

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Henrietta Hahn. On April 27, 2018, in Patchogue, New York. Thank you very much, Mrs Hahn, for agreeing to speak with us today. I'm going to start our interview with the most basic questions. And from there, we'll develop your story. And I appreciate that you will be sharing with us some of your experiences and your family's experiences during the Holocaust.

So, the first question is, can you tell me the date of your birth? When were you born?

June 11, 1923.

And where were you born?

In Munich.

Germany, OK.

And what was your name when you were born?

Bick-- B-I-C-K.

That was your maiden name, yes?

Yeah.

And you were also known as Henrietta at that time?

Right.

Did you have a nickname?

Henny.

Henny, OK.

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Yes.

Tell me about them.

I'm the 12th born.

There were 12 other-- there were 11 others?

Yes, but they only-- they died when they were little, six of them.

Oh, OK.

So there only was six alive.

Tell me the six who were alive, from the oldest to the youngest. What were their names?

The oldest was Mitzi-- Mary--

Mm-hmm.

Margot.

Margot.

Julius.

Julius.

Edward.

Edward.

Doris.

Doris.

And myself, Henny.

Henny, you were the baby?

I was the baby, yes. And I'm the only one alive still.

The oldest one was Mitzi.

Yeah.

OK. So you--

Mary,

Pardon?

Mary.

Mary. So, it was Mary, Margot, Julius, Edward, who was the fifth one?

Doris.

Doris. And yourself.

Yeah.

How many years older than you was your oldest, Mary, your oldest sister?

Oh, god, I think she was born in '01.

1901?

Yeah.

So, she was already an adult when you were born.

Right, right.

OK, OK. So, your mother must have had her pretty young and you towards the later years.

I was the last one.

Yeah.

So, tell me a little bit about your mother. What was her first name?

Emma.

And her last name, maiden name?

Mutzbauer.

Mutzbauer.

Yeah. Typical German name.

Emma Mutzbauer. And was she Jewish?

No.

Oh. And tell me, was she-- do you know what religion she was?

Catholic

OK, so she came from a Catholic German family.

Yes.

Did she have brothers and sisters?

Yes. How many, don't ask me.

OK, but she had some.

She had some, yes.

Did you know your aunts and uncles as you were growing up from her side of the family?

Yes and no.

OK. What does that mean?

Well, one, he had like a bank statement job.

OK.

And so he would say, it's a German's job and I have to be careful who I see. So, we didn't go there.

OK.

I remember-- I remember one aunt, she was the older one. And we visited her once in a while.

Do you remember her name?

Anna was her name. But her last name, I think she was-- I think it was Mutzbauer, but I wasn't sure.

Anna Mutzbauer? Anna Mutzbauer?

Yeah, I think so.

OK, OK. And let's turn to your father. OK, we'll wait a second. What was your father's first name?

Carl.

Carl. And his last name, Bick.

Bick, yes.

B-I-C-K?

Yes.

And did he have brothers and sisters?

Yes, he had a brother in Liegnitz. He had a wool Fabrik.

A wool-- a wool factory.

Yes.

OK, the brother did?

The brother did, yeah.

What was the brother's name?

Robert.

Robert. And remind me again, your father's name was--

Carl.

Carl, Carl, of course. So, Carl and Robert. Did they have any other brothers and sisters? Or was it just the two of them?

I really don't know.

OK. OK. And was your father Jewish?

Yes.

OK.

And did you know-- did you know your uncle, Robert?

Yeah.

The one who had the-- the factory?

I saw him once in a while.

OK.

Did you see him--

Because he was out of Munich.

In Liegnitz, you said.

In Liegnitz, yeah.

Liegnitz, OK. And what about your grandparents on your father's side?

I don't know them.

OK.

I don't know any of the grandparents.

Neither mothers nor fathers?

No.

Well, you say that your oldest sister was born 1901, Mary.

Yeah.

That meant that your parents met and married at the turn of the century. And it was unusual at those times for somebody from a different religion to marry somebody else from a different religion.

Well, as much as I know, she was not my real sister.

Oh, she wasn't?

She was not. No, she was not from my father.

Aha. So, your mother had another--

She was Catholic.

Mary was Catholic.

Yeah, completely.

Yeah.

OK. And had your mother had another husband? A first husband?

I don't know if she had a husband.

Ah, so, Mary might have been--

Yes.

OK, OK.

Do you know when your parents met?

No.

OK. Was Mary the only one of your brothers and sisters who was-- who had a different father?

Yes, the only one.

The only one. So, everybody else was from your father, Carl Bick, and mother?

Yes, yes.

All right. On your mother's side of the family, do you know how her parents had supported their children, how they made a living?

I have no idea. I wasn't born yet.

OK. What about-- oh, did she come from-- her family, was it better off than your father's family or worse off?

I don't think so.

You don't think it was worse off? OK. On his side of--

Not that I know of.

OK.

I mean, I was the youngest, the smallest.

Yeah, I know, I know. Did your mother go for higher education? Did she--

My mother was a seamstress.

She was a seamstress, OK. And your father?

He was a jeweler.

OK.

And so, did he have higher education, your father?

Not that I know of. I don't think so.

OK.

As you were growing up, were there any other relatives that you knew of who were part of your life, either from mother's or father's side of the family?

I wouldn't know.

OK.

So, if they weren't part of your life, if you don't remember visiting them, then, you know-- what I'm trying to find out is how large was your circle of family and relatives.

Well, I'll tell you, when I was born, Hitler sort of started already in a way.

Well, certainly in Munich, he did.

Yeah.

Because Munich was the scene of a lot of these early activities.

Yeah. So, we were very private.

Uh-huh.

We had one dear friend. She had a bakery. And she was very good to us. My mother used to work there. And she always would send some rolls home, or bread home, or something like that.

Do you remember the street that you lived on in Munich?

In Munich, yes. I was born in-- it's a long name-- Westermuhlstrasse.

Westermuhlstrasse. Wow. Were you born at home?

No.

You were born in a hospital. OK.

Not that I know of.

OK.

I might have been and they never told me.

OK. And then where was your home located? On Westermuhlstrasse?

Westermuhlstrasse 3.

Number three.

Yeah.

Yeah. Do you still remember what it looks like?

Yes, I do.

Tell me about that. Tell me how it looked.

All I remember that in the backyard-- they used to have backyards, you know?

Mm-hmm.

And there was a car factory back there. They repaired cars and you could get gas there.

Mm-hmm.

And we lived there.

Was it-- tell me a little bit about your apartment.

My apartment was big.

Tell me about it.

It was one big hall.

OK.

I still remember that. And the kitchen was in the middle. And there was a bathroom, I remember, and a dining room, and a living room. And then later on in the years, my second sister got married there. She lived there for a while.

Margot?

Yes.

Margot, OK. So, she was already an adult as well when you were born, or was she?

Well, sort of.

OK.

Going into it.

OK, all right. What about-- did you have bedrooms in the apartment?

Yeah. I remember I had a crib.

Did you? Yeah.

And I still remember my father and Aunt Bobby. No, that was my brother.

OK.

Lulu-- Julius.

Julius.

They say goodnight to me. And I was in the bedroom, from the parents. Was that crib staying in.

Oh, yeah. So you slept in your parents' bedroom because you were the baby?

Yeah.

And the older kids had their own rooms.

Yeah. They had their own beds.

They had their own beds.

Yeah.

OK. OK. And did your-- did your house-- did your apartment have electricity?

Yeah.

Did it--

And a bathroom.

OK. It had an indoor plumbing? You had indoor plumbing?

Yeah.

OK.

How was the apartment heated?

I think electric.

Really?

Or maybe coal? Was coal used at the time?

Coals, yeah.

So, there used to be like coal ovens, big ones with tiles.

Yeah, yeah.

Did you have such a coal oven?

Where you put the coal in and heated it that way.

Yeah. Did you have that kind of oven in your apartment?

Yeah, I think so.

OK, I'm almost sure.

OK, OK. And do remember the floor the apartment was on? What story it was on?

Second.

Second European or second American? Was it the ground floor and the next floor above it? Or was it the ground floor and two floors above it?

No, no, no, it was the second floor.

OK, so you have a ground floor.

Yeah.

And it would have been the floor above that?

Yeah.

OK, OK. Did you have a balcony?

Yes, out to the back.

Out to the courtyard.

Yes.

So, you could see the auto mechanics.

Right.

OK. About how many other families lived in your building?

Two floors.

OK.

I think it was about five stories high.

OK. Was it-- what was the material that it was built of? Was it stone? Was it a stone building? Was it a brick building?

You're asking an awful lot.

I know.

My dear lady.

I know, I know, I know.

I was a little kid.

I know. I'm trying to get a sense of what it looked like, what the neighborhood looked like.

It was a pretty decent neighborhood.

Was it middle class neighborhood?

Yeah, I would say so.

OK, OK. Was it in a particular part of Munich?

I would say it was maybe on the outskirts, like this is here.

OK. So, it was a residential area.

Yes, it was, definitely.

All right. And was there public transportation that was close by?

Not really.

OK. Did your--

You had to go a little bit to the Hans-Sachs-Strasse to get the trolley car.

Hans-Sachs-Strasse?

Yeah.

OK.

I have hard names, don't I?

Well, those are the way the German names are.

Yeah.

Yeah. And your father, you say, was a jeweler.

Yes.

Did he have his own store? Or did he work for someone else?

A jeweler is one that moves about.

OK. In what way? Was he like a watch repairman? Or did he deal in fine jewelry, like in gemstones and things.

No, he had the real stuff.

He had the real stuff. And what does it mean to-- I don't understand. When he moves about, did he have-- did he have-- he went from client to client or from store to store?

From store to store.

OK, OK.

Or from salesman to salesman.

OK. So, he sold the jewelry.

Pardon me?

He was a jewelry salesman.

Right, right.

But did he make the jewelry too?

He didn't make it, no.

OK, OK. If he moved around, did you ever visit him where he worked?

No, I was too little.

OK, OK. And you don't know whether or not where he worked was far away from where you lived.

No, I guess he worked in town.

OK.

That would have been maybe an hour.

OK. All right. Tell me a little bit about your parents' personalities. What was your mother like as a person?

Oh, she was a good lady.

Was she?

She was a good lady. And my father was a good father.

What are some of the memories that you have of them?

My mother, she taught me to-- to bake a little bit. And my father-- Oh, that was nothing. You don't have to spank the child. That was nothing.

So he would be easy-- he was not a disciplinarian.

No. No.

OK, OK.

He was an awful good man.

Was he-- was he somebody who was very present in your life, in the sense was-- sometimes fathers were working so much their children didn't them.

No, he was present. He was present. He always came home at night. He would sit in that big, big chair in the kitchen. And then one day, he was picked up.

We'll come to that. We'll come to that in a bit.

Did your older brothers and sisters help in bringing you up?

Yes and no.

OK.

Most of them left. And they came over here.

Oh, they came to the United States? Tell me, who came to the United States?

The oldest one, she got engaged.

Mary.

To a waiter here.

OK.

And when he came over here, he send her the tickets to come over.

OK.

So, she did come over here, which I was little. But she came home. About twice she came to visit--

OK.

--back to family. So that was her. Then there was Margot. She stayed in Munich.

OK.

She married a German.

Not a Jew, a Catholic German.

A Catholic. So she stayed in Munich.

How old were you when she got married?

Oh, god.

About?

10, 12.

OK. So, this would have been the mid-30s. She got married in the mid-30s? OK.

Yeah.

And Hitler had already come to power.

Excuse me.

That's OK. That's OK. And then Julius.

Then Julius, he got married over there.

To a Jewish girl?

To a Jewish girl.

OK.

And now what year he came over here, I don't know. I really don't know. So, he came over here. My brother Eddie--

Mm-hmm.

--he went to Italy. And he got married in Italy. And he loved Italy. He was crazy for Italy. And he became with a beauty parlor-- a beautician.

Mm-hmm.

And then he became a salesman for beauty parlor stuff.

Mm-hmm.

And then there was Doris. Doris came over here quite a bit later. I was, I think I was a teenager already.

OK.

And she wanted to take me along, but my parents didn't let me. So, that was her gone. And that was me left alone, except for the one that married the German fella.

Well, that's what I was surprised to hear. Is that it sounded like you had so many brothers and sisters.

Yeah, and I had nobody. I grew up alone.

Oh, OK. I went through the horrible times alone.

Oh, jeepers.

Because my sister was married. She had two children. And my father then-- OK, he was-- we had to get out of the house, the apartment in the Westermuhlstrasse, we had to get out of there. And we moved into Hans-Sachs-Strasse.

OK, let's now go back a little bit. Before that all happens, I want to find-- ask a few other questions about before all the bad things start to happen. Did your parents have a radio at home?

Yeah.

Did they listen-- did they listen to the radio? And what kind of-- were their political broadcasts? Did they hear, let's say--

Oh, yeah.

Yeah. And did they hear Hitler over the radio?

Yeah.

Did they ever discuss what they were hearing?

No.

No. So, as you were with them, and all of your siblings are more or less out of the house--

Yeah.

--you're the only one left to grow up there. In the 1930s at least, they all leave before the war, except for your sister, Margot, who marries a German Catholic.

Yeah, yeah.

OK.

Doris was the last one who left.

OK.

That was the one before me.

And she came where? To the United States?

Yeah.

Where in the United States?

New York.

All right. How is it that everybody was able to come to the United States? Did you have relatives here who helped sponsor people over?

Yeah.

Who would do that been?

Well, the thing is that I was still a little.

OK.

So they didn't want to rip me out of--

Of course.

--my home.

Of course. But you--

So they left mama and papa here. But in the meantime, within three days we had to leave the apartment. Within three days.

Do you know when this happened? No.

I don't.

Do you know how old you were?

Maybe I was 10, 12.

So, this would have been 1935 or 1937, sometime in the mid-1930s.

Could have been, but I could not swear on that.

And let's go back a little bit before. What was the first thing that happened in your family that was a result of the politics, that was the result of Hitler having come to power? What was the first way your family was affected?

Well, within three days, we had to move out of our apartment.

Your mother, your father, yourself.

Yeah.

OK.

And there was Doris still around, the one before me.

Uh-huh, Doris was there too. OK.

She was still in Germany.

OK.

So anyway, within three days, and we had to be moved in a Jewish house. Which was in Thierschstrasse.

Which street?

Thiersch.

Kirsche?

Thiersch.

Like cherry.

T-H.

Oh, T-H. Thierschstrasse.

Thierschstrasse. And about three houses before there, that Jewish house, was the Volkischer Beobachter, which was a German newspaper.

OK.

The German newspaper.

OK.

And so we had to move in, but it wasn't in the front. We had to go in the back house.

OK.

Do you know what I mean, the back house?

, Well I'm assuming there are courtyards.

Yes.

And then the apartment that would be in the back of a courtyard.

Right, right.

OK.

So, we were there, and my father had to keep the housekeeping.

You mean he was the superintendent?

Yes.

Had he lost his job?

Yeah.

Had he lost his job a long time before then?

No, not really. It was all sort of in one--

In one time.

Because he was Jewish.

OK.

And so, anyway, I worked in a-- it had like underwear, and sweaters, and stuff like that. I worked in there.

Was it a shop?

It was a shop, yeah.

OK.

And well, I got thrown out, because I was half Jewish.

Well, at that time, you're 10 or 12 years old, and you're working already?

I must have been older.

OK.

So, I got thrown out of there. And so, what did I do? I did my father's [INAUDIBLE]. Cleaned the story, five stories up, and down, and the long yard to come in.

That's a lot of work.

That was a lot of work for me, a lot of work. Maybe I was 14, maybe. I wasn't much older.

OK.

So, I did that. And then one day, two gestapo guys came. They were talking to my father in the yard. I saw them, but I couldn't think of anything being wrong. And he was walked out. And that's the last time I saw him.

From-- you were inside the house and he was in the courtyard?

He was in the courtyard. And he was put in jail at Dachau. So, all we got from him were cards. And then, he wanted to

come here. And they tried everything to get him out of there, but nothing doing. There was somebody in the street who put my father in jail, would you believe? That he was-- he knew about the attack they had on Hitler in a beer house.

Yes, yes.

And that's what they put him in jail, and kept him there, and died him there.

And he died there.

Never, ever saw him again.

And you were how old?

How old could I have been? Maybe 15, 16. When I was in that store already.

O.

Could have been 16, right?

Well, that would have been 1941, when the war is already on. Had the war started, do you think?

No.

So you were younger. You were younger. Were you able to say goodbye to him?

To my father?

Yeah.

No. That's the last time I saw him, in the yard, in the Thierschstrasse, when they picked him up. They just walked him out. He took his apron off and walked out with them, just made like this to us.

Your mother was also there?

There's nothing you could do against them.

Did your mother-- how did you find out where he was taken?

He was allowed to send us cards.

OK, OK.

"I'm right now here in Stadelheim." That was the prison in Munich, outside Munich. And then they got him, I don't know, either into another one, or to Dachau right away.

OK.

And there, he wrote that should get the kids in touch and have him come over. And nothing.

Did your mother-- did your mother try to visit him in these places?

Of course she would have gone with him. They even ask him-- ask her if she wouldn't want a divorce from him.

Did she try to visit him when he was in prison?

No.

No, OK.

You couldn't visit him.

OK. Did she go to the Gestapo to find out about what happened to him?

You didn't ask.

You didn't do that. You didn't ask.

Can you imagine, mom and I had to live on the street still where that guy send him to jail, the guy who said he was-- knew about the conviction for Hitler, that they wanted to kill him.

So, he lied about it.

He lied about it. And got away with it.

Did you-- did you know who it was specifically?

Yeah, yeah, we knew who it was.

Do you want to tell us the name of the person?

I would not remember it.

OK.

Was he a neighbor?

No, diagonally, across the street.

So, not in your apartment building, but across--

No, no--

--the street.

It was a different house.

How did you find out that it was him?

I don't know how we found out.

Yeah.

I really don't know how mama found out.

That's very bitter. It's very cruel to have--

Oh, gosh.

Yeah.

It's one of the cruelest things. A man who had 12 children, six of them alive, most of them were gone. In fact, at this point, Doris was gone already too.

So, she didn't see this? OK. I can't imagine how you must have missed him.

Oh, gosh, my god, missed him wasn't the word. You know, you're still a kid when you're that age. Yeah, that was my life over there.

How-- when and how did you find out about his passing?

His what?

How did you learn that he had died.

Oh, we got hit urn. Believe it or not, we got his urn sent. That was-- we was so stunned when that came, because that was so unexpected.

So how did it-- you open the door one day and a postman gives you a package? Is that how it happened?

I don't remember did mama get a notice or whatever. Maybe some things she didn't tell me. She didn't want to upset me even more.

Did you see the urn?

Yeah, I went to the cemetery.

OK.

He's-- he's still buried in Munich.

Did she ever get an explanation as to how he died?

You don't ask questions.

Yeah.

You don't ask questions. You just accept what is end.

Did you have a funeral for him?

Yeah.

What cemetery is he buried in?

Tharkirchner.

How do you say it?

Outside Munich. Tharkirchner, Friedhof.

Tharkirchner.

Tharkirchner, yeah.

Would that be T-A-R-K--

T-H.

T-H-A-R.

Yeah.

K-I-R--

R--

C--

C-H.

OK. Tharkirch-- N-E-R. Tharkirchner Friedhof.

Friedhof, yeah.

Yeah.

Somehow, I don't even think he's there anymore.

Who came to the funeral?

Pardon me?

Do you remember the funeral?

Oh, yeah. We went-- when were all over there, my one sister still was alive there. Remember the one who married the German.

That's right, Margot, mm-hmm.

So mother and I went over once, and we visited my sister. And she took us out to the cemetery. And they all knew he came from out of Dachau, you know. Those were hard times, very hard times. Somehow, I wonder how we ever lived through it.

Did this effect-- you know, Margot, like you, was half Jewish and half Gentile. Did she have any danger to her? Did Margo-- was Margot in any danger because she was half Jewish? Or did having a German husband help her?

Well, her German husband was a lot of help to her.

Was he?

Yeah. I mean, she could stay in Munich.

OK. She was-- did she-- so, she had some protection.

Yeah, yeah.

What about your mother? Was she--

My mother, she was asked if she wouldn't want to divorce the Jew. And she said, no. And so, they left her alone. And we had this one friend who had a bakery. And she asked mom quite often to help her.

In the bakery?

Yeah, to look for her. Clean the house or whatever.

So, then it was just your mother and you. And your mother had to support you.

Yeah. Yep. Yeah, but, well, this wasn't the end yet.

Tell me what happened next.

The end?

Not necessarily the end, but what happened next? After you have your father-- your father's funeral, how long had he been gone? Was it a year? Was it more than a year from his being arrested? Was it a matter of months?

Oh, gosh, you ask me something.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I know there are--

It seems so long ago that you just don't remember.

I understand. I understand, and I apologize.

No, no, no, no, there's nothing to apologize for you. But it is very, very hard.

Yeah.

Very, very hard. So, anyway, papa was dead.

Mm-hmm.

I've cleaned the house, the staircase.

That's right.

Five stories down, the long entrance where the trucks came in.

That was all your job.

That was all my job, yeah.

Even after he gets-- when he's taken away, then you have to do it.

Yeah, then I wasn't asked.

OK.

Just had to take over, because the job had to be done. And that was a house only for Jews. Was a big sign outside.

And what did the sign say?

[SPEAKING GERMAN]

Only for Jews.

Yeah.

And there were other-- did you have other neighbors then in that house?

There were a few in between, but mostly Jews came in already.

OK. Now, the man across the street, the man across the street who had told about your father, was he Jewish?

No, no, god, no.

OK.

He wasn't Jewish. And what happened to him, I really don't know.

OK. OK. So, it was just the building that you were in. And what was the name of the street again? Huntak?

Thierschstrasse.

Thierschstrasse, exactly. OK.

It was right on the Isar.

On the Isar River?

Yeah, it was a beautiful section of street.

OK.

It was really, really nice. It was very close. It's a Isartorplatz.

Uh-huh.

And that's where the sheet came in.

And so your mother-- do you remember the name of the bakery lady who helped your mother?

Harman.

Harman. And was the bakery named Harman?

But they're all dead.

Yeah, yeah.

They're all dead.

After your father was taken, was it hard to put food on the table?

Well, mama got a lot from--

Mrs Harmon.

From Harmon, from her.

OK.

And she paid her for working there. So, we had a little-- few pennies we had.

But it's just the two of you living at home.

Yeah.

OK.

In fact, we were taken out of the apartment because it was one room too big for us. And were taken in one bedroom and a living room. It was a nice apartment, but--

But it was in the same building?

Yeah, but in a different apartment.

Got it. Got it. And when you say you were taken out, who did that? Who took you out of one and put you in the other? Who were the authorities who did that?

One of the Hitler guys.

OK, OK. So, this was even a political thing.

Because-- excuse me.

That's OK.

The house was rented by German-- by non-Jews any more. Those were Christian. They were Hitler.

I guess.

And they ruled the whole thing. So, we had to be out.

OK, OK.

And we were out.

Yeah.

And so, it's the two of you. Did you ever go to school?

Yeah, I went to school, but I was allowed to go to high school anymore.

So, how many years of schooling did you have?

To public school?

Mm-hmm.

And then I went to special for Jews, for like a evening school, but during the day. But there was special students in there. There were mixtures like.

Well, tell me about the public school first. Was the public school when you were still living in your old apartment, the big apartment, when you started going to public school? OK, let me ask this a different way. Do you remember how old you were when you started public school?

When I started public school?

Mm-hmm, first grade.

I was regular age then.

So, probably seven years old?

Yeah.

Six or seven, OK. So, at six or seven--

Six or seven.

Yeah. And you were born in 1925.

'23.

'23, excuse me. If you were born in 1923, at six or seven is 1930, 1929-1930, and Hitler isn't in power yet. So, life is more normal. Is that what-- could one make that assumption?

Yeah, it was still all right. I went to first grade. I went to second grade regular.

Regular. And how many years of public school? Did you go through fourth grade, or fifth grade, or sixth grade?

The regular years.

The regular years, OK.

Yeah.

OK. Do you have any memories of public school?

I remember one thing. That's all I remember. The guy who taught us to draw--

Mm-hmm.

He said, boy, in singing, you are so much better than you are in drawing.

Really?

I somehow never forget that.

So, he was very frank.

He was very, very plain about the whole thing.

Did you have friends at school?

Yeah, I had one friend that was very close. And then all of a sudden, I lost her.

What was her name?

And I don't know how, and why, and what. I don't-- I don't know if Hitler had anything to do with it or not. I really don't know.

Do you remember her name?

I think Emma was her name.

OK. Did your parents introduce you to any religious instruction?

My father wasn't religious. He was not religious at all. When you told him and said to him it was Yom Kippur, you're not supposed to eat-- "I didn't eat the whole night long, why should I not eat now?"

So, he didn't really-- he didn't really follow any of those rituals? No. What about your mother? Was she religious? No.

I mean they had Christmas.

OK.

I remember going to synagogue on Jewish holidays.

Uh-huh.

But that was about it.

OK, so you did you have a Christmas tree?

Oh, yeah.

OK.

Oh, yeah.

Did you go to church on Christmas?

I don't think so.

OK.

I remember going on Hanukkah.

OK. So, it sounds like you had an introduction, that is you-- it wasn't completely separate. You did go on holidays.

Yeah.

You did have some celebrations. But not too intensive.

No.

OK. Did you ever visit your uncle with the woolen factory?

No, I never got to Liegnitz. And then, as it was, he died. And she lost it.

His wife?

His wife lost the factory.

Did they have children?

I don't know.

OK.

I think they did, but I could not swear on it.

Was his wife Jewish?

No.

OK, so Robert married somebody not Jewish as well, just like your father married--

Right, exactly.

OK.

Exactly.

But she lost the factory even so.

Yeah, yeah. In fact, after Uncle Robert died, my mother wrote her a letter, if she would have maybe a knitted outfit for me that maybe had a mistake in knitting or whatever, that mama could buy cheap, you know. And she didn't even answer her.

Did you have a lot-- did your mama have a lot of people who turned their backs on your mother because she had married someone Jewish?

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, plenty. They found out right away.

Did her own family turn their backs on her? Really?

I had an aunt, my mother's younger sister. And, oh, gosh, "There goes the Jew over there. That's my sister's kid. That's the Jew over there."

She would talk about you that way? Oh, jeepers.

Yeah. Oh, jeepers, that's bitter. That's bitter to have your aunt talk about you--

Oh, yeah.

--like that.

Oh, yeah. And do you know, after the war, that was so very strange. There's a knock on the door. I open it, and there she's out there. "Oh, hello, child, how are you. I'm so sorry I couldn't see you at the time when Hitler was there. I'm so sorry. What can I do for you?" I said, "Look, you didn't do anything for me time ago. Why should you something now? Please leave my door." And she did go. I didn't want a cent from her.

Mm-hmm. Did you continue-- did you continue to wash the staircases and--

Oh, yeah.

--take care of the courtyard?

Yeah. After your father--

Yeah.

--is taken and so on.

Yeah. Till I got called into a regular work factory, like, where I could pick myself. Like I worked for Kamera.

OK. So tell me about-- so you were-- you were called to finish this and have a job in a factory.

Yeah.

And who called you to do that?

Well, Hitler was gone. Everything was free for me to do what I wanted to do.

Oh, you're talking now after the war?

After the war.

I'm talking still before. How many years did you take care of the staircase in that apartment building?

[? For ?] many years.

Yeah.

Seemed like endless. That's a big job.

It's a huge job.

Because I had to do the railing. I had to do the side wood.

Mm-hmm. And did all-- since it was an apartment building that was only for Jews, did all of the other Jewish families stay there? Or did any of them-- were any of them arrested? Or were they left? Or what happened?

No, they were not arrested anymore. Well, after Hitler was gone, some of them moved out.

But I'm talking before. I'm talking when your father was taken and--

Oh, they still lived-- they still lived there.

OK. Was anybody else ever taken from that apartment building?

No, no.

So, there were Jews who lived in this apartment building throughout the war?

Yeah.

And they were left alone?

Mm-hmm.

That's kind of surprising.

Yeah.

Did you get to know any of your neighbors?

Oh, yeah. In fact, I was friends-- I'm still friends with one or the girls.

Tell me about her. What was her name?

What's her first name? Lucy.

Lucy. Mandelbaum.

Mandelbaum? And was she also half Jewish, half not Jewish? Or was she full Jewish?

She was half, I think.

She was half.

Yeah, I think she was half.

OK. And which parent of hers had been Jewish? Which parent of--

The father.

OK. Did the father live with them?

Mm-hmm.

Throughout the whole war?

Yeah, he did normally.

Oh, wow. Oh, wow. And--

I have another friend. She lives in Canada.

Mm-hmm.

You meet so many people. And you feel very bad when you lose touch of them.

That's true. That's true. Then comes the end of Hitler. And that's when I went for Kamera.

For Kamera?

For Kamera, the battery factory.

Uh-huh, OK. You went to work in a battery factory.

Yeah.

But that's after Hitler has gone.

After Hitler was gone, yeah.

I still want to talk about before then. I still want to talk about life before he is gone. Did you ever go out on the street? Did you ever go to the stores or to the parks?

I wasn't allowed to go in stores.

You weren't allowed to.

No, we weren't allowed to go in stores.

OK. Did you ever-- were you ever taking a walk around town?

Yeah, with the Jewish star.

OK.

You know, you had to wear the Jewish star.

OK. And did you-- could you go into a park?

Into a park?

Mm-hmm.

I guess so. But with the Jewish star.

OK.

In fact, later on, I got to tell you, I got caught once, where they didn't the star. And I was taken to the police.

Oh, really?

Yeah.

And what happened at the police?

Well, that was after the factory, Lohhof, where I was in labor camp there. I came home late, so mom was worried stiff what happened to me.

Mm-hmm.

And there police in that-- we were on the last-- in the last wagon, only for Jews. And it was raining. And I had a raincoat over the regular coat. And it got pulled back. So it got a wrinkled. and. You could not see it when I sat there. So, he told

me to come. So, oh, gosh, I got so scared. What the heck does he want? So he told me, "I can't see your Jewish star." So, I said, "Here it is. Here. [SPEAKING GERMAN] Its hiding." So, he took me to the police station. And I was there for about an hour and a half. And that's when they let me go.

They let you go. Tell me about the labor camp that you worked in. Tell me about the labor camp that you worked in.

Oh, where I worked in. It was outside of Munich. And the thing was that I had to go from Isartorplatz to Bahnhof.

To the train station, yeah.

Train station. And it was about an hour walk.

Really?

And I had to walk this every day, every night coming home. Because they permitted to me, gracefully, that I could sleep at home because my mother was-- she had kidney trouble. And so, they allowed me to stay home.

So, otherwise, you would have had to sleep at the factory?

No, no, no. I had to work during the day out there.

OK.

Then take the train back home again. And walk again from the train station to the house, which took an hour.

OK.

With the Jewish star [? blending. ?]

OK.

I had to walk through Munich.

Did you have-- first of all, tell me, what was it like walking through Munich when you had the star on the front and the back? How did people treat you?

Well, some people said, oh, there's a Jew. And some people ignored it.

OK. Did you ever have anybody assault you?

No, but it was very-- I mean, you find yourself a young girl, and you got to go walk through the streets. What is this about?

Yeah.

You know?

Yeah.

That was very shameful. What did I do? Why am I marked, you know? You ask yourself the question.

Yeah. Tell me about the labor camp.

Well, the labor camp was-- I must say, the people who ran it, who showed us how to do the stuff, they build very decent.

Really? OK.

They never hit anybody or did anything to anybody, not that I knew of. I never knew that. And there were French prisoner of war and English prisoner of war. And they lived in a camp, a house like.

Like a barracks.

Pardon me?

They lived in a barracks?

Yeah. And we lived home or lived there. And the only time I remember-- I mean, they showed us how to do it. In the wintertime, we worked in the-- in the factory.

Mm-hmm.

In the summertime, we worked outside. And so, in the wintertime, it was very dangerous to be in a factory with machinery that big.

OK, why? Why was it dangerous?

You know, big machines.

OK.

You know, we weren't used to that?

Were there accidents?

I think I had once an accident with my arm. I got my arm caught, but I don't remember details anymore.

OK.

So, anyway, the traveling was enough already.

Yeah, it sounds like it.

It was horrible to go through town with a Jewish star, marked, really. So, anyway, in the summertime, it was all right. We worked outside. And we worked like with mixed marriages, like where she was Jewish and he was Christian. And so, they had to work out there too.

OK, so it was a labor camp for people who were half and half.

Yeah. And regular, the soldiers were regular, you know. But they were afraid to talk to us. Maybe once in awhile there was a piece of chocolate in a bundle of rocks, you know, so we should find it. So anyway, one day, we had to stand all in line, all of them who worked there. Not the French prison of war or the English, just the Jewish. We were wondering why we had to stand in line.

So, it turned out that the Gestapo came and called out different names, you know. And it turned out to be that the people who were called by name, they were taken from concentration camp. They were called out and called to the group of Nazis there. And they had to go into concentration camp. And we had to go back in line and back to work.

Do you know why they were chosen?

Well, that's just what they wanted to put into the concentration camp. They had no-- no answers for things.

Yeah.

You know?

Yeah.

But we worked there from about 7:00 or 7:30 in the morning till about 5:00.

So when you would go to work every day, you had to be there by 7:30 in the morning.

By the train.

So, that meant you have your hour's walk, and then the train ride, which lasts-- how long was the train? Half an hour, an hour? 15 minutes?

No, more than a half an hour, about 45 minutes, something like that.

So, you have almost two hours, like an hour-45 one direction.

To move. To move, yeah.

So, it means you have to get up at 5:00, or you have to leave your home--

Yeah.

--by about 5:15 in the morning.

Yeah. Yeah.

And walk through Munich in the dark.

That for four and a half years.

For four and a half years. What was the name of the labor camp?

Lohhof.

Lohhof. And what did they do there? You were working with machinery in the winter.

Yeah.

What was being produced?

Flux.

Flux?

Flux, yeah.

Like linen flux?

Linen flux, yeah.

OK, so it was threads.

It was threads, yeah.

And then, and from the threads would be fabric.

Would be fabric, yeah.

OK.

We had to learn in the summertime, it got off the wagon in bundles. And we had to learn to spread it out and stand them up. They stood like to dry.

Yeah, yeah.

And then put them together and bundle them, load them up on the wagon, and they got into the factory.

OK.

And was the end product a piece of fabric?

Yes.

Did you ever have the opportunity or the possibility of having some of that fabric, of taking a few pieces to make clothes from?

No, no, no. You couldn't take anything, my god.

OK, or they wouldn't give you anything?

No.

OK. At that factory, did they feed you?

Pardon me?

Did they feed you at that labor camp?

No.

So--

We had to bring our lunch our own.

OK.

Or unless they lived there. The ones they lived there, they got fed.

Did the work that you do, was that any different than the work that the French prisoners of war or English prisoners of war did? Was it the same work?

I think it was. I guess they did the heavier bundles.

OK. Because they were men? Mm-hmm.

They were so nice to us, I mean the French prisoners of war. There was such a difference in looks. And you know like--
They would give you a look?

Yeah, a little nod with the hello They knew the mess we were in. But I mean, I never saw any beating going on there.

OK. What about the bosses? Who were the bosses?

Well, we were introduced to foreman.

OK.

Two foreman we had.

And you said earlier, they were pretty decent.

Yeah, they were decent. I mean, they never gave us any hitting or any punishment of any kind. Not that I remember [INAUDIBLE].

Was there anybody else like you who had permission to live at home?

Yeah, there were a few. There were like the German wives who were married to German guys, you know?

Mm-hmm.

The Jewish wives who were married to two German guys, they were allowed to go home. There were a few of them. That's why they had the wagon only for Jews. Nobody else got in there. If they got in there, then they had-- were taken out.

When you say wagon, do you mean like a train car?

Yeah, a train car.

OK, OK. And did you travel on the train together with these other women? When you would be going home, were you by yourself? Or did you go as a group to feel a little bit more secure?

I traveled with the Jewish woman.

OK.

You know, because it said only for Jews. Nobody else got in there.

All right.

If they got in there, then they got out again. They were taken out again.

And when you'd get to Bahnhof, did everybody go their separate ways?

Yeah. Well, we all went the same direction.

Oh, so you would go together?

Sort of, if you were together, we went together.

OK, OK.

It was a horrible time, I tell you that.

I believe you. I believe you.

And my mother couldn't do a thing.

It must have been so hard for her to see you suffer.

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Especially, tell you the truth, the youngest, you know, what I had to go through for this religion. You know, for a religion. But the worst guy was the one in Nuremberg.

Tell me about him.

Gosh, he's long dead. What was his name? Gosh, I can't think of his name. He was such a Jewish hater.

How did-- how did he come into your life? What happened that your life-- your path and his crossed?

Well, he was all over the lives.

OK.

He was-- he was-- he had some title.

OK. And--

What was his authority? What did he-- what could he do?

He could throw you into to concentration camp in anywhere. What the heck was his name? You know, when you want to think of things, you can't.

Oh, I know. I know. And it comes later. You say he was from Nuremberg?

Yeah.

Did he live in Munich too?

No, no.

[PHONE RINGS]

Let's cut the camera. So, we were talking about this man who was really-- really a Jew hater.

Yeah.

Was he a Nazi official?

Oh, yeah, he was a-- he was with Hitler's group.

Oh, OK.

He had a-- like a [INAUDIBLE] or whatever he was.

OK, OK.

And he came from Nuremberg? Did your path ever cross his?

Pardon me?

Did your path ever cross his path? That is, did he ever come--

No, no.

No. No.

Never got in touch with him.

OK, all right. So, it wasn't like-- you just knew him by reputation.

No, no, by reputation, that's it.

OK, OK. What was your mother doing? When you're at work, you said she was having problems with her kidneys?

Well, she had kidney problems, but she still was working.

Yeah, she was working on that bakery?

In the bakery, yeah.

Was she able to get any other work, or was that it?

Well, she was sewing.

Mm-hmm.

She was-- she was doing a lot of things to make a few pennies, you know?

Did you go hungry?

I guess so. I really think so.

OK. It sounds like a very lonely time as well.

Yeah. And I guess there's so much one can't remember. Over the years, it gets lost.

Did you see your sister much?

Do I see my sister?

No. Did you? At that time, when you were going to the camp, Lohhof, did you see your sister much?

Yes and no. It depends, you know. I couldn't use a trolley. I couldn't use a train. The only train I was allowed to use was the one to go Lohhof, to the camp, you know.

Did she have to wear the yellow star?

No.

She didn't?

No, she did not wear it.

She had a-- she's just the same as you are, that is same parents, but because she's married to somebody who's German?

Yeah.

OK.

It was strange, come to think of it.

Yeah, yeah. Now her husband, was he-- what was his job?

He had a beauty parlor.

He had a beauty parlor?

Yeah.

So, he wasn't anybody who was a political person?

No, no, no.

OK.

No, he wasn't political.

And did he and your sister help you and your mother at all?

Oh, yeah, they did as they could.

OK. OK. But it does sound like you are all very isolated.

Nobody wanted a Jew. They just didn't want them.

Did you have any friends at all during these years?

Oh, yeah. I had a fella. We sort of grew up together. And he was a Christian Jew, you know?

So somehow, he got away with it. He used the trolley. And I don't know what the heck he did it.

Mm-hmm.

But he came to visit me sometimes. Then I had a few girls.

Mm-hmm.

That's about all I have to say.

Well, I still have a few more questions. I still have a few more questions. Did you get-- when you started at the labor camp, did someone come to your house and say, "You're not cleaning anymore. Now you have to go to work at the labor camp." How did that all happen that you were taken to work there?

They just hand out papers.

OK. Did you have to report to a local authority?

No, no. They just sent you notes.

Oh, I see. So, you'd get something in the mail.

Yeah.

And it would say, "Report here and here."

Right, right.

"And you're going to begin over there."

Yeah.

OK.

I mean, the Hausmeister that sort of finished itself, by itself.

OK.

You know what I mean?

Yeah. And then you get this. And did you have interaction with the English prisoners of war?

No.

Just the French prisoners of war.

Not either.

Also. So there's just the look.

The looks, or maybe once in a blue moon a piece of chocolate was dropped into the flux, you know.

OK. And it would be either from them or the German soldiers, you're saying. You had said earlier, maybe the German soldiers would leave a--

I don't think the German soldiers would have done it.

OK.

It was either the English or the--

French.

--French.

OK, OK.

Wouldn't have been the German.

OK. Was there-- at the factory, was there an-- or the labor camp, was there a Nazi presence there on a regular basis? That is political officers, Gestapo?

I think there was. I think there was somebody sitting in the office.

OK.

But, I mean, we weren't told about it.

During those years, were you allowed to go into a store?

No.

How would you buy food?

Mama bought it. I wasn't allowed to go into a store.

Had you ever gone to the cinema?

To the cinema?

Mm-hmm.

Not during this time.

Had you gone when you were younger?

When I was younger, before all those rules.

Yeah.

Things were allowed or not allowed.

Yeah.

You know.

So you do remember as a little girl having gone to the cinema?

Yeah, once in a blue moon.

OK.

Because I couldn't go alone. Papa didn't go with me. Mama didn't go with me.

OK.

So then, I didn't go.

OK. During the war, during the time you're in the labor camps, are you writing-- are you and your mother having letters from your brothers and sisters who live outside the country? Did you get any mail?

Oh, yeah.

OK.

Yeah.

From whom?

From America and from Italy, from my brother and from my sisters and brother here.

OK. What were they writing?

About what happened to them, whatever is good for them. And we should just hold out.

Did they have any-- did your mother write to them telling them about what your lives were like?

Yeah, but it didn't help any.

OK.

You couldn't-- you couldn't really do that.

Yeah. I mean, it's wartime. And these are-- Italy is easier because it's an ally. But the United States is an enemy of Germany.

Yeah.

So, but you still got letters?

I still got letters, yeah.

OK. Did you tell them that you were in a labor camp, working in a labor camp? No.

Said as little as possible.

Did they have any idea of what it was really like?

I don't know. It's hard to guess.

It's true. It's true.

If I would have my brother here, if he would be still alive, I could ask him.

Yeah. What about-- I want to go back a little bit. You say Doris was able to leave Germany. And she leaves before your father is arrested. Is that right?

Yeah.

Doris. So, I'm trying to sense about what year that might have been. '37, '38, '36?

Must have been around '38.

OK. Who brought her over to America? Who did she go to?

My sister, Doris, or my sister, Mitzi-- OK.

--Mary.

OK. And when Mary came, who did she go to?

When Mary came?

Mm-hmm.

Well, she was engaged.

To a German or to an American?

To a German.

And they were able to go to the United States without having someone sponsor them.

Yeah, at that time. At that time. He came as an employee here.

OK.

He worked in a restaurant.

OK.

So, he got a job.

And she came with him. And they get themselves established.

And they got married.

OK.

And had two children.

OK. And they came to New York?

They came to New York, yeah. I just talked to my niece the other day.

Uh-huh. And so, was it them who brought the rest of the brothers and sisters over?

My sister did.

Mary.

Mary did, yeah.

So, she brought Mitzi. She brings Julius. She brings Doris.

Doris, yeah. Not Eddie. Eddie is Italy.

Eddie's is in Italy. OK. And when all of them went to be with Mary and went to the United States, what was their reason for going? When they left Germany, why did they leave Germany?

Oh, gosh, Hitler was so close.

OK.

Things didn't look good at all in anymore in Germany.

OK. So, while Mary came because of her husband's job, your brothers and your sisters came because of what was going on.

Yeah. Yeah.

Because of the politics. Had your mother and father also talked about coming to America?

Oh, yeah, they would have loved to, but they were unable over here to support them. You know, I was a child still.

Yeah, that's right.

You know, I would have had to have been supported.

That's right, that's right. So, it was that your parents-- there just wasn't the possibility for Mary to be able to bring your parents over along with everybody else.

With everybody else, no.

OK, OK. Do you remember what the war was like when the Americans started to win the war? You know, they have the Normandy landing in June 1944.

Yeah.

And by May '45, Germany is defeated. How was it when the war came to Munich? You're still going to the labor camp, and traveling home by train, and then walking from the Bahnhof. When does-- did you have bombs falling? Did you have street fighting? Tell me about that part of it.

I tell you, I don't remember any of that anymore.

Really?

I really don't.

OK.

I wish I would.

OK.

And I wish I would have paid more attention.

OK.

But I don't know, I guess we were so happy that the end is coming soon.

Yeah.

That maybe we ignored it.

Do you remember what it was like when the Nazis disappeared?

Yeah, all of a sudden, they were gone.

From-- were you working at the camp? Or were you at home?

I was home.

And how did you know they were gone?

You didn't hear Nazi, Heil Hitler anymore.

OK.

You know, that quiet down.

OK, so it became quiet. Do you remember seeing American tanks?

Yeah. Yeah.

Do you remember seeing American soldiers?

Yeah, I think I saw some.

OK.

I think I saw some, very sure.

So, that all is in early 1945.

Yeah.

All right. What is--

'45 I was-- oh, gosh, how old was I? From '23?

Well, almost 18.

Yeah.

Something like that. 17, 18. So you're-- you're getting to be a young lady.

Yeah.

And you were still working in that camp until the last moment?

Yeah. Till it was over.

OK.

I don't know, we just didn't go anymore. There was no sign or anything, just didn't go anymore. I guess the train, the sign disappeared too.

Yeah. And did you stay in that apartment, that one bedroom apartment with your mother?

Yeah. I stayed there till I got married.

OK, let's talk first about what those first days of liberation were like.

Oh, god.

Or the first months of liberation.

I think I was very quiet.

Yeah.

It was too-- too good to be true, you know what I mean?

Did you feel like you-- did you start walking around the city more?

Yeah, without this.

Do you remember the first time you went into a store?

Yeah.

What was that like?

It was a milk store. You know, over there, you get the milk separately.

Mm-hmm. Was it in the neighborhood, in your neighborhood?

It was in the street.

It was in the street.

It was in the street, yeah. I was here and they were there.

OK. Did the people who owned-- ran the store, did they know you?

Yes. They knew me. Was very surprised that it did know me.

They were in the neighborhood then?

Yeah, in the street, just a few houses down on the other side.

And--

And, you know the Volkischer Beobachter, the Nazi paper was on the other side, on the same side as I lived on. They were just across a small street. In the corner house, they were in.

Mm-hmm.

And they, of course, oh, we win, we win, and all this, you know.

How did the dairy store personnel, how did they treat you when you walked in the first time?

In the dairy store? Very nice. You know, like sort of relief too, but if it was true, I don't know. You know what I mean? The Germans became very-- you know, you could have them like that. You know what I mean?

Well, explain it to me.

You could have him either way or another. I mean, the German-- Germany is such a beautiful country. But the people-- eh.

Do you mean that it's hard to tell when you meet somebody whether they're a good person or not?

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean they would-- they would turn like a flag in the wind.

Ah.

You know what I mean? They would turn so easy. How can you turn so easy when you you're so fanatic for one thing?

It sounds like it's hard to trust someone.

Yeah, yeah. That's why I couldn't have married over there. You know what I mean?

Mm-hmm.

I couldn't have-- I wouldn't have known how they really meant it.

I got married over here.

How did you meet your husband?

At work.

At work?

Yeah, Bulova.

A watch company.

Mm-hmm.

So, when you-- when the war was over, you said you were able to choose where you wanted to work. Is this what you were telling me earlier?

Yeah, yeah.

So, where did you go to choose where you wanted to work? Did you have to go to like an [GERMAN]?

Sort of, yeah. I tell you, I looked for some-- I would ask my-- my-- anybody, any relative, or anybody I trusted, where would I make some money. I could use some money, you know?

Yeah.

And then told me, in a factory, you do piecework.

OK.

And I did pretty well there.

Mm-hmm.

And so you chose Bulova.

That's where I chose Bulova. And that's where I met my husband.

So, how long did you work at Bulova in Munich?

Altogether?

Mm-hmm.

That's a good question. You know, that's a very good question. He died on me.

Who?

My husband.

Oh.

I can't remember.

Did you start working there soon after the war ended?

Yeah.

OK, so was it the same year, in 1945?

Yeah.

OK.

No, no, no, no, no.

No.

It was in-- it was about, I think, three years, I worked there. After three years, something like that, I started to get married.

OK, OK. So, you met your husband at Bulova.

Yeah.

What were you doing? What was your job?

On the power press.

On the power press.

Yeah.

And what was his job?

He was a tool and dye maker. He was learning too.

OK, was he from Germany?

He was American born.

He was an American. OK.

Yeah.

And his name was what?

[INAUDIBLE] terrible. I can't remember.

Your husband's name. OK. That's OK. That's OK. It happens sometime.

Is your last name now, Hahn--

Hahn, yeah.

Is that the same as his name?

Yeah.

OK. And so, he was Hahn. But was he a German Gentile or a Jew?

He was-- no, he was not Jewish. He was from German parents.

OK. OK. But he was an American.

He was an American, yeah.

OK. And what attracted you to him?

I don't know.

OK. Well, were there many Americans working at the factory there?

Yeah, yeah. They were many mixtures working-- very-- a lot of Italian too.

Oh, really?

Yeah.

OK.

Was that time in Woodside.

That's here in the United States?

Yeah.

OK, but in Germany, in the Bulova factory, where there many--

Germany was not in Bulova.

OK.

I mean, Bulova was not in Germany.

Oh, I thought it was in Germany.

No, no, no, no, no, no.

I thought that it was--

It was America.

Oh, OK, so my question then is, after the war, when you were still in Germany, what do you do? Do you start working in another place that you wanted to work in? You told me at the very beginning of our interview that when Hitler was gone, you were able to choose where you went to work.

Yeah.

And I wanted to know, where is it that you went to work?

That wasn't Bulova.

OK.

Because Bulova is America.

OK. I thought they might have had a European factory. It was my mistake.

No, they didn't. They didn't.

OK. So, where did you work after the war in Germany?

In that-- in that store where they sell sweaters, and underwear, and stuff like that.

Ah, so, that's where you got a job.

Yeah, yeah.

And was that close to home?

Not really.

No? Did you walk there?

Yeah.

I sort of had to learn to walk everywhere.

And the owners-- who hired you?

Jewish people.

I see, so it was a Jewish store. OK. And they were able to restart the store right after the war?

I guess so.

OK, OK. How long did you work there?

Till I started coming over here.

OK. All right, then let's get to that part. Did your sisters-- your sisters and brothers, did they start writing to invite you, to get you and your mother to come over to the United States?

They knew it was a [? must ?] because we were the only ones left here.

OK.

And so, did they help bring you over to the US? How did you get to the United States?

My brother-in-law, who died, he sent me the ticket. And for mama, they send-- my older sister sent the ticket.

OK, so it was Mary--

Which we had to pay them.

Yeah, when you got here? Oh, wow. Tough.

Yeah.

Tough. So, when did you leave Germany?

I came over here, 1947.

OK. So two years.

So, that's when I must've left.

OK. And did you travel by boat or by plane?

By boat.

By boat. Do you remember the boat trip over?

Yeah. I got so excited when I saw the Statue of Liberty. My mother said, "You're free now, child, you're free now." I said, "Is that the Statue of Liberty?" She said, "Yes." And we landed.

You landed in New York? Was there someone there to meet you?

My family was there.

Your family who's there. And you hadn't seen them for 10 years.

Yeah.

So, what happened after that? Where did they take you?

To my sister's house. And we had a room, mama and I, a room together.

In Mary's house? Or Mitzi?

In Mary's house.

OK.

And that's where stayed till I got married.

Ah, OK. And where did she live?

Astoria.

Astoria. She had children?

Yeah. In fact, I talked to her the other day. She lives in Florida.

Oh, your niece, Mary's daughter. OK. What's her name?

Marion.

Marion? OK. And when you lived there in Mary's house with your mother, were her children still living at home as well?

No, no.

OK. So, it was her husband, you, your mother--

Her husband was dead then already.

Oh, was he? OK, all right.

Yeah. And your mother, do you know about how old she was when you went to the states? When you came here?

When you went to America, I never paid attention to that.

That's OK. That's OK.

I can't remember.

Well, did she work afterwards? Did she have a job? Or was she old enough that she didn't need to work?

She worked, believe it or not, in that bakery, that bakery, OK? She divorced, the bakery owner, she divorced. And she married a young guy, really very, very handsome and all. Came to this country and lived somewhere in the mountains.

Who is this you're saying?

The bakery.

Oh, Mrs Harman?

Harman, yeah. You're very good for names.

So Mrs. Harman divorced the baker.

Yes.

Married a young guy.

Yes.

And lived here in the mountains in the United States.

Right. And he became a waiter.

OK.

And she did housework. And mama was there quite often.

Visiting them.

Yeah. Being there, doing things for them, housework, or sewing, or whatever.

Even here in the United States?

Even here in the United States.

Like she had done in Munich.

Yeah.

Well, isn't that-- isn't that interesting?

Yeah.

So, she had a friend. Basically, this lady was her friend.

Yeah. She definitely did.

OK.

A very good friend. And they were friends till she died, Harman.

Yeah. Do you know where in the mountains they lived?

[PLACE NAME]. Right in the [INAUDIBLE] mountains.

[PLACE NAME].

Yeah. I don't know where that is. Is that here in the East? Or is that like out West?

No, it's here in the East.

Yeah. OK, so maybe in New York or New England?

No, it's about two hours from here.

Oh, OK, so it's pretty close. So, it's pretty close. OK. So, your mother is not completely alone. She has somebody from her world--

Yeah, yeah.

--from over there. And when you arrive, you're already then, oh, jeez, 24 years old, when you come to the states. How much schooling had you had? How much--

Not really that much. I had public school. And then I had those few hours for high school. They only threw a few hours in.

OK.

To give us.

OK. That's still in Germany? Or did you go to school here too?

That was here.

That was here, OK. Did you miss that? Did you miss having--

Yeah, I tell you, over the years, I missed it. But somehow I caught up.

Mm-hmm. And you started working in Bulova.

Yeah.

And did you start working there almost right when you came to the United States?

I don't remember.

That's OK. That's OK. And it was there that you met your husband?

Yeah.

Do you remember his first name?

Julius.

Julius was your husband's first name? So, his last name is Hahn. And his first name was Julius. OK. When did you get married?

When did I get married?

That's OK. Sometimes these dates just escape people.

I don't remember. That's terrible.

That's OK. It will come to you. You just didn't expect me to ask the question.

Yeah, when I'm in bed tonight.

That's right. That's when it comes, exactly. When you married, where did you live, the first place you lived with your husband?

In Woodside.

Woodside? OK. And did you have children?

Well, not right away, but I had four children.

You had four children.

Two and two.

All right. Tell me their names.

You met one.

I did. But for the camera, tell me their names, your children.

Diane, Julius, Karen and me.

Well, that's-- what about Bobby?

Bobby, yeah, OK.

OK.

He belongs in there.

OK. So, it's Diane, Julius, Karen, and Bobby. OK. And did all of them grow up in Woodside? Is that where you lived with your husband?

I lived in Woodside. And we bought a house. That's the second born.

OK. So, your children, again, your daughter-in-law tells me it's Diane, Karen, Robert, and Richard. OK. Could you tell me, who is the oldest?

Diane.

And the next?

Bobby.

OK, and then--

Karen.

OK.

Richie.

And he's the baby. OK.

He's not so much a baby anymore.

I believe you. I believe you.

Have you ever been back to Germany?

Yeah.

To Munich?

Yeah.

When did you go?

To see my sisters as long as she was alive.

She stayed there.

She stayed there, yes. But she's dead.

When did she pass away?

About five years, something like that.

OK, OK. Were you back many times, or just--

Three times.

Three times. And--

And one time I was back for Eddie. He was almost dying.

Who is Eddie? Oh, your brother?

Brother, yeah.

He was in Italy?

In Italy. I wanted to see him once more. And that was it. My sister-in-law had died. And one couldn't talk to her. She only spoke Italian.

Yeah. Did your children ask you much about what you went through as they were growing up?

No.

Did you talk much about it?

Not really.

OK.

You know, it's all right when you talk about it now, but to go through it, it's another story. Really.

I can't imagine what it was like.

Really, it was horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible.

Yeah. Thank you for sharing it with us today.

Listen, you've been very, very kind. I was so afraid of that. I woke up at 3:00. I woke up at 5:00.

Oh, yi.

And, god, how am I going to do this? Will I remember that? And then, I thought, well, if I forget it, I forget it.

You did wonderfully. You did absolutely wonderfully. Thank you.

Well, I thank you for being so kind.

Aye. It is-- I know that we are asking about really difficult times, really difficult times. They're not easy to speak about.

No.

But you have given us a sense of what it was like. You have painted this picture for us in words. And you have shared with us the things that made an imprint on you for life.

Yeah, that was life. That really was part of our life.

And it was a very bitter thing.

And you wonder sometimes, how the heck did you live through that?

Yeah.

You know?

Yeah.

Well, I thank you both very, very much.

You're welcome. And then, I will say this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Henrietta Hahn on April 28-- no, April 27, 2018, in Patchogue, New York. Thanks again.

I thank you.

OK.