, I'm not particularly persuaded by that point of view.

Q: Yeah. No.

A2: I was a little indignant by it.

Q: Of course.

A2: But I can understand it.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Well, I mean, the question that I posed is one that I don't think really has answers.

A: I don't think so either.

Q: But they are part of the realities, and there are very deep feelings on both sides. On all sides. There ma – sometimes are more than two sides.

A: You know what I'm noticing –

Q: Yeah.

A: – the most is that the Germans that I've met today, they always say, that wasn't us, we had nothing to do with it.

Q: And what does that do when you hear that?

A: I don't believe it.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: Do you have the same reaction?

A2: I do. But I also have to say – I mean, I do, period. But it makes me wonder what is happening now, under our own noses, that we're not suf – attuned to enough, you know.

A: Now, if you speak to **Kurt** –

Q: Yeah.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: – he has many German connections, and he feels very differently. Really, he's made a lot of co – he's gone back and back and back. He's made many connections, and he treasures the friendships with Germans.

Q: Yes.

A2: I mean –

Q: Thank you for bringing that in, because we're talking – you – we're talking individuals. I'm not – I'm ad – I'm sometimes reflecting something that's in the air that's not individual, but people are – have their own way of processing that, their own way of responding to it. And it's not a finished story.

A: No.

A2: I mean, I – I – I would just add one more thing –

Q: Sure.

A2: – and I am s – rem – so removed from it, but my impression is that – you know, **Weimar Germany**, I guess, was really collapsing. People turned to a strong, authoritarian dictator because they thought it was the only way to get things done. And I think once **Hitler** – I think **Hitler** very quickly, you know, empowered the worst, lowest, most brutal, most criminal elements. And I think once that happened, you know, there were lots of decent people who were terrified. And so I'm not too

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

sure – I’m not excusing it, I’m just explaining it, because I think people do bad things when they feel –

A: I think that’s true.

A2: – that if – if – you know. Now, I don’t – that doesn’t excuse –

A: No, but I think it’s true.

A2: – cheering on Nazis when you’re rounding people up, but I – but you know, I do think –

Q: Some people had no power, who were not direct victims. Some people, like the ones who saved your mother and father for a while, were also very anti-Nazi, but they couldn’t show it.

A2: Absolutely.

A: That’s right.

Q: And other may not have been that, but they didn’t like what wer – they saw. You know, they – they may not have been anti-Nazi, but they didn’t like this, or that, or they – again, it’s individual. It’s individual. But we live in a world after that happened, and so we have to find our way through that world. So –

A: And it’s scary that we’re seeing elements again.

Q: Yeah. I think I’ll wrap up this part. Thank you very much, **Steven**. This, I think, has been really helpful and insightful, to talk about going back, and what going

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

back meant, you know, to both of you, and in the different instances, the experiences that you had. So we'll – do you want to say something else?

A2: No. Thank you very much.

Q: Okay.

A: Do you need anything el – **[break]**

Q: Okay. So, before we go back to your story, one last question. Was this the one and only time you went back to **Germany**, when you were in **Fulda**, in 1987?

A: No.

Q: When did you go back again?

A: I went back with **Steven** and my grandchildren on a cruise, and we went to **Berlin**. Just to **Berlin**, though, for a couple of days.

Q: And that's when you tried to find the old pharmacy?

A: No, that wa – I'm sorry, I'm giving you the wrong information. The only time I – when I went to **Fulda** was with my aunt and that whole group.

Q: Right.

A: My sister and her husband did not go. They couldn't afford it, and didn't want to go.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: And then, a year or two later, just my sister, her husband and I – and

Hannah(ph) arranged for us to also get a little restitution money.

Q: Okay.

A: So the three of us went alone. And my sister was then very diligent in trying to find what happened to my parents. And I know we crept up to some small office –

[technical interruption, break]

Q: Are we good? Okay, so we're gonna repeat these questions. After the trip to –

A: **Fulda**.

Q: – **Fulda**, did you ever go back to **Germany** again?

A: Only with my sister and her husband, but not to **Fulda**, just to **Berlin**.

Q: Just to **Berlin**.

A: Right.

Q: Okay. And tell me about that.

A: And that was to research my parents –

Q: Okay.

A: – history. And it was very hard, because it was almost 50 years later, and if my sister hadn't been so diligent –

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: – it wouldn't have happened. But finally, we found an office that was like a hole in the wall, and it was almost 50 years later. And when we entered, he said, what took you so long, your papers are going to be gone next year, or something like that.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: And they handed us this, and I have it.

Q: Okay.

A: This little history, on toilet paper, but the Germans were so thorough, the records were there. And that's when my sister must have found out when my parents went to **Auschwitz**. Course, it's in your papers.

Q: The – okay.

A: The dates, but –

Q: But the toilet – what is this on toilet paper? It was somebody who wrote down something?

A: Yes.

Q: And the office was an official, kind of municipal office?

A: And they were going to be sending the papers away, or throwing them out.

Q: Oh my gosh, and they had kept it that many years?

A: And they kept it.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: So that was at the point where you learned that your parents were sent to **Auschwitz**?

A: Right.

Q: Okay. Were you able to get restitution for any part of what was lost?

A: We – some of my family did, but **Hannah**(ph) and I got practically nothing.

Q: Okay.

A: Don't quite know why, but we didn't.

Q: Okay. Let's go back now to your life in the **United States**. We left off where you had moved in with hank – Uncle **Hans** and – and Aunt **Bertha**(ph), and **[indecipherable]**

A: And he had his be – ups and downs.

Q: That's right. And you lived with them until when?

A: Well, I came here when I was 16.

Q: Okay.

A: And I got married when I was 21 –

Q: Okay.

A: – for the first time.

Q: What was your husband's name?

A: **George Laporte**(ph).

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: **George Laporte**(ph), okay.

A: And I got divorced when he was – when I was 25.

Q: So, four years.

A: Four years.

Q: Okay.

A: Then I remarried when I was 28, to **Steven's** father.

Q: And his name was?

A: **Stanford Fingerhood**.

Q: **Stanford Fingerhood**.

A: And – and I've been divorced for ever.

Q: And you have how many children?

A: I have just **Steven**.

Q: Just **Steven**.

A: And three granddaughters.

Q: And three granddaughters.

A: That being one.

Q: What – and the names of your granddaughters?

A: **Minna**, over there.

Q: Okay.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: **Olivia.**

Q: **Olivia.**

A: And **Sarah.**

Q: And **Sarah.**

A: I have photos, if you want to see them.

Q: Yes, I will. But fir –

A: **Minna**, you know where it is, the one f – it's right – of the three of you at **Claire's** birthday, it's right with the rest.

Q: Yeah, later. We'll –

A: Okay.

Q: We'll look at it later. Did you have a profession?

A: I'm an interior designer.

Q: For how long?

A: I'm 89. Since I was 21.

Q: Wow. Wow, did you go for school, after school for inter –

A: I – I did.

Q: What school was that?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I went at night to **Pratt**, and to the **New York School of Interior Design**. And I had quite a happy and good practice, and I love – I still have very, very little, but business has been really good to me, and I've loved it.

Q: It's a lovely profession.

A: And I have, you know, good publications, and a name, and I love it. And wonderful clients. Ex-clients. Some still –

Q: And you've lived in **New York** the whole time?

A: Mostly here.

Q: Mostly here, in this apartment?

A: I lived – we lived in **Washington** very briefly with **George Laporte**(ph), and then in **Stuyvesant Town**, and then very briefly in **Manhattan**, and here over 50 years –

Q: That's quite a while.

A: – in this apartment.

Q: On the **Upper West Side**.

A: On the **Upper West Side**.

Q: Is there anything we haven't talked about today, that you would like to add to our interview?

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

A: I feel very fortunate. I think, given my background, I have been very lucky, cause I've had a really good life. You know, I love my family, I think they're great. I love my life, until I go – got sick. Could do without this. And you – you know, I'm – I mean, I'm a true New Yorker, I'm – I have gone to the opera, ballet, symphony. I have friends, I enjoy people. I – you know, I – I – I think I'm very blessed.

Q: A life well lived.

A: I think so. Really, really lucky.

Q: Wow. Thank you.

A: What else can I tell you?

Q: That sounds like a wonderful way to end the interview. Thank you very much.

A: And thank you very much.

Q: And with that, I'll say, this concludes the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mrs. **Dorothea Fingerhood**, on April 27th, 2017.

A: Thank you so much.

Q: You're welcome. Okay, so **Dorothea**, tell us, who is standing behind you?

A: My son is to the left.

Q: Okay.

A: And that is **Steven Fingerhood**.

Interview with Dorothea Fingerhood
April 27, 2017

Q: Okay.

A: And my middle granddaughter is standing next to my right.

Q: Okay.

A: And her name is **Minna**.

Q: And what is she studying now?

A: **Minna**, you tell them, because it's too complicated.

A3: Science, technology in society and engineering entrepreneurship.

Q: And have you heard your grandmother's story before?

A3: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: You haven't.

A3: Some of it.

A: Some of it.

Q: Okay. Have you been to **Germany**?

A3: Yes.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

Conclusion of Interview