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This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Helga Schuessler on May 22, 2019 in Oviedo, Florida. Did I pronounce everything all right?

Yes, Oviedo.

Oviedo, Florida. Thank you, Mrs. Schuessler, for agreeing to speak with us today.

I think it is a pleasure having you here.

Thank you. I'm going to start our interview at the very beginning, asking you as many details as I can about your life before the war-- and your family-- and we'll take things from there. So my very first questions are very basic. Can you tell me your name at birth?

Helga Helena Emma Lindenberg.

Helga Helena Emma Lindenberg.

For my grandmothers. OK. And what was the date of your birth?

November 15, 1921.

November 15, 1921. And where were you born?

In Breslau. That is Silesia. It is now Polish.

And what is the Polish name for it?

Pardon me?

What is the Polish name for Breslau?

Wroclaw.

Wroclaw. OK. So it is in the eastern part of Germany, or was in the eastern part of Germany.

Yes.

Is it close to Danzig?

Oh no, it is quite further south. And Danzig is in the north.

And would you say it's about 200 kilometers or 100 kilometers?

It could be. 200? I don't know if Germany has 200--

[LAUGHTER]

--kilometers.

Yeah. Well, that, of course, is why there needed to be Lebensraum, right?

[LAUGHTER]

So you were born in Breslau. Tell me a little bit about your mother and your father. Tell me about your father's name and when he was born if you know the date of birth.

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My father's name is Rudolf Lindenberg. He was born in Lüneburg. That's close to Hanover. November 19, 18-- oh good grief-- 81.

1881. And his birthday was then close to yours.

Not so close. Yeah, well--

November.

Yeah, September and November.

Oh, I thought you said November.

No, no, September.

Your birthday--

The 19th of September.

19th of September is his birthday?

His birthday.

And yours is?

Mine is the 15th of November.

Got it. And did he have brothers and sisters?

He has-- wait a minute-- three brothers and one sister.

So there were five children in total?

Yes.

Did you know any of your aunts and uncles?

His youngest, my Aunt Greten, his youngest sister. And she came to-- from Germany, she went to England. And from England, she came to New York and lived in that house we lived in. And you have no idea because these houses were actually not allowed for humans anymore, you can see. But with the influx of all the immigrants from Europe, they opened it up.

Were these condemned houses then?

This was a dem-- this was a house, you know, that [HUMS].

And was it in New York City?

It was in Queens.

It was in Queens.

It is outside.

OK. And we'll come to that, because that's after the war. But did she emigrate to the United States before the war or during?

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After the war.

OK. So where did she spend the war?

I spent--

She, Aunt Greten.

Oh, Aunt Greten, she was in England. And I don't know why she came over. Because my father had family in New York.

OK. But did she leave Germany before 1933?

She was able to leave Germany in '38 to go to her oldest sister in England.

That means your father had another sister?

Yes. It was Alice. And well, I don't know when she immigrated to England.

Do you know the names of all of your father's siblings?

It was Alice. It was-- good grief-- Albert.

Albert.

It was Hans and Greten.

And then your father?

And Rudolf, yes.

And Rudolf. And Rudolf was the youngest or--

No, Rudolf was the second oldest.

OK. Who was the oldest?

The oldest is Alice.

Alice. So Alice, Rudolf, Greten--

Alice, Rudolf, Albert.

Albert.

Hans and Greten.

Hans and Greten. And did you know your uncles?

No. No, I only know Greten. And we called her Greten. [LAUGHS]

Now, is it that you didn't know your uncles because they didn't live in Germany?

Well, because they lived in the States already.

OK, so they had emigrated to the United States before.

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Before. I think in '38.

So they were living in Germany until 1938?

Yes.

Everybody?

I really don't know if that might have been even earlier, because of family-- my great uncle in Chicago. He imported silk for the parachutes for the First World War. And later on, they used-- what is it?

[SPEAKING GERMAN]

[LAUGHS] They use this as other material where they--

Nylon?

Nylon? Was it nylon?

You know this is something that-- [LAUGHS]

It happens to everybody. It happens to everybody.

Yeah, but not at the right time.

[LAUGHTER]

Because they used for parachutes real silk, which is much heavier. And nylon, which was developed later on, was much lighter and the Second World War used the parachutes in nylon. Yes. But he made his money already before. And my great aunt was a very good friend of Helen Keller.

No kidding.

Yes. And the house in Chicago is still-- it was getting over to the blinds of Helen Keller. And she was very friendly. It was a friend of hers.

OK. Do you know the name of your great aunt and uncle?

It was Oscar und Rey. Oscar und Rey.

Rey Heinemann.

Heinemann. And so they invited your uncles over to help with the business? Is this the idea?

Nein, unfortunately, they didn't help, because they thought my father was married to a Christian woman and would escape all this. But that was not the right decision.

No. No.

He had certain privileges. He didn't need the yellow star, because he had a Christian family.

Can we cut for just a second?

Oh, I'm sorry. That was me. I was just noticing you sitting on the floor. And I thought, "Oh, she could sit on the couch."

Can we still cut?

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Yeah, sure.

OK. So it was Uncle Oscar.

Oscar.

Und Rey Heinemann?

Yes.

And they lived in Chicago. And she was a friend of Helen Keller's.

Wait a minute. Oscar lived in Chicago. Otto and Rey lived in New York. And that's why we were able to stay in New York, because right after the war, these immigrants-- and New York didn't take anybody who didn't have family there.

So Otto and Rey, how were they related to you?

That's my great aunt and uncle. It was my father's sisters and brothers.

Well, I'm--

Now, wait a minute.

No, no, no. Your father's sisters were Alice and Greten. And he had brothers Hans and Albert. But Otto, was he an uncle of your father's?

Yes-- [LAUGHS]

You don't know.

Who was Otto? He was a great uncle of mine. He must have been an uncle of my father. Yes.

OK. We'll come to this time when you're in the United States later on, because it comes after the war. What I'd like to get a sense of now is prewar life, which is why I ask you about your father and his siblings. Did any of them live together with you in Breslau?

Nein. No.

They were all in Lüneburg?

They were all spread over. In England, his older sister, my aunt Alice. And his second brother, Albert, in Chicago. And Greten lived in-- yeah, she lived still in-- when did she get to-- I really don't know when she went to England to her sister.

OK. And then that leaves one brother.

Hans died in the First World War as a soldier, as an officer. And he couldn't get, as being Jewish, not the highest rank in the German army either.

Oh, really? Even during the First World War?

Yeah, that was already '18.

1918.

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It goes way back. [CHUCKLES]

Yeah. Did you know your grandparents, on your father's side?

I only knew my two grandfathers-- my father's father in Lüneburg and my mother's father in-- where did they live? In Breslau. Because my one grandmother died half a year before I was born. And the other, half a year after I was born. So I had only grandfathers.

What was your grandfather on your father's side? What was his name?

Adolf Lindenberg.

Adolf Lindenberg.

And my mother's was-- what was it? What was my grandfather? Do you remember mother's father?

It can come to you later.

[LAUGHS] It should.

And then you'll let me know.

It should.

So your father was born in Lüneburg?

Yes.

And that's where the family came from?

Yes. And we had two years ago in July a very, very nice reunion. Unfortunately, I couldn't attend.

In Lüneburg?

In Lüneburg, the museum. And Lüneburg Museum now has a Heinemann Saal.

Oh, really?

Yes.

So that's from your--

My father's family.

From your father's family. So there must have been a maternal Heinemann--

Yeah.

--in there. OK.

And there is even a street.

Heinemannstrase?

Heinemannstrase.

Interesting. So were they prominent citizens of Lüneburg?

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Yes.

How? In what way were they were they well known and prominent?

They were bankers-- my grandfather, my great-grandfather. And they had a bank, that was later on took over from Deutsche Bank in Lüneburg.

I see. I see. And did all of your father and his siblings, did they have higher education?

Yes. They were all professionals.

OK. Do you know what your father studied at university?

My father was an engineer for electrical high and low currency. I don't know how you will-- what it is in today.

OK. But at that time.

Yes, at that time. And he worked with court for question that appeared in court, when people weren't so sure how they were-- how do you call it?

It sounds like maybe he was an expert witness?

Yes.

About these technical things.

Yeah, for certain things. Yes. And of course, this all disappeared with Hitler.

OK. We'll get there. We'll get there. Right now, I'm in the 1920s.

[LAUGHTER]

So his family of origin was both prominent, being bankers, and well-to-do. Yes? Is that what the truth was, is that they were well-off?

Yeah.

Do you know how many generations they had lived in Lüneburg?

Quite a few generations. But I couldn't tell you. I really don't know, but a long time ago.

OK. And your paternal grandfather, when you were born, did he still live in Lüneburg?

Yes.

So did you visit him?

Yes.

Is that how you get to know him?

There is still a picture where my aunt and the dog and my little sister-- I don't know if you saw it.

OK. But there's a photo of him and your aunt and the dog?

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Yes. And I have the house still from Lüneburg. Dieter, you know the picture of the house in Lüneburg?

Yeah.

It's hanging in my--

Yeah.

It still exists.

Oh, so the house he lived in?

The house he lived in, yes.

And when you say you still have it, does that mean you have the photo, or you have the actual house?

I still have a photo from that house.

But you don't own the house.

No, that was taken over-- I think a lot of tenants. But it wasn't ours anymore. But I remember that house really well. My aunt, the youngest one--

Greta.

--Greten, she studied music. And there was a living room and there was a formal dining room and another room. And over there was her room and with all the doors closed. And we had to be quiet when [LAUGHS] she practiced her music. So that's a vivid memory of--

Well, was her music nice, or was she practicing?

Well, she taught later on in England music too.

Was it piano?

Piano, yes. But this is something later on, you feel good grief, there's all these thoughts in between. And she still must have heard us. And we were not allowed to scream or--

Or play or anything.

[LAUGHS]

When you would visit him, would it be together with your parents, or would it be separately?

No, only with-- yeah, it was with my father. I don't know if my mother so often visit, because there was a little something. My grandmother, father's mother, was quite religious and resented that father married out of his faith.

OK, so let's establish right now. Your father was Jewish?

Yes.

And your mother?

Was Christian.

And what denomination?

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Lutheran.

She was Lutheran?

Yeah, and this is what we are too.

OK. And what did I want to ask? How is it that your father ended up in Breslau?

He worked with telecommunication, telephone, and it wasn't at this time telephone. And how do you call this?

Telegraph?

What was it? That Morse something.

With telegraph?

Telegraph, yes. And my mother, she worked too as what they called a Stopselmaus.

Stopselmaus?

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah.

What's a Stopselmaus?

Because at that time you made connections with calls from a main center, and you connected.

So she was kind of an operator?

An operator, yes, one of the operators at that time they had. And they said sometimes they made some fun, because-- excuse me-- it's Schmidt and Schmidt, but it wasn't the same Schmidt. Excuse me.

It's OK. Take a breath. Well, you could have that kind of confusion in those days.

And they made fun out of it too.

So did they work at the same company or the same organization?

No, my father had a business. And obviously, I don't know how they got together.

Well, that was one of my questions.

Most likely because of my mother, what she was doing at the time. And you know, I heard a very nice story of a cousin of ours. His father was so religious that the family resented it. And it might be-- that sounds to me kind of familiar. My grandmother was very religious.

So you're talking on your father's side?

Jewish, yeah.

On the Jewish side. OK.

On the Jewish side. And resented obviously. And out of rebellion maybe, my father married out of faith.

So in other words, your cousin thinks that because it was too much your father was rebelling against that?

Yes, in a certain way. You know, if you are forced to do something that you go the other way. It looks like it.

Well, it can happen. It can certainly happen.

Yeah, well, this idea came to me with this nephew of mine now in Israel. He had more or less the same experience with his father. When he start to be too religious, the family wanted you know. Too much of a good thing is still too much.

It can be.

[LAUGHS]

It can be. And it can always be in the human who interprets religion. Some people are very religious but they draw you to them rather than away from them. So you're not sure how your parents met?

I think through my father's profession and what my mother was doing with telephone.

OK, Stopselmaus.

A Stopselmaus.

[LAUGHTER]

If we call it, that means it would be something with a mouse. But Stopsel? How do I translate Stopsel?

Well, to connect.

Ah, a connecting mouse.

And connecting. [LAUGHS]

Plug.

A plug?

Plug mouse.

A plug mouse. OK. OK. Let's turn to your mother. Let's talk about her a little bit. What was her name?

My mother's name is Erna Jordan.

Erna?

Jordan.

Jordan. So in American parlance it would be Jordan?

Jordan.

OK. And her first name Erna, so E-R-N-A?

That's correct.

And when was she born?

She was born in March '91.

So 1891?

Yeah.

So she's 10 years younger than your father?

Yeah.

OK. And where was she born?

She was born in Deutsch Eylau.

Ooh.

This is something on the northern coast. I think it is now-- is it Russian?

Is it part of Prussia? Was it part of Prussia?

Yeah.

So she's from the old Prussian territory that today would be Kaliningrad?

Yeah.

Near Konigsberg?

Not that far.

Not that far from Konigsberg?

Yeah, exactly.

OK, so Konigsberg is today known as Kaliningrad.

Yeah, she was born, but I think she moved as a very, very young child to Breslau with her parents.

And do you know anything about your grandparents on your mother's side?

I think my grandfather, he work too in telecommunication. That might have been the connection with my father later on.

OK. One question I forgot to ask-- Was your father the only one who married someone non-Jewish in his family?

Yes, I think so. No, no. I think his oldest-- no, he was Jewish too. I think he was the only one. But Greten never married. She said she doesn't want a marriage or anything to do with it. [LAUGHS]

Did she like your mother?

Pardon?

Was there anybody on your father's side who liked your mother?

I think they had very little connection.

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OK. Did your mother have brothers and sisters?

Yes. Yes.

Who were they?

As I told you, the most ridiculous thing, they were-- my cousin was in the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler.

Well, let's translate that so the people could understand.

[LAUGHS]

Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler means they were the bodyguards--

That's right.

--for Adolf Hitler.

Because they were very tall. But you know, from one side, you have that extreme to the other side. And as I told you, we had to tell our cousins. He was in the Lazarett for a time being in Breslau.

Lazarett meaning he was in the hospital?

In the hospital. And he was injured quite early in the Second World War. And coming from Breslau, he was in the Lazarett, or the hospital. And we had to tell him, "Please, with your uniform, don't come and visit us," because our neighbor was also Nazi. And he was the one who told us if they ever see my father-- they used to throw them down the stairs, and my father had to live--

We'll come to that. We'll come to that. Right now, I'm still in the 1920s. I haven't even gotten to Hitler coming to power yet.

Oh, in the 1920s, I had a very nice youth.

But before I get even to that-- I misspoke. I'm before the 1920s, because I'm asking you about your parents' backgrounds. And so we were talking about your mother. And you said that she had brothers and sisters. So let's find out who they were. How many did she have? Were they boys? Were they girls?

My mother had-- they were seven. And my father had five.

Right. So in the seven from your mother's side, who were they? I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

[LAUGHTER]

As much as you can remember.

I wasn't prepared for that.

I know. I know.

I know quite a few. It was Arthur. The oldest one-- you got me.

That's OK. But anyway, let's go through the ones that you remember.

I remember almost each and every one.

All right, so what were their names?

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That's--

--what you don't remember?

[LAUGHTER]

OK. How many boys were there? How many girls?

I think they were three boys and two girls.

Three boys and two girls makes five. And then you said there was seven. It's OK. It's OK.

[LAUGHS] It's so far, so far away.

OK. But as with your father, I'm trying to get a sense of how many of this larger family were part of your life. So did they live in Breslau?

No, they were quite separate. My father's family in Lüneburg was quite different. And it was just my grandfather and his youngest--

Daughter?

--sister, my Aunt Greten.

Yeah. But on your mother's side, did all of her siblings live in Breslau?

Yes, but wait a minute. There was-- she lost I think one brother in the World War II.

Or One?

World War I.

And well, we came together for birthdays. But other than that-- because he married beneath.

Who married beneath whom?

I think my father's [LAUGHS] idea.

So your father felt that he had married beneath himself? Or your mother felt--

No. My mother's family--

So the Lutheran side?

In a way that not kind of agree with my father's family.

OK. Was your mother's family also well-to-do?

Not too well-to-do.

Not too well-to-do.

I think there were too many children and not on the same level as my father's family.

OK. And had any of them gone to university or to higher education of some kind?

I think one of the boys, because he worked-- but I couldn't tell you really.

OK. Well, now I'm turning actually to 1920s, all right? And that is your birth. You have a sister. Is that correct?

Yes.

What is her name?

Gertraud. Gertraud.

Gertraud?

Gertraud. If you say Gertrude, she gets furious. [LAUGHS]

Does she have a nickname?

No, she doesn't.

So she's Gertraud?

Traute.

Traute.

Traute. Traute Marguerite Hildegard. She is after her godmothers. And I am the grandmothers. And she has her middle names with godmothers.

Would this be on your mother's side?

On my mother's side.

So all of your middle names-- were you baptized, by the way?

Yes.

OK. And your sister, as well?

Also yeah.

As you were growing up, did you practice a religion, or were your parents secular?

Well, I was confirmed. You know confirmation?

Sure.

Because the Lutheran, they do it with 14 years. I had two years with my pastor. [LAUGHS]

OK. So you did go to ch--

Yes, we did. Not so frequently. But we practiced in a way the Christian religion.

So here's a question-- when you were born in 1921, your father was already 40 years old.

Yes.

That's kind of old in those times to start having a family.

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It was, yes.

How does one explain that? Was he a bachelor for a long time?

Yes, obviously. And I don't know what made him then marry. I really couldn't tell.

All right, what kind of personality did he have?

Pardon me?

What kind of personality did your father have?

He was a very, very calm and nice. And he never complained.

Was he an outgoing person?

No.

Or reserved?

I would say he could sit in his corner reading and the world around him forgotten. It was a good thing in a certain way.

Yeah. And your mother, what kind of a personality did she have?

Oh, she had friends. And she had a ein Kraenzchen with girls.

What's a Kraenzchen? I don't know what that is.

That is when some of her friends, girlfriends-- they were all married already, but they always came together. And they called this Kraenzchen. And they had coffee in one house of one girl or coffee in the other one.

So it was a circle of friends--

Yes.

--who would meet.

[LAUGHS]

Describe for me the house that you grew up in. Was it an apartment or a house?

That was an apartment. In the city, in big cities, you didn't have private houses. But we had big apartments before Hitler with eight rooms.

Oh, wow.

[LAUGHS]

All right, so we're in the 1920s, before Hitler. Tell me what it was like? Tell me what the house looked like.

The apartment looked like?

The house. Yeah, the apartment.

We had our play rooms. We had for the maid an extra entrance with her own room and her own linen--

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Wow.

--bed linen. [LAUGHS] And my father had his room-- a Herrenzimmer.

So like a study?

No, where he had-- when he met his friends or his people who he worked with, he had his own room.

So your mother had one room to entertain her friends, and your father had another?

Yes, and my father had another one.

Ooh.

And we had a formal dining room. And we had a dining room for every day.

Oh jeez, that's a lot.

[LAUGHS] Yes.

That's an awful lot.

And my mother had a sewing room.

You could get lost in that place.

One of these apartments had a 20-meter corridor, from one side to the other. And I remember we had some tricycles and that--

You were driving up and down.

Yeah. [LAUGHS]

Was the apartment in the center of town?

Yes.

Do you remember the address?

One was Hohenzollernplatz.

Hohenzollernplatz. OK.

And the other one Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse.

OK. Well, they certainly speak to German history.

[LAUGHTER]

Both of those names. Do you remember the addresses by numbers?

This I would have to look up.

That's OK. That's OK.

I don't remember anymore.

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That's OK. Did you have telephones?

Yes, we do because my father worked in a company. It was AEG.

AEG. OK. That's still quite a big company.

Yes.

AEG. Yeah.

We did have very early a telephone. And later on, you had a combination when everything went down. You split the line with somebody else.

Oh, I see. So it could be two apartments sharing a phone?

Yes, you shared a telephone.

OK. You shared a line.

A line, yes.

Because each person could have their own phone, yes?

Yes. Yes, but you shared a line. And sometimes when it rung-- excuse me. That's what I remember. When it rung, it was not necessarily for us. But this was later on.

This is later on.

In the very beginning, in the '20s, beginning of '20s, before Hitler--

Before Hitler.

--we had our own telephones.

OK. How was your apartment heated? Or it sounds like you lived in several apartments, but I'm talking the big one. Was it coal ovens? Was it some other kind?

They had central-- you know, what they called central that was from the basement with hot steam up under the windows, these--

Radiators.

Radiators.

OK. I mean, I ask these questions--

And some of these apartments, I think, had these big nice stoves, where you could sit and that had a little hole where you could do--

You put in coal or you put in wood to burn.

That was coal or briquettes.

I think in German it's called Kachelofen or something like that.

Yes. Our kitchen had a [GERMAN].

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What's that?

That was a very monstrous something big. I think it was by gas. And you had one of these rings but the oven too. And bake, bakery, or something. And I remember I had shoes with these crepe soles. I don't know if you ever-- this is some kind of a rubber something. And the maid we had, to dry it up, put this in that stove till we all of a sudden had a very funny smell. [LAUGHS] And the soles, they stuck to the--

What they were sitting on. Yeah.

[LAUGHS]

Well, that was a maid who didn't know how to dry out shoes.

[LAUGHTER]

Did you have other servants? Did you have a cook?

We had maids, yes.

You had maids.

A cook, I think my mother liked to cook. But a maid we had, yes.

OK. One or more?

It was, as a rule, one.

OK. Did you have a nanny?

No.

No nanny. OK.

No nanny.

So it was your mother who watched--

My mother, yeah.

After she got married, was she still a Stopselmaus?

No.

OK.

[LAUGHTER]

And were your parents social? In the sense that you say your mother would have friends and they'd have coffee here, there.

Yes. Yes. And it was more that my mother had social connections. My father-- because he wasn't from Breslau. And if he met people from his profession, that was obviously business. Because he had his own room. And I remember the corner had some kind of where the wine bottles were stored and the glasses were hung up.

And so that's where he would--

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And his desk had a safe on one side. And I remember whenever we moved they lifted this, and one side was always so heavy. And they didn't know what's the matter. What do you have on this one side of the desk?

So it was a hidden safe?

It was a built-in safe.

OK. Did you move a lot?

Yes because later on when my father didn't have his business--

OK, that's after '33. I'm talking before 1933. Did you live in one place, or did you live in several?

No. I think we moved twice. I don't know why we moved from Hohenzollernstrasse to Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse. This I couldn't tell you.

OK. And you were born in Hohenzollernstrasse? Was that the one that was your first home?

That's what I remember. And I remember something very nice on this Hohenzollernstrasse, that had a gate. At the entrance door had a gate. When you closed it, that was from inside the gate, that nobody-- it was a burglarproof, you can say. And it must have been that my mother lost the key or forgot the key or I don't know. We had to call the fire department to come and break in the second floor-- it was the first floor-- because she couldn't get the entrance. And they had to break in and open this gate from the inside.

So describe for me what the apartment building looked like. First of all, how many floors was it? How many stories?

These were big houses. And we lived on the second. Here you would call it the second floor. But it was actually the first floor, because down there didn't count.

Exactly. So in the European, or at least in Germany, the first floor is the ground floor.

Yeah.

And then the first above it is the first floor. But for us in the United States, we'd call that the second floor.

Correct, yes.

Was there an elevator in that building?

I don't think so.

OK. So you had a staircase?

We had a staircase. And we had a staircase, as I told you, for the maid too.

So a separate one.

A separate one from--

The other side. From behind.

From the side.

OK. And did you have a balcony in that apartment?

Yes. We always had a balcony with geraniums. [LAUGHS]

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And what did it look out on? Was it a park? Was it a street?

This was a big street. And the middle of the street-- it was on both sides you had riding passes, because at that time, people who had the means had their horses and rode. And it was the middle where you could walk. And on both sides there were riding passes, where you had your horses and for the cars on both sides. It was one way one and one way the other.

So if I understand this properly, the cars would go on the outside.

On the outside. And one from this side, and one from this side. And the middle was big, big where we walked. You had your baby carriage or whatever. And on both sides still, they had riding passes.

So riding passes means the places where horses could go.

Because people who had the means and lived a little outside had their horses.

And when you say passes, they didn't have to get a pass to be able to ride there, did they?

No.

No. It just meant that this was the way.

That was the way, yes.

This is the way that they could go. And was that close to the pedestrian area where the people--

No, that was the middle. The pedestrian was where the cars went.

No, no, no. Pedestrian is where the people walk.

Yeah.

OK. And then so the horses would be near where the people walked? Is that so?

No. There was a road for the cars in between. That was here you had the sidewalk. Then you had where the cars went. And then you came where is the riding passes. In the middle, where you still can walk.

And then the same thing on the other side?

On the other side.

OK. How interesting. It must have been wide streets.

These were-- not all of them were that way. But these two-- Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse und Hohenzollernstrasse-- were these wide, where you had of these better apartments or big apartments.

And were there a lot of cars in Breslau?

I think so.

OK. So were there more cars than horses?

Yes. Yes. We had an old Mercedes.

You owned a car?

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Yes. And my father didn't drive, funny enough. We had a chauffeur.

Oh my goodness.

I don't know why he didn't drive. [LAUGHS]

And did you take vacations with this car? Did you have outings with this car?

Yes, we went to the seashore. And we went to the mountains. And later on, our chauffeur was better off [LAUGHS] than we were.

Oh my goodness.

Because when this all fell down, my father saw to it that he got a good job in Berlin with Siemens.

Oh, wow. Another very strong company-- Siemens.

I remember Klini-- Klinisch.

Klinisch?

Klinisch. I think it was his last name. But this is all I remember. Klinisch, he drove us there. And I remember he picked me up from school. And one day he had a flat or something and was late. And I had frostbitten two toes.

He was really late.

Yeah, he was. He was.

He was really late. So he had a flat tire?

I don't know what. Something with the car that he didn't pick me up. And at that time, you know, you didn't have your telephones.

And in the 1920s, that's when you started going to school?

Yeah.

How old were you?

That was a very, very nice school. It was Ilming Lyceum.

Ilming mit Lyceum?

Ilming Lyceum.

Ilmen Lyceum?

Yeah.

OK. And was this a private school?

Yes.

Tell me about it. What was it like? What did you study? What did you learn?

I just know that our school was always better. [LAUGHS]

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Did you have to wear uniforms?

No. No. And I was just in a girls' school, because at that time, it was still not--

It was separate?

I really don't know that they have mixed schools.

OK. Boys and girls together?

It might have been because my poor sister. Because of these economic downfalls, she couldn't attend a private school anymore and went to a public school. But I really don't know. I never went, because when all this happened, I was already 15. And that was the end of public school. They only went to the age of 14.

OK. So when you were 15, that's already 1936.

Yeah.

Let's talk still before 1933. So up until the time you are 12 years old, you have a life that is worry free. Is that correct?

Yes.

All right. And you go to this Lyzeum. And how old were you when you started school?

I think we start with six years. I don't remember that we had kindergarten as they have it here. Maybe, at that time, it wasn't, in Europe, not customary.

OK. When you went to school as a child, do you have memories of either walking there, or were you always driven by the chauffeur?

Well, my first few years, we had a chauffeur, [LAUGHS] who brought me to school. And later on, we walked to school.

Was it far from your home?

Obviously not so far, that you could walk.

Do you remember the building, what it looked like?

Wait a minute. What was the school? I'll get to it.

OK.

That school had a high school on a higher level and under middle level.

OK. So it had a Gymnasium?

It was still better than public schools, but not as much as high schools, because they charged. And money was not easily available anymore.

Yeah, after '33?

Yes.

But also, for many people in the 1920s, it was a very hard time. And yet your family, you told me, was well-

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to-do-- not only your grandfathers but your father.

He had his business for telephone and telecommunication and worked together with-- at first, it was Mix and Genest, where they said "Mist" und "Geht Nicht". [LAUGHS] And later on, with Siemens.

OK. So he had his own company.

Yes.

But was he the only person in that company?

He was the owner of it.

OK. Did he have anybody who worked for him?

I guess so.

Did he have an office?

Yes.

Outside of the apartment?

Yes. And I remember that was '23, when my mother said he sent baskets of money. Buy something because a few hours later you couldn't get a matchbox for it.

So it was during that huge inflation?

Yes.

So he would send money home to your mother and tell her buy something.

Buy whatever you can still for that basket of money.

Did your father belong to a Jewish community in Breslau?

No.

OK. Did they have common friends, your mother and your father?

More my mother's friends.

So they became his friends?

I don't think so, because with this woman [GERMAN].

So he would have nothing to do with that?

[LAUGHS] No.

He would nothing to do with that. OK. So it wasn't like they had a joint social life?

No, not in this way.

OK. Did they get along?

Pardon me?

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Did they get along, your parents?

Yes, I think so. My father, he didn't like any complaints or any-- he wanted his peace.

OK. And was your mother somebody who would complain?

Well, I wouldn't know. This was a time when children were--

No, I'm not asking about details of something that was private. But in a home, you get a sense whether it's a happy home or whether it's a closed and sad home.

No, we had a very open--

And so they were happy together?

Yeah, well, my father had other interests. So that was natural, that my mother had her friends.

And he had his.

And he had his.

Well, one of the reasons I ask about this is because you showed me a photo which we will film later of them in their engagement party. And that is such a happy photograph.

That's my mother's family. They were happy-go-lucky. First of all, they were a lot of people. And I think they were different from my father's family.

OK. Were they more accepting of him?

I guess so.

OK. You didn't know? You didn't know. OK. Did you ever identify yourself as Jewish when you were growing up?

We never were because we were baptized, and we were Christian. And my father had the idea that since the mother brings up the children, it is better with her religion. Then obviously, he wasn't the religious type, which didn't go well with his mother.

Yeah.

With his very religious mother. I never knew her, because as I said, she died half a year before I was born.

Yeah. But she had an influence? She had an influence.

Obviously, she would have liked her son to marry a good Jewish girl.

Yeah. By the time 1930 rolls around, you're nine years old. 1931, you're 10 years old, and so on. Do you hear anything of what's going on in the streets, in the society? Do you listen to the radio or anything?

Actually, no. Where I was hit first, I was in a sport club. And I liked sports from school. And we had extra sports clubs. And when I couldn't attend it anymore, I said, "Why not?" Because I was Mischling, half Jewish. Even so, we never practiced any Jewish religion at home. So that was kind where I remember I wasn't quite sure what they are talking about.

Yeah. How could you even know what to make of this? So this is the first time you're exposed.

Yeah, well, at the first time, I really knew when they threw me out of the sport club.

How old were you?

Because--

How old were you?

Oh, I must have been 11 years or something like this.

So this is even before Hitler comes to power?

Wait a minute. No, that was after Hitler.

Because he comes to power in 1933. And you were then-- well, you could be.

12.

You were, yeah, 12-- 11, 12, right on the cusp.

Yeah. And that must have been the time when they threw me out.

Yeah. And age wise it matter-- because he comes to power, I believe, in the beginning of the year in 1933.

Yeah, in January '33.

Yeah. And you have your birthday in November. So between January and November that's pretty quick, when you're thrown out. And you're still 11 years old. Yeah.

How did things change at home?

It changed it at home because of my father lost the business. And we moved to a smaller and smaller and smaller apartments. Excuse me.

Let me step back a bit. In the '20s and early '30s, before Hitler, and when you live on Hohenzollern and Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse, did you know your neighbors in the building that you lived in?

I don't think so. I don't think so. But we had friends, my mother's friends. And one, we even called her Tante. And she had two children-- she had three. And one of the girls, she wasn't quite right. And obviously, as they told me, I taught this Sylchen to speak.

Wow.

Because I felt sorry for her.

So she has some sort of disability?

As a child, maybe if you see somebody who you feel sorry for her.

So she had a disability?

Yes. Yes.

OK. And well, that's quite a thing.

The oldest, she married Rodenstock. Are you familiar with the-- lens. The Rodenstock is a very big company in Germany.

No, this company I don't know of. But is this the family that this girl came from?

No, she married-- the daughter of that good friend of ours, of my mother, Lotte, she married Rodenstock.

I see.

And Rodenstock is very famous for lens-- lens and lens.

Oh, for lenses--

Yeah, lenses.

--whether eyeglass or camera or something. OK. No, I wasn't familiar with that.

No, Rodenstock is still a name. She died. I don't know. I think she drank.

Were any of your mother's friends Jewish?

No. My mother's friends, no. The whole family, no. And you know, that wasn't even--

No one would make a distinction?

No. Because only one of my aunts from my mother's brother's wife, she was the one whose son was in Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, who resented my father. But the others, they--

So was it only her son was Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler?

Yeah.

OK. There weren't anymore?

He had a brother. But Wolfgang died in the very beginning of the World War II.

Do you know how?

He was a-- Panzer. How do you call Panzer?

He was on a tank.

Yeah, with tanks. And he died with 19 years was killed.

Oh, he was a young kid actually. Did your parents ever discuss politics at home?

No, I don't remember.

When things started, do you remember the day Hitler came to power?

Oh, yes. But we never discussed this. Actually, with my father, he went with us to museums, to churches, to something that we learned or had to learn about the good thing of life. And my mother was an excellent cook. And [LAUGHS] so both had their--

Their areas where--

Yeah, their areas.

OK. So do you remember radio broadcasts about Hitler?

Yeah, I think so. I really don't know if we watched it, because we were hit and that was enough.

Here's a question-- The first time that you feel the effects is when you're thrown out of the sports club. But after Hitler comes to power in 1933 in January, how did public life outside change before you are affected? Did things look different?

For us, only were different that we couldn't go to the private school anymore, because--

No, I'm asking not how it affected your family. But did the streets change? Did people's behavior change?

Frankly, maybe we didn't notice that or we didn't take notice of it.

OK. So when was the first time, aside from you being thrown out of the sports club, that your family as a whole is affected by what happened?

Well, with moving to smaller and smaller apartments.

How soon after Hitler came to power did you have to move?

I really don't remember when we moved the first time.

Was it already a year after he came to power? Two years? Three?

It must have been quite early, because the minute my father lost his business, we must have lived from money that was there. But I couldn't tell you, because parents didn't discuss these things with their children.

OK. Do you remember what the new apartment looked like-- the one that was smaller?

Yeah-- I remember that we didn't have a playroom anymore. And my sister and I slept in the same room.

And you hadn't before?

We didn't before, because each one had its own room.

OK. And do you remember the name of the street that this one was on?

Yeah, well, it's either Hohenzollernstrasse or the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse.

No, that's before the war.

And then we moved-- I think that the last one was Paradiesstrasse.

Oh, what an irony.

Well, that was everything but a Paradies. But I really don't know if there was something in between.

OK. So the last place that you live that you remember, what did that place look like?

That was Paradiesstrasse.

That was Paradiesstrasse. Was it still in the center of town, in Breslau?

That was still-- yes. It was in different parts.

And was it a residential neighborhood?

It was one of the-- you had these streets where one house next to them. And each house had, I don't know, according to the height of the house. And every floor maybe one or two people--

Apartments.

The have two apartments.

And you mentioned earlier somebody who lived who was a neighbor who was quite an ardent Nazi.

Well, that was our last apartment.

And that was in Paradiesstrasse?

Yes. And that's where my father had to take a rented room, because he couldn't--

How old were you when you moved to Paradiesstrasse? Do you remember? Were you 15 already?

I think so. I think maybe. Do you get me.

Had you finished Lyzeum?

Yeah, well, I couldn't finish school. I left in the middle, because I was-- with 15, I was too-- wait a minute. I was 15 and a 1/2. I think something when I left that school, which I couldn't go further on because of money. But for the regular--

Public school.

--public school, I was too old. Because the regular public school, my sister went because she is two years younger. And she had her last year or two in a public school. But for me, I was past 14 years, the age of a public school. So I was left.

And so what did you do after that? Stay at home?

No, I could get an apprenticeship, because I couldn't study either, because I didn't have the schooling. I wanted to study pharmacy. But I couldn't, because for studying, you needed your high school finish.

Oh, I see. So you weren't even able to start Gymnasium?

I couldn't. I couldn't.

And why couldn't you?

Through my father's friend, I could work in a darkroom as photofinishing. At that time, you had films, you had to develop them, and you made the photos out of it. It's not something like you do [LAUGHS] right now.

Of course. So let me establish that you finished your primary school education and what we would call middle school education.

Well, I don't even have a middle school diploma.

OK. So it would only be, let's say, the first-- but it finishes at age 14.

Yes.

And from there, normally, you would go to Gymnasium. Is that correct?

Yeah.

And why is it that you did not go to Gymnasium? You say you couldn't. But why couldn't you?

Yeah, Gymnasium at that time was private and you had to pay.

I see. And there was no money?

No, there was no money.

And there was no public Gymnasium?

No.

No public high school?

No public schools. They stop--

They stopped at 14.

--with 14 years.

OK. Now it's clearer to me.

It's different from here.

It's different from the United States, where high school is still part of the public school system.

Yeah, that's right. That's right. Because I have my granddaughter here. She goes to school.

All right. So you were able to go and finish your schooling even though Hitler had come to power, up until age 15. Is that correct?

Yeah.

So for three years you still went to school.

Yes.

Do you remember what the atmosphere was like?

Frankly, I don't know if we-- I have no memory of that. The only thing I know that at home it wasn't as it was before. Let's put it that way.

In your Lyzeum, where there Jewish children?

If they were-- yes, I guess so because we had Saturday still school. And there must have been Jewish because they were on Saturday in school. But other than that, that wasn't important to us.

OK. And after 1933, were there any Jewish children in the school, that you know of? You don't know. You don't know.

You know, this was something you didn't pay attention to-- That one maybe went to one religious service and the other to another-- because we had religious-- at ours, I think, once a week, something. And if they weren't there, well, so what?

Well, of course, in normal life, you don't make such a distinction.

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No.

But because part of Nazi ideology was to--

That's what he made, yes.

Yeah. Because that kind of imposed this kind of distinction on society. Then I assume people started to respond to that-- either follow it or reject it.

In part obliged.

Obliged. Obliged.

Yeah.

OK. Do you remember anything about such things happening where you see somebody, either a teacher saying something that you know they don't believe but because they have to.

Didn't come across.

That wasn't--

Frankly, we didn't pay-- I know we had one good teacher. And I remember they had to go Heil Hitler when we came. And we called her "the boettel". She was Doctor Boettcher. But we called her--

Doctor Boettcher?

Doctor Boettcher. She was our class teacher. And I remember she always had the keys in her hand and Heil Hitler. And always with the keys in her hand. [LAUGHS]

Was there any kind of ideological instruction in school?

Might be. Frankly--

You don't remember.

I don't remember.

It was a shock when you were thrown out of the sports club because you're Mischling.

Yeah.

Did that happen again in other circumstances? Were there any other kinds of classes where there was a distinction made between you and the others?

Yeah, well, it was enough that I couldn't study, that I couldn't go and further what I actually wanted to do.

But I thought that was because of money.

Yeah, well, not only because of money. Yeah, not only because of money. Because you had to study when you finished a certain grade in school. And that was my limit. I couldn't study, because I couldn't get further on. This public school didn't allow to go to study.

You know that it's a different-- was a very-- I don't know if it is still today. But in my time, when you didn't get to that level where you could go in to study, if you couldn't go there, you couldn't jump this. You left in a degree where later on you could get any professional with a three-years apprentice-- that you started three years and you could have a profession at that, which you don't have here.

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No, you don't. There isn't such a thing.

Because you could be a plumber, you could be a mason, you could be--

An electrician.

--electrician, anything. And we always feel people who feel they have to study here, if they would have a profession here, they could make more money--

Of course they could. Of course they could. Than somebody who goes to university. But it sounds to me like it was a mix, but also confusing, that once you finish Lyzeum at age 15, there is no Gymnasium that you can go to in order to be able to go from there into university to study pharmacology. Is that correct?

Yeah. And I couldn't, because I didn't finish that level. You could only study if you went to the high school, finished high school.

So in other words, was there something called the Abitur?

Yeah. You needed the Abitur. That's correct.

You needed the Abitur. And you could not go further to get the--

No, I couldn't, because I had to leave earlier, because that was private school and there wasn't money-- the money involved. Here you don't need the money. It is--

OK. But it also sounds that if there had been money, would you have been able to go further?

Most likely. If my father wouldn't have lost it, most likely.

OK. Did his demeanor change as time went on?

No. He was even quieter. And I don't remember him complaining ever. Ever.

Do you think he was lonely?

Pardon me?

Do you think he was lonely?

Maybe. And I don't think so. He read. He could forget his world in a book. And maybe it was his defense.

So if he suffered any more hardships, did he keep those to himself?

Yes. And I still remember when he had to leave our apartment because of that lousy neighbor, there were Jewish families who had big apartments. And they were obliged to rent this to people who-- my father had one of these rooms, which were very inferior. But I remember I brought him the food.

Was it far from your own apartment?

Not too far. I had a bicycle. And I drove. And I brought him his food.

And this was in Paradiesstrasse that you were living. But he-- the street, that was another street. I don't remember. I only remember that one day I came and this apartment was empty. And they said they took them all.

OK. We'll come to that later. We'll come to that in a little bit. Can we cut for a second?

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Of course. All right, camera's speeding.

OK. So we stopped at a very poignant moment. I want to step back a little bit. And that is-- you mentioned this neighbor in your apartment house who threatened your father.

Yeah.

Did you come in contact with other people who were ardent Nazis in addition to him?

Well, you can see with my family because one of my uncles-- it was not the uncle. The picture you saw-- it was his wife who told her-- my cousin's-- her two sons-- the one who died in the--

Wolfgang at age 19.

Yeah. But this was the only-- maybe we were isolated then.

Did your mother's demeanor change as the--

No.

She was always still friendly, still outgoing?

Yeah.

OK. And the photograph that you showed me, which we'll film later, is of a man in a Wehrmacht uniform.

That was my uncle.

OK. What was his first name?

Albert.

Albert Jordan?

Yeah.

Albert Jordan. OK. And it was his children?

It was his son who was in the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, because they were at that time very tall.

He was very tall.

He was very tall. But at that time, then 60 years, that long ago, it was tall. Today's generations, I think [LAUGHS] they are taller to begin with.

OK. So was he like six-foot tall or something like that?

Yeah, well, he was six foot. And I remember his bed. They had these metal beds, German beds. He had-- both of them-- he and his brother too. He wasn't quite as tall. But these beds were too short. And he had some kind of extension something.

For his feet.

[LAUGHTER]

My, that must have looked funny.

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Well, we didn't think of anything. They were just tall. And they were for their generation extremely tall. That's why he wound up with Hitler's Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler.

Well, that certainly sounds like one of the reasons. But did any of them join the Nazi party?

My uncle worked for the government. And they were obliged. They had to-- both of them, the youngest brother my mother and this one in uniform. They had to.

OK. And their children, the ones who were part of the bodyguards, were they also members of the party? The ones who were the Leibstandarte.

Yeah, well, the Leibstandarte was enough. [LAUGHS] Enough party.

Yeah.

That was the highest you could reach.

Did you have contact much with this side of the family? Did they talk to you?

Yes. But the only thing, as I told you, we had to tell Wolfgang, "Please, don't come and visit us in your uniform," because of our neighbor.

But wouldn't have the neighbor thought well that here's this young man in a uniform coming to visit them?

I don't know what he would have done. We didn't want Wolfgang. And he was in the hospital at that time.

That's right, you mentioned that.

Yeah, because that was the reason he was not in-- because it was war still.

Do you remember when the war started? Do you remember where you were?

When did the--

The war started September 1, 1939.

Yeah.

And you live in Breslau, which is close to the Polish border.

Yeah, not that close.

Not that close? No?

No.

Were there Poles that lived in Breslau?

No. No.

No. OK.

That was only after the war then, because the Russian pulled over to the Polish. And the Polish went to Silesia.

So do you remember, as I said, the war starting?

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Might. This is so far away, that maybe you intentionally cut it out of your memory. Might be.

Might be. Do you remember soldiers in the streets? More soldiers?

There should have been, but-- But soldiers, you didn't see on the street. They were-- [LAUGHS]

They were fighting. They were fighting. Did you go to the cinema?

Oh, we did. Yes, I think we liked American films. [LAUGHS]

Do you remember any that you saw?

Oh god, what was it? It was with Fred Astaire. And I remember, I think, you could sit-- you didn't have to go out. They didn't throw you out. You could sit twice. [LAUGHS]

So you could see two showings, two different films.

But I remember, not often, but-- we always read a lot too. My father said [GERMAN].

An intelligent person does not get bored.

Yeah. [LAUGHS]

Yeah, it's true. You find something to be of interest. Yeah.

That's why, I have people here, when they see our books there, they say, "Was your husband a lawyer?"

[LAUGHTER]

According to the books we have, must have been a funny lawyer.

A funny lawyer, yeah. Did you see newsreels in the cinema? Do you remember any newsreels?

We might have, but I don't remember that we went so often to the movies. That was all money involved.

OK. Did you ever go hungry after your father?

No. I don't remember, because my mother she did the darnedest thing. Don't ask me from what, but there was always something on the plate.

And did she go back to work when your father no longer was able to support the family because he lost his business?

My mother, she was contracted. She had to work. While we were in camp, they took her in a company. They made some kind of pills or something.

You're talking about during the war, after your father is taken. I'm still talking in the 1930s after Hitler comes to power, and your father loses his business. Did she go to work?

No, no.

OK. So you were living mostly on whatever your father's savings had been?

That's right. And that's why the apartments got smaller and smaller.

OK. Did you have still a radio and a telephone?

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We had a radio, yes, because it was kind of my father's profession. We did have. And telephone, I remember we had telephone too. I don't know to whom we talked to.

And what about the Mercedes? What happened with the Mercedes? Did you still have the car?

Oh, the Mercedes? I don't know. I really don't know what happened to the Mercedes. That wasn't our-- you know these old ones. And I remember it had a stationary-- you could put the whole thing up, and then you had a convertible. But we used it very, very seldom because my father felt it's too drafty for us. Or we had some fur bags in the car in wintertime, because obviously they hadn't heat.

That's right. So you would have fur to put on your knees?

Yeah. With the little sacks, where you put your whole feet in.

OK. And did it do the trick?

Yeah, sure.

OK. But at any rate, did the Mercedes disappear?

I really don't know where the Mercedes went up. It might have been with the chauffeur to Berlin. I don't know. And as I said, my father didn't drive. My mother didn't drive. We were too young. [LAUGHS]

When you move to Paradiesstrasse, how old were you?

How old was I? Must have been 16, 18, 18 years or something like this.

18 years means 1939.

OK.

[LAUGHS]

It's OK. Don't worry. It's OK. The questions that I ask, the ones that are the most difficult to answer all have to do with chronology, all have to do with times and dates. And that's the hardest thing to remember. So forgive me for doing this.

No, that's OK. Forgive me--

No, come now.

--that I don't can answer.

The reason why I do it is because in trying to understand what happened to you, I try to anchor it in certain times and certain years, because when someone will look at your interview, they will know if you're talking in the late 1930s this and that was going on at the time. If we're talking 1940, this and that was going on at the time. And that helps to orient them. For example, do you remember Kristallnacht?

Oh, I was working in a store, in a pharmacy where they broke in.

So it was owned by someone Jewish?

I was there.

Yeah?

I was there. I cleaned the glass still from the street.

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So you were there while they were breaking the glass?

No, they broke it at night. And when I came there in the morning or my boss, we saw what they did. And I remember the store had some kind of indirect lighting around. We found cameras. They threw, instead of taking them. They didn't know. We found them up there underneath the roof.

So there were cameras in the store?

Yeah, well, pharmacies, drugstores in Germany is something different. You don't have medication, but you have whatever-- powder, personal-- what shall I say? What do you say a pharmacy in Germany? It is a Drogerie. There you have beauty--

Products.

Yeah, it's like a Walgreens. Similar.

And we had photograph where people brought their-- I worked in the photofinishing in the store.

OK. So it was not an Apotheke.

No, it is not.

An Apotheke, which is where you go to get medicine.

No.

It was a Drogerie, where you don't get medicine, but you get--

You could get cough drops and things like this.

Things that are over the counter?

And bandages and all kind of-- but no prescription medication. But I was there.

And you worked in the developing, the photofinishing--

Yes.

--developing lab?

We had the store on street level. And I was in the middle. And we had the other darkroom.

OK. And what was the name of the pharmacy? Do you remember? Drogerie am Sonnenplatz.

Drogerie am Sonnenplatz. And who owned it?

What was his name? Ah, god. He went after this to Berlin and disappeared. What was his name? And his father-in-law took over. He was a Christian and could take the Drogerie. The father-in-law, Pavel was his. And he was-- gosh, it will come to me. But it's the owner went, and they always said don't look for them, because they want to disappear. I don't know what happened to them.

I'm confused now.

Bruno.

I'm confused now. After Kristallnacht, what did the owner do? What did he do? You said he went to Berlin?

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He disappeared because they damaged his store. And he had a Christian wife too. And they disappeared to France. And we were always told-- it was understood that you don't trace them, because that's the way. They don't want to be traced.

OK. Because the way I understood it is that he went to Berlin to complain that someone closes--

No.

--his store. And then he disappears because he's arrested. OK.

We never knew if he had contact with his brother and with his-- what was it? Brother-in-law. Because he took care of the Drogerie it was.

OK. Drogerie am Sonnenplatz?

Drogerie am Sonnenplatz.

And so did it change its name?

I don't--

No, after. OK, fine.

No, it stayed that name.

OK. It stayed that name. So what happens is the owner senses the danger. And does he leave with his wife, or does he leave alone?

No, they didn't have children. He left with his Christian wife to Berlin, they said. And we never knew what happened, when he died, or what.

Or if he survived.

He survived, yeah. We never knew. We never knew. And I worked with his brother-in-law.

OK. Do you remember the brother-in-law's name?

Because he took over the Drogerie.

Do you remember the brother-in-law's name?

Waldemar Pavel.

Waldemar Pavel.

Because his wife's name was Pavel, and this was his brother-in-law.

OK. And how long had you been working at this Drogerie, at this sort of like Walgreens or CVS?

Well, I worked till they took us for the camp.

When did you start working there?

I must have started-- '38 maybe.

OK. Was this your first job after finishing Lyzeum?

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Yeah, the only job.

The only job. And about how many people were employed at the Drogerie when you started?

We had another boy who did whatever was to be dispatched. And he cleaned.

So was it a small place?

Not a big place, no.

OK. And do you remember anything about his personality as a boss, as an owner?

Oh, he-- well, obviously a nice guy. He must have known my father, because through my father I got there because I needed a job to earn some money. And since I couldn't study and couldn't do-- that was a good-- it was an apprenticeship. And I think the first year there were not too much money. And this was at every year you got a little more. But it was better than nothing.

Yeah. And it sounds like his situation had a similarity to your own parents.

Yes, and I learned photofinishing. Because at that time, you took a picture, and you brought it to-- your film had to be developed. And the pictures had to be made.

So you could do that. You could do that.

Yes, I still have an enlarged-- it's not in working condition-- for 35 millimeter.

And do you remember how old you were when your father had to move out of Paradiesstrasse?

I must have been 18, 19, something this.

So 18 or 19 means either 1939 or 1940.

Yeah. '39.

The war starts September 1, 1939. Did your father have to move--

You know, actually, that my father had to move out had nothing to do with the war.

Of course. What I'm trying to establish is when did that happen-- before it starts or after it starts. Was he moving and living somewhere else for two years, for one year, for five months? Do you have any idea how long it was that he lived apart from you?

That he did what?

No, that your father lived apart from you.

Oh, that must've been maybe a year.

About a year.

Could be.

I think we need to stop. It sounds like the pizza's here. But yeah, she leans up, I can't see her anymore.

All right.

Somebody was at the door, no?

That's OK. We're going to break in a minute. But you're saying your father lived apart from you in this rented room--

Yes.

--for about a year. About a year.

Yeah, could be. Could be.

And you and your mother and your sister were in Paradiesstrasse.

Next to that Nazi.

Next to that Nazi. Do you remember his name?

That's the trouble. His last name was Rudolf, while my father's name was Rudolf. First name.

And at that time, we still got correspondence from my family in the States here. And this funny-- it's not funny-- that our mail from the States always got first to Rudolf--

Herr Rudolf, Mr. Rudolf.

--because his last name was Rudolf, while my-- it was Rudolf Lindenberg. But he arranged it and he looked. And I'm pretty sure what he saw because it was English. But he got the first sniff of our mail from the States.

Oh, how awful. What a nasty kind of situation to be in. Yeah.

They wanted to nail us down to something.

Let's take a break now. And we'll continue this after lunch.

[LAUGHS]

Thank you.

OK. Camera speeding.

OK. So before lunch break, we were talking about those final months when you were in Paradiesstrasse, and your father lived separately from you. And you said it was for about a year.

Yeah.

And did you ever know of anybody being deported before?

No. No, actually no, because it was we had such a tight-knit family. And the problems in our family were enough. We didn't want some outsider on top of it. And my mother's friends, they didn't have this problem.

OK. They weren't political people, in other words. OK. So tell me, walk me through that day when you were bringing your father food. Was it in the morning? Was it in the afternoon? Do you remember?

Well, I used to bring him his food to his rented home there. And when I went there, that must have been in the middle of the day. The apartment was empty. And when I knocked at the doors at the neighbors, they said, "They were taken away."

But I had no idea where and where I could find out where they had brought them. And I don't know how-- no, I couldn't see him anymore. Because when I went to the place where they said they were brought to, they were already gone.

And as I said, the father from a school friend of mine, he was a police. He was in the transport of my father. And obviously, they had a list of names. And the name Lindenberg that she said, "Oh, this is most likely the father of my daughter's friend."

And from there, from them, and through this girlfriend or this school friend, I know that my father died on the way to wherever they want to bring him. It might have been Auschwitz. I really don't know.

And that they were transported in these cattle wagons. They have in the middle, a compartment they lift if one of the cattle dies. They have certain places on the rails where they opened this up and they fall and goes. And that's what they do if human beings-- and this is what they told me. Most likely that's where my father wound up.

So he dies on the train.

He must have died on the way to-- he had already problems with his stomach. Most likely the aggravation or not-- I don't know.

Did he have an ulcer or something?

Pardon me?

Did he have an ulcer in his stomach?

I don't know. He didn't discuss any-- the only thing-- excuse me-- he said certain food doesn't agree with him so well. And that must have been something. It might have been the whole situation. Excuse me.

And I was thinking that this would have been in 1940 or 1941 when your father was taken.

Yeah.

Yes?

Yeah.

Something like that?

'41, '42.

So that means he's a 60-year-old man then.

Yeah.

He's not old, but he's not young anymore.

Yeah.

And do you think maybe he had a heart attack when he would have been on the train? At this paper, it said-- it is his death certificate-- that people his age, and they where they felt they are useless for any kind of work that they've disposed of them.

We will look at that death certificate later. You showed me before. And we'll film that. It's interesting that the date on it is 1954, which is--

No.

Oh, it's earlier?

No, I think it's '43.

Is it? OK. Then I was wrong. But then we'll have to take a closer look at that. I thought it was after the war already. OK. My mistake. Once you find that the place is empty and that he's been taken and then you go--

The whole family with whom he was living there.

Was taken?

Yeah.

Was this then the first time you even experienced that someone's been deported, someone's been taken away?

No, we heard already that people disappeared. As they say, "they disappeared." But to where and to where they brought them.

Did you have the sense that they-- did you know of places like Dachau or Buchenwald?

Well, we heard about it, yes.

You had heard about it at that time?

Yeah.

OK. Because political prisoners were taken sometimes to those places.

You know, even Catholic priests. They had sometimes-- they went the same way as Jews.

Did you know any?

No.

OK. So those names were not unfamiliar to you?

No. Well, we heard. And of course, they were-- I don't how we heard about it. But you knew that they existed. Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz.

OK. So do you remember when you got home that day-- what you told your mother, how she reacted?

Well, I told my mother the whole family is gone and father too.

And what did she do?

We couldn't do-- you couldn't do anything, because where would you go? I don't know how I-- I tried to find out where. And I went to a place. They told me they might be there. But when I went there, they weren't there anymore.

And was this place like a jail or was it a kind of railway st-- do you know what kind of place it was that you were? No?

No idea. They had some kind of a collecting places.

Point.

And then they dispose--

Yeah. Well, then how did life go on for you? How did life go on for you and your mother and your sister?

We had to go on.

How? What did you do?

I had a little-- I had this apprenticeship where I had earned something. And my sister too.

What was she doing?

She worked as a secretary because she learned shorthand. A secretary. And had a job that were acquaintances from my father too. And I don't know. It was Lobocz.

Lobocz?

[LAUGHS] Lobocz. I don't know the name. It's not a German name. But this company she worked for was Lobocz.

OK. Do you know what their business was, what kind of business it was?

I think they had a real estate-- not real estate. How do you call it?

Excuse me, can we cut for a second?

Ready.

OK. So you were working. Your sister was working. Were you expecting to get news from your father?

No. We knew that there were never news from these transports.

OK. So that policeman that guarded that transport, when did he come to tell you of what had happened, what he had seen?

He was the father of a school--

Friend, yes.

--friend. And she told me, "I think my father today had"-- well, I don't know if it was today day. But he knew that my father was on a transport and he died.

So you found out fairly soon that your father had died?

Yes.

Oh, I see. So you didn't even expect to hear anything.

No, because you never heard anything.

OK. And did you keep in touch with his relatives, your father's relatives in Lüneburg and abroad? Had you had contact with them as things started going bad?

Frankly, later. And there wasn't any of his family living anymore, because that was quite, quite later that we visited Lüneburg. And interesting now, as I said, two years ago, that museum picked up my grandfather's

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family and his history.

I see. But at that time, your grandfather had he passed away by 1941?

Yes. He didn't live anymore.

OK. And Greten? She was in England?

Greten, she lived with us for a while when she came to the States and later was companion to Mrs. Bulova.

Of the Bulova watch people?

Yes.

No kidding?

Yeah.

OK, but this is in the United--

And you know it turned out what Mr. Bulova claimed his wife. She wasn't his wife. She was his companion. And my aunt was her companion.

Isn't that interesting.

Yeah.

But that's after the war and in the States.

Yes, that was after the war. We came here in '43, '44.

OK. We'll come to that. Right now, I'm still--

In the '20s.

Well, no. I've passed to the 1940s.

[LAUGHS]

I'm into the 1940s. So we're 1941. Your father is taken. Your school friend's father is a guard, or a policeman, that is guarding this transport, finds out your father has died on the way, lets his daughter know. His daughter tells you fairly quickly. And it's at this point that I'm asking, were there any Jewish relatives of yours living in Germany from your father's side at the time?

There might be in his hometown Lüneburg. But Lüneburg and Breslau is such a difference that we had at that time no connection with Lüneburg and not [GERMAN]-- close relatives.

OK. I've got it. But Greten, you had mentioned, had gone with her older sister to England in 1938. Is that correct?

Yeah.

Yes, OK. So she's out of the picture. She's not in Germany during the war.

No, she was not. But how she came, I don't know how. Because when she came to the States here, she didn't have any place to live. And the way we lived were these old railroad apartments. I don't know if you--

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I've been in them, yes. Railroad apartment is one room into the next room into the next room.

The light just goes right here. And when we got to this-- in Long Island-- to this house that was actually condemned because they weren't allowed that one bathroom is for two people. It was just the toilet, not the shower or anything. We had in the kitchen one of these big tubs or whatever you want to call it, where we took our showers or our bath.

Well, the old-fashioned apartments in New York were like that.

Yeah, I know.

Many of them. Yeah. But this is after the war. I'm still in the war--

In the war.

--and the beginning of the war at the time of your father's death. And I want to get a sense of where was his family whatever was left of it at that time.

We had no connections.

You didn't know.

We had no connections. And strange enough, from my great aunt in Chicago, who was friends with--

Helen Keller.

--Helen Keller, she through the Red Cross found out where my mother was.

The Red Cross was something that was so remarkable, you have no idea. And she found out that it was Vilsbiburg. Vilsbiburg is a little town close to Munich. But since she spelled it so differently, we thought that isn't a German town and looked for in Holland till we said, "No, wait a minute, there is a Vilsbiburg." And there we found my mother.

This is after the war. Or this further on.

That is in the war still while we were in the camp.

But we haven't gotten to the camp yet.

Oh. [LAUGHS]

What I'm interested in is that in 1941 or '42, when you lose your father, what other connections there were, what other news you had of other relatives. And what you're saying is that you didn't have any.

No.

You didn't have any. So at this point, things go on. And you are working as an apprentice. Your sister is working as a secretary. And your mother is still at home in Paradiesstrasse.

Yeah, she had to work someplace. That was something. They told her she had to do something.

OK. So do you remember what this Paradiesstrasse apartment looked like?

Yes. It was something-- I think still in New York exists.

Paradiesstrasse?

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Paradiesstrasse, yeah.

Yeah, that apartment.

Yeah.

OK. Because you were talking about New York for a minute.

When you came from the street, you opened your door, and you came to the kitchen. That had no--

No entrance.

No entrance or something. You came to the kitchen. And then to the right was the living room. And on the back there was a little Kabinett, as we called this, where you had storage.

Closet?

Closets. They weren't closets. They were Schranker.

Oh, they were--

Wardrobes.

Wardrobes, yeah.

Wardrobes. And from then, there was a little room, I slept. And my sister slept in the other main bedroom with my mother.

And that was what Paradiesstrasse looked like?

That's what Paradiesstrasse. We always said this is our idea of a paradise. [LAUGHS]

It was quite a step down from--

Many steps down.

Yeah. And it had the nasty neighbor.

Yeah. And this has the nasty neighbor. And at that time still, my father collected glass-- they were famous. And some of them went to the Paris expo. They were from Professor Benner in Czechoslovakia. They were famous for their glasses.

So was it a kind of crystal?

Crystal glasses, yes. And I remember at that time in Germany you had these kind of-- you traveled with these, what you have there. What do you call this?

Excuse me?

A big case?

What do you call them?

A suitcase? A briefcase?

Suitcases or-- no. Suitcases or something.

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OK. A suitcase.

But ours was a little bigger. And we had these glasses in our bed-- they were Plumeaus. I don't know if you know a Plumeau That was a special cushion for wintertime on your feet. And that was that's where we had our-- these glasses, down in [GERMAN].

In the basement.

In the basement. But the bomb fell off and that's where all the house and all this--

So the Paradiesstrasse apartment.

In the Paradiesstrasse didn't exist anymore.

So when did the bomb fall on it?

Well, that must have been '41, '42-- in the war.

All right, when that happened, were you still living in the apartment?

No, we were in camp.

So tell me about that. What happened between the time your father leaves, your father is deported, and you end up in the camp? What happened?

Well, there was still a time where we lived with my mother. And I think these people say when we came to the camp-- in December to January. Yeah, but this is a little later. But we were taken. Why and how, frankly, I don't know. The only thing I know, my poor mother was all by herself all of a sudden. And her brother lived close to Munich. And he obviously said come and live with us.

So were you at home when you were taken with your sister? Were you at your apartment in Paradiesstrasse when you had to leave?

Yeah.

Tell me how it happened.

They told you, you have to be there at an X time in the morning or afternoon. I don't remember any more. And you better be there because if you didn't, they looked for you. And we were told if you don't, you go to the KZ right away.

OK. KZ means concentration camp.

Concentration camp, yes.

So you get a notice through the mail.

No, there was somebody who came and said we have to be there.

OK, but they didn't take you at that moment?

No. We have to go there. I don't remember how we got there-- either with a tram-- because it was a little further on the outskirts.

OK. But it was you and your sister together?

Yeah.

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And did you both realize that this is something ominous?

Yeah, we realized that was something not too kosher.

OK. And your mother, was she there?

And my mother was all by herself all of a sudden.

But she was there when the person came to give the notice?

Yes.

Did she see you off, or did you just--

No. No. I think the only thing, as I said, she went with her brother, because her brother said come. She was all by herself all of a sudden.

How did you know this?

This we learned later.

OK. So at the time--

We didn't know what's the matter with my mother.

OK. So you and your sister go to a certain place. What is this place that you go to?

That was working camp. We got some wooden shoes.

A labor camp?

Kind of a labor camp, yes. The only thing not so drastic-- even so, it didn't have-- it has a latrine. You know what a latrine is?

Tell us.

And we slept on the floor on straw, some kind of straw mats.

So were you in barracks?

They took restaurants there. And where we-- the females lived in one restaurant. And I think I have it in this--

In restaurants?

In restaurants.

Ich weiss nicht was dass ist.

Restaurants, they were--

What do they do there at the--

Well, they had to take us. And females, we are in that place. We were in one restaurant. And we slept on the dance floor, on the floor. And the males slept on another one.

So all right-- what kind of-- this wasn't a restaurant where you go to eat?

[LAUGHS] That was once a restaurant where you eat. But they were obliged to take these people to accommodate them. And we went. That was some kind of a labor-- yeah, you can say labor camp, because we had to go out and cut little trees and limbs and make some kind of what they called Faschinen. That was something where the-- how do you call this? Argh. They're made during the war that these big trucks-- no, they are not trucks.

Tanks?

Tanks. They couldn't go through these big--

Ditches?

--ditches. And we made these kind of Faschinen as they called it, with little tree trims and limbs and with other. We had to-- you know, to line these-- that the tanks could go through this.

A ditch.

Through this ditch. That was more wishful thinking than we never saw and felt that ever-- we never saw a tank going through these ditches. They were quite big.

So what you're saying is that you were creating these sorts of plank type of things that would be laid in front of tanks.

They looked like kind of these walls, like something, which was supposed to line these ditches that the trunks--

The tanks.

--the tanks could go over. I don't know. I never saw. We never saw any. And we were just busy doing something like this.

Did anybody tell you why you were taken to this labor camp?

No.

Do you know why you were taken?

Well, we went there because we were not friends of the Nazis.

And how was it that you're not friends of the Nazis?

Because of my Jewish father.

OK. So it was because you were half Jewish?

Yeah. You were Mischling first grade.

Were there different classes of Mischling?

Definitely. If it is both, you were Jewish. If it was just one part, you were first. If it was just one part of your grandparents, you were second. And this goes on. That was the classification. And we were, as we said, of course we are first class. [LAUGHS]

OK. So nobody tells you why you are taken. It is clear to you.

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That was absolutely understood why they were taking us.

OK. Did you meet other people too when you were gathered together?

Well, we had a whole group. And you know my sister and her later husband-- they married. And I married. That wasn't a good marriage. And my first marriage was divorced, because these were-- what shall I say? You got somebody in normal life, then you felt that isn't the right match anymore.

So if you had been in your normal situation--

You wouldn't.

You wouldn't.

You wouldn't.

OK. So was your husband and your sister's husband also Mischlinge?

Yes. The same.

And you met them there in these labor camps?

Funny enough, Hans Pils, my sister's later husband, he was a very good friend of my first husband from the tennis club in Breslau. [LAUGHS]

And your first husband's name was what?

Frank Weber.

Frank Weber.

And he had a Jewish father and a Christian mother. And there is a long story about my sister-in-law that doesn't belong to my-- [CHUCKLES] But it is now. When the Russians came, the Russians took her. And she had a little boy, which she later-- which she, as a baby, left because the mother said leave him. And this baby now-- I am very, very familiar now, and we are in close contact with this Moishe in Israel.

His name is Moishe?

His name was Mikhail. But his father, he was Jewish Russian--

Soldier?

--officer. He called him Moishe. And when I looked for this Moishe, I looked at the wrong name, because he wasn't Grieback anymore. He is now De Baruch.

What was his first name? Grieback?

Ryback.

Ryback.

And Ryback obviously is a very common name in Russia.

OK. And what is his name now?

Now his name is Moishe de Baruch.

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Debau?

De Baruch.

De Baruch. OK.

And he has a travel agency [LAUGHS] in Israel.

But he was your first husband's sister's child?

Yes, which she left because the mother said, "Come, we leave him."

Leave him with whom?

With the father. With the Russian father. And the Russian father took him via Switzerland to Israel. And now, about a little more maybe than a year, I got in touch with him through internet.

OK. So this Russian father who was the officer--

Yeah.

When your husband's sister--

Yeah, my sister-in-law.

--your sister-in-law left the child, was this right at the end of the war that she left the child?

Yeah, that was after the war.

Right after the war.

Yeah, right after the war.

And then this Russian officer goes to Switzerland at that time?

He deserted the Russian army. And that's why we couldn't trace him, because he didn't want any trace of his life.

His name. I see.

That's a story.

Yes, it is a story.

That's another story. And about now, a year ago, I met this Moishe. And the funniest thing, he looks exactly like my first husband.

Really?

Because these two, my sister-in-law and my first husband, they looked very much alike. And this-- now he is 70-- he looks exactly-- nothing Jewish. [LAUGHS]

So had you known your first husband before you got to the labor camp?

No. The only thing-- no, I knew him in camp.

OK. In the camp.

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And then it turned out that through a tennis club my sister's later husband, they too knew each other.

How long were you in the labor camp?

I think 10 months or something like this.

So do you remember what year you were taken? Do you remember how old you were when you were taken?

How old was I? 20, 21, something like-- no. I have it in-- [LAUGHS]

OK. So it was about 10 months that you were there?

Yes. Yeah, well, then the war ended. You know where our camp was, close to the Polish border. And when the Russians took over, pushed over the Poland, and the Poles came to Silesia. That's where our guards then left.

Did your camp have a name?

I think it was Gross-Rosen.

Gross-Rosen?

Yeah.

You were in Gross-Rosen?

Yeah. And when the Russians came, our guards left.

I see.

And that's when my sister-- she went to-- because her husband's family came from Leipzig. And she went to Leipzig. And I went to look for my mother and brother.

When you were at this camp-- and you say you were there for just about 10 months, so not a full year-- how soon after you got there did you pair up with the person who became your first husband?

Well, we were all together working with these Faschinen or whatever. And it turned out that we came both from the same town-- and Hans, my brother-in-law. So people who came from Breslau, they kind of tried to get together.

OK. And where did you marry?

I married in Linz Am Bindermichl.

Linz Am Bindermichl. Is that the one in Austria?

Austria.

In Austria. OK. So this is after liberation?

Yeah.

All right. So do you leave Frank? And when you are liberated, do you go together someplace, or do you go separately to look for your mother?

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My sister went to Leipzig.

Right.

And I went to look for my mother.

By yourself?

No, because at that time I think he wasn't my husband yet. He looked for my mother.

He was with you?

Yeah.

He was with you.

There was something I still regret, because I left because he said, "Come, we don't want to talk about it." And I left my sister actually with her, at that time, not husband but friend. And this is still something that hurts me, because I left her without saying, "Now I go to Breslau and look for my"-- when she woke up the next morning, I wasn't there.

And why? Oh, why was that?

Well, because my, at the time, husband said, "I don't want to spread this that we disappear."

Oh. So you were still living in that situation?

Yeah. In this camp or--

This restaurant?

Yeah, this restaurant on the floor.

What a weird kind of place. It sounds weird.

[LAUGHS] Yeah, well, they didn't know what to do with all these people all of a sudden. And we were not paying guests.

No, you weren't. Here's a question though-- Did your situation in the camp stay the same? In other words, did things get worse? As the war is being lost, was there any change in what they asked you to do or how--

No, actually we were so included in this with no way outside. There was no radio, no anything.

You were isolated.

Completely isolated. We went in the morning to someplace where they told us to cut the little branches of trees to knit them or whatever you want to call it. And at night--

Did anybody get sick in the camp?

We didn't get sick. But yes, there were people who went sick because of the hygienic situation. If you ever knew what a latrine is.

Well, I take it it's a common bathroom.

Well, it is a-- [LAUGHS]

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OK. Was there opportunity to have showers?

No, we had some water running and pots to--

OK.

But the water was cold.

Oy. Not fun.

But better than nothing.

And did you have soap?

I really don't know what we used as soap, because we got during the war, it was rationed. And we had little something. This is something I don't know what we did.

OK. And what about food? What kind of food did you have there?

We had in this little town, there was a baker who was very, very friendly with us. And he told us when he made fresh breads, come and get some. And I still remember them warm in the pocket from these overalls we had.

So you were able to have contact with somebody local? It wasn't like you were complete--

Just the baker.

Just the baker.

Just the baker. But other than that, where my mother where, where was the rest of the family, nothing-- because telecommunication weren't so like it is today.

No. But if you're in a labor camp, and if you're working on these things, and if it's involuntary-- that is, you didn't ask to go there--

No, definitely not.

Yeah, so I am thinking that it's more or less like a prison.

In a certain way, yes, because we are not free. Free we were when, as I said, the Russians came too close, and our guards didn't like.

Of course, they didn't want to meet them.

They don't want to--

Right. But if you had guards, did they let you go and meet common people in the surrounding area? Or were you under lock and key?

Not lock and keys. And I would say that we could get to this baker walking a few-- I really don't know how we did it, because they learned it. And they said this certain baker he makes us some bread, some rolls.

OK. So you were allowed. It wasn't that you were inside.

We when not-- no. We could go to the bakery.

Yeah, which a prisoner generally couldn't.

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And frankly, we didn't have money. He must have made money. And I still remember these warm little breads, these little rolls.

Yeah, in your pockets. Semmeln as we called them.

Yeah. It makes a huge difference when you are hungry.

[LAUGHS] And you didn't care that nothing else was on it. It was nice, warm.

What kind of food did they feed you within the camp itself?

This was some kind of soup. We had some container. It must have been a kitchen with big pots. And we got--

And did you have a uniform you had to wear?

No. The only thing we got were these wooden shoes. And in wintertime, the snow got stuck on this, because if you go with--

Wooden shoes.

--with these wooden shoes, I remember that we little axe um these branches zu hacken. We went like this to--

To knock the snow.

--to knock the snow off.

And did anybody die while you were in the camp?

No. No. We had one who was a little something. He ate, I think, some mushrooms, and he died. But that was his fault.

It was his food poisoning--

Yeah.

--of some kind. And do you remember what it was like when the Russians came to liberate?

No, because we left before they came. Because the guards left, and this opened the gates before the Russians came in.

OK. When you say you left then, was that when you went to look for your mother, or do you live together with your sister?

This is something a little dark what I feel, because I left with my, at that time, not husband or friend. And my sister went with her, at that time, not husband yet to another family. So we kind of split. And it took a while before we-- I don't know how we got together again, because her part was in the Russian part of Germany. And I went to-- I was in the American.

So when you went to Breslau, did you go back to Paradiesstrasse?

No. How I got from Breslau, which I went and realized the house wasn't there anymore, through something I really don't know. My, at that time, mother-in-law and my sister-in-law, they lived in a little town. I don't remember the name. They had Russian occupation.

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And this Russian soldier, who made friends with her, they married some kind of-- and this is the Moishe I'm now in contact. He looked for us in Breslau. And at that time, you marked your house you are moving at this direction or you can people with his name, you can get information about that. That was the only way you could find information, because nothing else worked.

Well, let me understand this properly. You would go to somebody's house or your own house. And you would say, I am looking for so-and-so.

You said I'm this and this. You can find me under this and this.

On the old place, wherever--

Wherever you-- because telephone didn't work either. That was the name of something.

So your house in Paradiesstrasse is bombed?

That didn't-- but the house of my, at that time--

Boyfriend.

--boyfriend, that stood still. And this had the marks--

From the Russian officer.

--from where the Russian officer found us.

I see. In the house where he had lived.

Yeah, we went to that house. It was damaged, but it stood. And we could be there. And we had outside here this [GERMAN].

And he found you there?

And he found us there.

I see. And when your mother-in-law, even though she wasn't your mother-in-law yet, when your sister-in-law had the baby, and your mother says leave him, where was she going? Where was the mother and the--

She went with friends. And this was in Munich, where she had her baby. And her child was six-- wait a minute. My Frank was born in November. And this Moishe was born in July the next year. Is a month older.

So did you have a son named Frank?

Yeah.

I see. OK.

That was my oldest son.

OK. All right, so I'm jumping ahead of the story. So let's go back to the Russian officer. He finds you. And then what happens? You're all still around in Breslau.

He brought me to where they lived. And he had facilities because of my sister-in-law. He deserted the army because that was the only way. And we went--

That's quite a big risk for him.

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Well, wait a minute. He was still a Russian officer. When we went from that German little town through Czechoslovakia, he always had to go the Russian occupation. And this brought us through Czechoslovakia, through Austria. And Austria and Linz had one part Russian. And over the bridge-- I have the bridge. I just sent him the photo of that bridge. The other, was Linz, that was American.

Interesting.

And this way, I still remember, to be with his wife, that didn't-- was too long. When he deserted, we gave him my, at that time, husband's, or friend's, suit because he went as a private person--

Across the bridge?

--over that bridge. He deserted. And [LAUGHS] that's the story.

Did you see that? Were you with him when that happened?

Yeah, we were all together there.

Oh, how interesting. How interesting.

And is this interesting now for my sister-in-law's baby she left with that man.

Was your sister-in-law with him when he crossed over the bridge?

No, they stayed. They stayed in that little town. I really don't know where.

The little town near Breslau?

It wasn't too close to Breslau.

OK, but it's still back there?

Yeah, it was.

And so she did not travel with you?

She did not travel. The only thing I remember that we traveled with was Grischa. He later changed his name.

OK. But his name was Grischa?

It was Grischa. Now his son said he had another name, Baruch or whatever, because he had to break--

He to cover his tracks.

Yeah.

OK. Well, yes, that's quite a story.

It is a story in itself. We went through all this. And Grischa, as a Russian officer, he had the whole arm for wristwatches. And wherever they asked silly questions, as he said, he, "What? Which watch you like?" [LAUGHS] And whatever they decided, that was free.

He knew the system.

[LAUGHS]

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He knew the system.

Definitely.

My goodness. My goodness.

That was black market at that time.

Yeah. And it worked.

Perfect.

So it was you, Frank, and Grischa who were traveling.

Now, Frank-- wait a minute. Frank wasn't born at this time.

No, I'm sorry, I thought your husband's name was Frank.

No, my husband's name was Fred, Fredegar. Fred Weber.

Fred Weber. OK. So Fred Weber. So it was you, Fred, and Grischa. The three of you were traveling?

With the Russian--

Forces, whatever they were.

Yeah, because these were kind of Jeeps, but bigger Jeeps. And I remember we were always in the back, and they were covered. They never saw us, or we didn't see any-- because that was a Russian vehicle, they didn't want some not Russian sitting in there.

So it sounds like Grischa organized that you would be traveling this way and bribing somebody on Russian military transport.

Yeah.

But those other soldiers and other military personnel didn't know you were there. Or they pretended not to know you were there, because he had a lot of watches.

Most likely they got--

The watches.

[LAUGHS]

They got the watches. Got it. How interesting.

The nice way, I still see, how Grischa lifted his-- "Which one?"

[LAUGHTER]

And then in Linz, Linz seems to be an important place for a lot of reasons for you.

Yeah, Frank was born in Linz.

I thought you said he was born in Munich.

No.

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Born in Linz.

Moishe was born in Munich. Frank was born in Linz.

So you were pregnant when you were traveling.

Yes.

Oh, that was no fun.

No.

[LAUGHTER]

Jeepers. And did you get married in Linz?

Yes.

OK. On the Russian side or the American side?

On the American side.

OK. So when you cross the bridge, how did you cross?

You know, this is something. That bridge, they must have had somebody in the middle, because that bridge was half Russian and half American. I really don't remember how we-- because we came from the Russian part and went over this bridge to the American side. And I'm pretty sure in the middle must have sat somebody.

But you don't remember?

This I don't remember. I just remember that Grischa, he was a little heavier than my husband. And the suit we lent him, that was everything. He burst out of all seams. [LAUGHS]

Oh, my goodness. Oh, my goodness. What happened to your husband's Jewish father?

He died. I never knew him. I never knew him. But I don't think he was killed by the Nazis. He died--

A natural death?

Natural death.

OK. And were there any other brothers and sisters beyond the sister who--

He had an older sister. She was never married. She lived with somebody. We never knew was it the father figure or--

You didn't know.

These were times where you didn't ask. [LAUGHS]

So when you're crossing the bridge, you're still pregnant.

Yes, because Frank was born in Linz.

In the American side?

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In the American side. And you know something? That was the insane asylum.

No.

They took over. The actual hospital was taken by the Americans. And this facility like a hospital facility for the rest of it was actually an insane asylum. And it's so funny. When Tito said Frank was born in the insane asylum, I said you don't talk, because you were born in the sugar factory--

[LAUGHTER]

--in Venezuela. And that hospital or that doctor he was born belonged to the sugar factory in Venezuela. [LAUGHS]

But neither of them were born in a usual place.

No.

[LAUGHTER]

How Interesting. How interesting.

But we always laugh because one you may be-- and then it's like, I always said, are you sure you are not the sweet one?

[LAUGHS]

So Linz has these important moments. It has a birth and a marriage. Did you stay in Linz?

Not too long, because from Linz we went to Munich.

OK. And in Munich, did you find-- where did you find your mother?

Because in Munich-- I don't know when I learned that my mother was close to Munich, in Vilsbiburg.

Vilsbiburg?

Yeah, this town, which my great aunt in Chicago pronounced so funny, well, we thought it was Holland more than anything else. And yeah, I met her. She stayed with her brother.

And did she tell you of what had happened with her?

Well, she lost everything. And her brother, who lived a little outside of Breslau, said come with us because she was all by herself. And he had a big family and still lived in a decent house.

OK. Outside Munich?

Outside Munich.

OK. Would have this been from his wife's side?

Pardon me?

Her brother, you said had a big family.

Yeah.

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Would this have been from his wife's side? Because if it was his big family, it would have been her big family too.

Well, it was her-- Uncle Walter-- no, it was my mother's family.

It was your mother's family?

Yeah, my mother's brother.

OK. Your mother's brother. And he had a big family near Munich.

Yeah.

Did that mean your mother had a big family near Munich, because they were brother and sister?

No. My mother, no. My mother had--

OK. I think I'm not being clear. I got the impression that when your brother says to your mother "come with me"--

Yeah. We were in camp, we two.

I know. I know. But you're saying he, your uncle, had a big family near Munich.

Yeah.

But because your mother is his sister, wouldn't that also be her family in Munich?

Yeah, well, it was her family.

OK. That's all I wanted to establish.

It was her family.

It was her family.

My father's family, we had no contact whatsoever. It was the only thing then the grand aunt in Chicago--

That's right.

--through the Red Cross.

Who found you then?

Yes. And through the Red Cross. And this was really something that was remarkable. If you think, where we were, I never saw her. I just knew that she existed. But I never met her. We never met her. And all through the Red Cross she employed.

And did she send you packages?

Yes, she sent us. When we came to New York, that was the first time where we got her little packages.

So what was her purpose in finding you in Germany?

What did she want to do?

Well, because she knew her-- it was her great-- wait a minute. What was it? Her nephew.

Your father?

My father. She knew that he didn't exist anymore and that we needed help.

And my mother came very late to the States.

Did this particular aunt sponsor you into the United States?

No. We came through the-- what was it? There were three-- the highest was Jewish, the Caritas were Catholic, and we were-- what was our? It has another name.

Was it a Lutheran?

There were three organizations that came. As I said, the highest was Jewish. The Caritas was Catholic. And ours-- how was ours called?

But was it Protestant?

Protestant, yes.

And Lutheran?

Yes.

OK. And so it was a religious organization that sponsors you.

Yes. Because I had family in New York, we could stay in New York.

But not with the family?

My family, that was the great aunt. And even though they had a big house, we couldn't be there.

OK. And this was another great aunt, not the one from Chicago?

No, that is another one.

OK. So they had nothing to do with your official ability to come to the United States?

No, no. It was-- god, how was our called? There were three organizations. But what was ours? We still owed them, and we paid them the passage. It was a little rough for us, but we could. I think it was $900 or something. That was a huge sum.

Yeah. It was. It was. But nevertheless, when you're in Munich, you find your mother, who's in this small little town. Your great aunt from Chicago finds you through the Red Cross. And then how long do you stay in that part of Germany?

Because we applied for the immigration here to the States. I really don't know how long it took us. It didn't take us too long, because we were one of the first batch after the war he could come to the States. All who were not in camp and were regular citizens, they could come later, quite later on, through Canada.

This is true. There were millions of refugees. And not all of the refugees had been in concentration camps or labor camps.

Yeah. They came through. There was the only way they came through to Canada.

So did you live in a displaced persons camp in Munich, or did you live together with your mother and your

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uncle?

In Linz that was a displaced people camp.

That's where you lived.

Yeah.

OK. But you didn't stay there? In Linz?

We stayed there till we could get to Munich. And it was so funny. They had all the written in Hebrew. And we didn't know anything in Hebrew.

Even though both of you are half Jewish.

Who-- in Germany, nobody speaks the Hebrew.

Or Yiddish. It could have been Yiddish.

Or Yiddish, yeah.

So you end up in Munich. How old was your son Frank when you came to the United States?

Oh, he was a year old, or was he? No, I don't think he was a year old yet.

So that means you must have come in 1946.

Yeah, in March 1946. And he was born in November '45.

Wow. OK.

And my friend-- I don't know where we got Steffi. She came here with the first boat because we were delayed from Germany in Bremerhaven because they had a coal strike here. And they had not a coal strike-- a strike for something. I think it was petrol, where the coal--

In the United States?

Here, yes, in '46. And they had preferences to our boats who came with immigrants. They had a strike of-- it must have been petrol.

OK. What significance does this have for your journey?

Yeah, well, because we were delayed with coming in. These boats they needed for other transportation.

I see. I see. Why did you want to leave Germany?

There was nothing there to-- it was my mother. And we always had the idea with Nazi Germany, we weren't too friendly with the Germans.

So you had mentioned earlier in our interview that your father's relatives in the United States didn't think that situation was so bad.

Because of his Christian wife.

So did they offer to help or not offer to help?

Unfortunately, obviously not, because this great aunt in Chicago-- but later on, when we came here, I

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remember the first $1,000 check. That was something ah.

It was huge.

That was really huge. We could buy some things to sleep on. And that was really-- They felt my father was protected with his Christian family.

And obviously not.

No.

And did your mother come with you?

No, my mother stayed in Germany quite, quite a while. And she was delayed because of the X-ray. They did something with her X-ray. And that showed that she might have had something from her lungs. It turned out the X-ray--

Was wrong.

--was wrong.

Yeah. Well, of course, they were checking all refugees for tuberculosis and whether they'd be coming with a disease. But she also wanted to leave Germany. Is that correct?

Yes. She wanted to live with us. But it didn't work out with my first husband. And she went back to Germany. Besides language wasn't-- she didn't get the language.

She went back.

So it was better for her. And then I remarried and went to Venezuela. And that would have been something up in the mountains. That would not have been for her.

Your sister, what was her route? She went from the camp that you were working in.

She went to Leipzig to her later husband's family. And frankly, I don't know where my brother-in-law was, because they didn't go together. I think he was still drafted as a young man, because in Germany, what young man wasn't in the army or--

Well, you said they met in labor camp.

Yeah, well-- so I think he was drafted to-- what was this French labor organization?

I don't know.

I think he was drafted for a few months in this labor-- and that was in France.

OK. TOT. TOT.

T-O-T?

T-O-T. Ich weiss nicht...

I think I've heard of it, but I'll have to look it up to see what it means.

Yeah, I think it was TOT Organization.

OK. So what happened with your sister? She goes to Leipzig, and she stays there?

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She went-- since this was a Russian sector, she had trouble then coming into the States.

Well, did she go to Munich? Did she go somewhere else?

She couldn't.

OK, where did she go?

She couldn't because at that time, you couldn't come from the Russian sector to the American sector.

Right, well, you went via Austria and the bridge. And you had Grischa.

[LAUGHS]

And his watches.

[LAUGHTER]

But did your sister leave Leipzig or did she stay in Leipzig?

She stayed in Leipzig.

For how long?

For quite a while because we were here already in the States, I think, at least an hour or something-- more than an hour.

You mean a year.

A year. A year. Because from this, I don't know when she was able to come from the Russian sector, because at that time, they weren't too friendly.

Of course not. Of course not. The question, though, is does she eventually do that?

Yes, she did. They did.

OK. And where do they go to?

They stayed for a while in my house.

In Munich?

No.

Outside Munich?

No, no. I was already here in the States.

OK. Before they get to the United States, they don't go from Leipzig to New York. They have to go to someplace western in Europe.

No, she came from Leipzig, when she was able to, to New York.

Directly? It's impossible. After the war?

[INAUDIBLE] [LAUGHS]

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OK. It means you don't remember it to me or you didn't know. And that's OK.

No, because I know when she came to the States, she stayed in my apartment, in our apartment in Long Island.

Did she come from Bremerhaven?

Obviously.

So she had to get from Leipzig to Bremerhaven. And that means going from the Russian to the American sector.

Yeah, it must have. It must have, because it was at least maybe two years later, when this was open.

OK. Well, I don't know how open it was. But there was a lot of smuggling going on. There was a lot of illegal crossings. There was a lot of different ways that people--

I still don't remember how she got from Leipzig, that she wound up-- but--

But she got there.

She got to New York.

She got to New York. So it was your sister, her husband, you, your husband, and your baby Frank.

Yeah.

And your sister-in-law was still in Munich? The one who had Moishe, had she come to the States?

I don't know when she came to the States, because we lost kind of contact. And this baby Moishe, I only [LAUGHS] met about a year ago.

That's an incredible thing that he appears, you find him in your life, half a century later.

And for him, it was something because I could fill in his first years, because he remembered the woman his father was married to wasn't his mother. And he said only when he was 17 years old that the father said, "You know, my wife isn't your mother."

And he said he always had the feeling that this isn't my mother-- the way she treated him. Because he had half brothers or sisters, and he said he always had the feeling there's something. But he said he had to be 17 years before his father told him "my wife isn't your mother."

Wow.

And that's why he said I filled in his first years of his life, because he didn't know--

Who his mother was. Did he ever contact?

--where was my mother? Who was my mother?

Yeah. That's a sad thing. Let's finish up a little bit. You're in New York. How long did you stay married to your first husband? How long were you married to your first husband?

12 years.

OK. So you divorced sometime in the mid '50s?

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Yeah.

OK. And when did you marry your second husband?

The funny thing, he got divorced from his wife too. But this had nothing to do with it, because we weren't that close together.

But when did you marry your second husband?

When did we marry? Tito was born in '56. '55, no?

No. '56 you were married.

You were born '56.

'57.

Oh, OK. Then we were married in '56.

OK. And when did you leave for Venezuela?

When did I leave for Venezuela?

'56.

'56. OK. So the same year you get married, you leave for Venezuela. And your second son, what is his name?

Rudolf Schuessler.

No. Your second son is Rudolf Schuessler?

Yeah.

OK. And does he have a nickname?

Hmm?

Does he have a nickname?

A nickname?

Yeah.

Excuse me, can we cut the camera for a little bit? So explain to me, because you've been referring to your son as Tito, so I thought that's his nickname.

Yeah, because the Spanish is chiquito, hijito. And he called himself Tito.

I see. I see. And so your son was named after your father Rudolf?

Yes.

OK. And your husband's--

And since my husband's name was too Rudolf. Even though the writing is a little different, but it is Rudolf

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still.

OK. And so from 1956 until when did you live in Venezuela?

Till 35 years ago.

So 1984?

Yeah.

And what were you doing in Venezuela with your husband?

I was a housewife.

But what kind of business did he have?

We had the plantation.

What kind of plantation was this?

A coffee plantation.

OK. You had a coffee plantation?

[LAUGHS] Yeah.

And was this a family-owned business?

No, that was his family. It was 1881 created.

From your second husband's family?

Yes. And the brothers took over. He had another brother. And Hans died in '61, I think.

And your second husband, how did he end up in the United States?

Because his first wife-- well, in Germany, you had a Trennt if you were able to get out of it. And his first wife was half Jewish too. So he came. We came, I think, on the same boat even.

So he was born in Germany, your second husband?

Yes. He was born in Germany. He was German.

OK. It wasn't that he was born in Venezuela--

No.

--and had to come to the United States? OK. Did you ever go back to Germany?

No.

Never?

Well, I was in Germany. Yes. I have a little something with my daughter-in-law, as I told you, because she has a feeling I favored my son Tito and neglected my other son, which is absolutely-- it's not the case.

Your older son, does he live in Germany?

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He lives-- he died five years ago.

I see. And would you go back to visit him? Was that the thing?

I visited him quite, quite often. And it was just shortly before his death that we had such a misunderstanding, because he felt I gave the house to Tito, which isn't the truth, because it's still my house.

Well, those things happen in families.

Yeah, well, it happens in the best of families, as we say.

Yes. But you never went back to Breslau, or did you?

No. I never went. I have a good friend-- oh, she died too. She went to Breslau because she came from Breslau too. And she said you wouldn't believe it. Wherever I thought--

Excuse me, can we cut?

Turn it off.

OK, rolling.

OK. All right, so you did have a friend who did go back to Breslau. But--

She said it's not our town. First of all, everything is in Polish, which I can't read.

Yeah. OK. Did your children ask you much about your life before the war, about what happened to you, about what happened to your father?

My son Frank always said, "Why don't you write this down when we have conversation? Why don't you write it down?" [LAUGHS]

So you talk to them about this.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Well, I'm glad that you've talked to us today. Thank you. Is there anything else I haven't asked that you would want to add to our story, to what we've taped?

I wouldn't know.

OK. It's a long day. I realize that.

I know but I enjoyed it.

I'm glad you did. I'm glad you did. And I am very grateful that you decided to say yes and said yes.

Does it help you a little?

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Through every single person's life, you get an insight into what was the situation that people were under. What was the situation for somebody who comes from different religious traditions? And yet, you have your formative years under a dictatorship. And how can you move? How do you survive?

And as you see, you can adapt, because my life was roller coast. What do you call this where you go up and

down? A roller coaster.

Oh, a roller coaster.

A roller coaster.

Yeah. And it was outside of your control.

Absolutely. You only have to make the best, as I do right now, because they are different birds right now here.

Yeah, it's true. It's true. Well, thank you. Thank you again. And I will say then that this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Helga Schuessler on May 22, 2019 in Oviedo, Florida. Thank you.

And I enjoy it.

Thank you.

OK, camera is rolling.

That's the way to look at photos too. But it's kind of a little complicated. I won't with my way.

Isn't that cool? All right, are we rolling?

We're rolling.

OK. Mrs. Helga, tell me. What is this photograph of?

This was when they got engaged.

Your parents' engagement party?

Yes. And that is my grandfather, grandmother mother's side. That's her brother.

OK. Hang on a second. I'm going to explain this. On the very left of your mother, who is in the middle, is her mother. And on the very right of your father is her father.

The grandfather.

On your mother's side.

Yeah.

And his name was what? Your grandfather's name. Grandpa?

Yeah, grandpa.

That was his name.

[LAUGHTER]

OK. And your mother--

She is Helena. And he is-- you got me.

Grandpa.

Grandpa.

OK. And in the middle smiling shyly with the flower in his lapel, who's that?

That's my father and my mother engagement. Up there is her brother.

But I'm repeating this so that people would know who you're talking about, because they can't see your finger.

Oh.

This person right here who's kind of balding is your father.

Yes. He had a very, very close haircut. He was not--

He was not bald?

No, nothing.

OK. So his hair was cut off entirely for that occasion-- or maybe not that occasion, but at that time. And then next to him is your mother, Erna. So this was your father Rudolf and your mother Erna. And standing right behind them is her brother.

That's her brother, yes.

And was that the brother who had the German uniform on--

Yeah.

--and who had the two sons?

Yeah.

And one of them was in the bodyguards for Adolf Hitler.

That's correct.

OK. And this brother's first name was what?

We had Nugel. We called him Nugel.

Nugel?

But [LAUGHS] it was--

Did you say Albrecht or Albert?

Oh, good grief. He had such a nickname. What was his name? Arthur.

Arthur?

Yeah.

You think Arthur? OK. Otherwise, we could have said uncle who's related to grandpa.

[LAUGHTER]

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You can say that too.

You can say that too.

I only know him Nugel.

Nugel. And it looks like a very happy party, as a matter of fact, this engagement.

It looks like it, yes.

Yeah. OK, thank you very much. We'll come to the next photograph.

Do you want me to cut? Camera's rolling.

OK. Mrs. Helga, tell me who is this a picture of?

That's my father.

Your father.

And this, they called Vater Morder.

Vater Morder, these sort of collars?

[LAUGHS]

Which is a father murderer, murderer of father. Sort of like the thing that chokes their necks.

And you know, they were detachable?

Oh, were they?

And you used these to change every day, but I think not the shirt underneath.

Oh, I see.

[LAUGHS]

So the collar would be changed, but the rest remains.

Yeah, that was--

Well, who saw it? Nobody. About what year do you think this one was taken?

This I can't tell you. I really don't know.

Do you remember your father like this? Is this the father picture you have in your mind?

Yes.

Yes?

Yeah.

Because he looks a little older here, like he could be around 50 or something.

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Yeah, well, I don't remember him as a very, very young man, because he wasn't a very young man.

That's right. OK, thank you.

Camera rolling.

OK, Mrs. Helga, who is this picture of?

That's my mother.

Erna, yeah?

Erna.

And what was her maiden name?

Jordan.

Jordan. That's right. And about when do you think this picture was taken?

'15.

1915?

1915.

OK. So she was a young woman, around 24, 25.

Yeah, well, that's how they looked.

Yeah. But before she married your father?

Yeah. I think so.

Yeah. OK, thank you. OK. Are we rolling? So tell me, Mrs. Helga, who is this? Who is this picture of?

That's my uncle Arthur.

And your uncle Arthur is in uniform, in German uniform. Do you know what rank he had?

No. Frankly, no. But it is some kind of an officer, a low-- I don't know how low. I really don't know.

OK. And he had how many sons?

Two.

And what were their names?

Wolfgang und Dieter.

Und Dieter. And which one was the one--

Wolfgang was in the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler.

Wolfgang was in the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, which means he was in the security guard, the bodyguards of Adolf Hitler.

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Yeah, well, because he was very tall and it was an honor at that time.

And which one was the son that died very young at age 19?

That was Wolfgang.

That was Wolfgang?

Yeah.

So he wasn't much of a guard for himself, was he?

No-- he was one of the very first casualties in the Second World War.

Yeah. And Dieter?

And Dieter still lived-- I don't know. I lost contact. But he survived. And he had a family with, I think, two girls. But I never--

And this was your mother's brother?

Yes.

All comes from your mother's brother, Arthur Jordan.

Yeah.

Or "Yordan," as they would say. OK, thank you very much.

He is a Jordan.

He is a Jordan. Yeah, OK.

Rolling.

OK. Cut. Cut.

Rolling.

OK. So tell me what is this that you have here.

This I got from the American Army in München. That was one of the rare certificates, because later on they sold it.

They sold them? Or they stopped making them?

There were people, they liked it.

Oh, that means they were sold on the black market?

Yeah. And it is only because this has a very low number that it is still legitimate.

Oh my god, so this is a real one that you really have that you really were there and that you didn't acquire by some financial means.

Because this was something you could represent and get the favors.

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That's right. You could get some sort of priority.

But when they start to sell this, they had other numbers.

So here I see on what is the right-hand side, it says in English on the bottom, "Official certificate for former," and it probably says, "inmates of concentration camps and similar Nazi penal institutions." That's what it looks like. In German it would be-- [SPEAKING GERMAN]

Yeah, OK. And so I see that at some point it's void on this side. And at some point, the military government Munich Public Welfare office is taken off.

Because they tried to handle this.

Oh, I see. So they tried to black-market it?

Yeah, black-marketing.

By they, you don't mean the military government, or do you?

No. I don't know where, but this is one of the rare ones.

OK. And now we're going to flip it and show the other side. We'll cut the camera and flip it. It's OK. You rolling? OK. So this is the other side of that certificate. And tell me about this. Who is this lovely girl in the picture?

Yeah, well.

[LAUGHTER]

Who is that?

That's I.

That's you. That's you. And it has all kinds of information. It says that you-- it bears the registered number of 1485.

Yeah.

And you're saying that's one of those low numbers?

Yeah. That's exactly.

OK. And it's issued on August 23, 1946 to you, Helga Weber, now married, geborene Lindenberg. And it tells your birth date. It tells what you were before. You were Drogistin. And it says where you live.

Ah, and you have Leinthalerstrasse 8.

Yeah, in Munich. And that you were in Lager L-Trachenberg up here. So was that the DP camp?

Yeah.

OK. Oh no, you were in a couple of them-- from Lager Trachenberg.

They changed the name later. I really don't know that we had two names, because we were actually just in one--

Place.

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--in one place.

OK. So let's look at these dates. It says that it's from 10.8.1944, which means it would have been August 10, 1944 until October 20. And then from October 20, this is KZ-Grossrosen, as you mentioned, until January 22, 1945, which gives us-- how many months now? About half a year, something like that. It says from 10th of 8th, of August until-- Yeah. So it's through the rest of the summer, throughout the entire fall, and into the first month of January '45.

And then [GERMAN], that you were imprisoned because of racial reasons. [GERMAN]

And the date of your last release was January 22, '45. Very interesting document.

That's when the Russians came. [LAUGHS]

That's when the Russians came. But the only Russian it sounds like you really had interaction with was Grischa.

[LAUGHTER] Yeah. Thank you very much.

That's on the way to the camp.

So, Mrs. Helga, yeah, tell me what is this photograph of?

That's where we were transported to the camp.

Trachenberg and then Gross-Rosen.

Yeah.

Those were their names. And you are the person-- tell me where you are. That's you, the second from the left on the bottom row next to the gentleman who has a hat and white kerchief. So that's you right next to him.

And I think my sister is all the way on the right.

OK. So she's the first on the right, again, on the bottom side. She's with a kerchief looking away-- not at the camera, but looking away to the side. And do you know who took this picture?

I don't even know where the others are.

Do you know who the other people are? No.

No.

OK. But all of you were somehow Mischlinge?

Yes, definitely.

OK. That's interesting to have such a photograph and very interesting how it came to be taken.

I don't know how, who took it because nobody else has a picture like this.

And how you got that picture. But you remember it, yeah?

I don't remember who took it. And I'm the only one who has this. My sister said she never saw it.

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And do you know was this from the train station at Breslau?

That must be somewhere.

You don't remember.

Güterbahnhof we called this, because this is a transportation that's not for humans.

No, it isn't. It is a cattle wagon for sure or a freight train, a freight wagon. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mrs. Helga.

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