

[INTERPOSING VOICES] In other words, when she asks you where were you--

You better be careful. She may come to visit me.

Three, two, one. Here we go.

OK.

Ready? OK. I'm Judy Weightman here with Louise Spitzer on June 2, 1988. And we're filming at Gerda Samuel's in Honolulu, Hawaii. And I'm just going to ask you a few questions for biographical data, first Louise. What is your present address?

My present address is 3103 Pualei Circle, Honolulu, Hawaii 96815.

OK, and could you give us the date of birth, and your place of birth?

I was born in Vienna, Austria on December 6, 1916.

1916? OK. And also I want wanted to know if you could give me the full name of your father.

Do you remember the full name of your father?

My father's name was Max, Max Spitzer.

And your mother?

My mother's name was Irene in English, Irene, as we used to say. And her maiden name was Alter, A-L-T-E-R.

And when you were in Austria, you were born in Vienna.

In Vienna.

And can you tell us a little bit about your early life in Vienna?

My early life, well, I had a rather nice childhood. We lived in Vienna. I went to kindergarten. I went to elementary school. Differently than here, I went to gymnasium afterwards, and well matura, I don't even know what it is called here. And then I had a year in between. I was sent to Brussels for perfecting my French for a little while. And then I went to hotel management school. And I just finished, just finished, a month before Hitler marched in.

That would have been in 1938 at that time?

Right. Let's go back to when you were, let's say in kindergarten, if you can remember, your first memories. Could you tell us a little bit about life, how it was then in Vienna?

Well, it was very different. My life in Vienna was really different than here. I was rather spoiled. You were not permitted ever to walk anywhere on your own. Well naturally, not as a small child. But I was taken everywhere and picked up almost to the end before I left.

Did you have a Jewish education?

Yes. In Vienna, it was different. In gymnasium, in the gymnasium we had three parallel classes. And every week one hour was for religion. And we were split to the three different religions-- Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religion. And that was obligatory. So everybody did. I had a Jewish education. I don't know too much about it, but I did have it.

Were there many Jewish children in your class at that time?

I can't remember. But there were quite a few, yes. And what about in your neighborhood where you lived, do you remember anything about?

Yeah, in Vienna, you actually didn't talk too much. At that time when I was a child, it was all mixed. There were many mixed marriages, and Jewish people and non-Jewish people together. And it wasn't-- not like it is in New York here.

I don't even-- my family was not very religious. We did keep Yom Kippur and we kept Seder evening. That was the two only things. Otherwise, I was not brought up religious. There was no kosher. I didn't even know about kosher food until I left, I went to England. That was the first time I really found out about it.

Did you have any anti-Semitic experiences at all when you were a young child?

Not when I was a young child, no. Later on, of course. But not when I-- no personally I didn't have. I whatever happened, I did it myself because I wanted to prove that Jewish people are OK.

Well could you tell me what you first remember of any discrimination or any anti-Semitic experiences happening in Vienna, even if not to you personally?

At school it was not so much anti-Semitism. But at the time, there was socialism that came in. That was already in gymnasium. There was socialism and there was the Nazis. And I just to provoke mainly, I was very active. And I wore there were Three Arrows, Three Arrows to prove that I'm a socialist. It was more that than being Jewish. But it was to oppose the Nazis.

And what did you know about the Nazis at that time that led you to want to oppose them?

Well, we heard about it from Germany, what happened in Germany, and that there was antisemitism there, and we did not want them to come in. And I tried everything to try and help to get against them.

Can you remember your first experiences of hearing about what was going on in Germany that led you to join the Social Democrats?

Not really. I don't know what did it. But I was young and you had to do-- you didn't have to. But I was rather wild, and I figured I had to do something against Nazism, whatever it was I heard from newspapers, and whatever at that time.

Did your parents talk to you at all about--

No, my father was not alive. And strangely enough, my mother was a very quiet person. And she never said anything. But once when I brought home all kind of leaflets, and she said-- I was a teenager at the time. She said, I don't care what you do outside. But you're not going to bring anything in this house. And I was so surprised. Because she never said anything. She let me do what I wanted outside.

Did your mother express any fears or any concerns?

Not at that time, no. That would be what year about? Can you remember that?

It must have been '37, '36, no it was earlier even. I was still in gymnasium. I was still in gymnasium. It was about '35, '36.

And then what happened? Do you remember when she started being more concerned?

No. We had an apartment in Vienna, and a house in a spa outside of Vienna, Baden. And then she stayed there. She

lived there. And I went to school alone. So I only saw her now and then. And we didn't talk too much. But well, that was much later, after already Hitler had marched in, we took people in and made it like in a boarding house in Baden, in the small town.

That was in '38 already?

That was already in '38.

Do you want to talk a little bit about what happened when you were in Baden, and he marched in?

Do you know, I don't even remember. It seems strange. But I don't remember just that. But I do know-- no, my mother was sick at the time in a hospital. And I was much more concerned about that. But then I went later. I don't know how he marched in. But then Baden was a small town, and people knew you. But they came and picked me up to go and clean up the synagogue.

Who picked you up?

Nazis. The Nazis came, and they looked around, and they just took me, and then they took a few other people along. And it was very strange. It was different than here. We had quite a few servants. And they came along and said, please take me. Take me instead of Louise. And they wanted absolutely to go. And they were furious. The Nazis were furious. And I said just calm down. It doesn't matter. They all-- the servants used to like me. And I told them not to worry about me. As I said, was kind of wild.

And I went along. In fact, I went to the synagogue and I climbed up to-- still that I remember so vividly. I climbed up to clean some lamps above where the Torah is. And they said, get down. You will fall down. And I said so what do you care if a Jew will hurt herself. And they said, no, please go home. Go home. We don't want you. They got kind of frightened. But--

How did they know you were Jewish? I mean when they came to get you, how did they know?

In Baden, in a small town, everybody knew everybody. I don't know how.

And your mother was in the hospital at the time?

No, then she was already back there. And they came and picked me up about three days in a row. And my mother had a fit every time. And so, again, our servants said, you can't do that to your mother. Please leave the house in the morning. There were lots of woods around. And they sent me I was walking in the woods just not to be at home. I didn't care. But they said, just don't be home. Your mother can't take it if you are taken away again once more.

And could you tell us a little bit about how you spent the day in the woods, and how long that went on?

Oh, I lived in the woods in Baden. I used to go there always. I just walked around, just walked. I walked and I had some food, some sandwiches. I sat down. I was alone. Now, I don't think this is possible. But at the time, I was very happy alone in the woods. I many, many times walked alone in the woods.

Were there any other Jewish children or teenagers that you knew of in Baden?

Yes. There were quite a few, quite a few. It was quite a congregation of Jewish people. And we were still friends. But then I actually don't remember what happened. It's a long time ago. I just remember just small incidents.

What were your feelings about the Nazi presence there in Baden?

Well, I was furious. I was mad. I was against everything. But there was very little you could do. In fact, I did something else. We had people staying with us. And they came, and took away linen, and pillowcases, and everything. And took it

to their headquarters.

The Nazis came to take everything away. And I took a little carriage, and I walked right into the headquarters. And I asked them to give it back. And they thought-- they had a fit. And they said, how could you? I said, do you want that we have people here. They got some money from the people. They were so startled that I did that. I got all the linen. And they let me go back home.

Wow.

That was nobody could believe it. Of course, my mother again had a fit when she heard what I was doing. But I did it. I just--

Was your mother afraid at all? Yeah, she was afraid because of me, because I wouldn't listen to anybody. I was determined.

What did she think would happen?

She didn't think I'd come back. I walked right into the headquarters.

And what did you know of people who didn't come back? What had you heard, anything at all?

Much later only from my uncle and my cousin who were taken to Dachau. But that was later.

OK. And so in Baden, did you have any other relatives living?

No. Oh, yes. I had two old aunts, great aunts actually. My mother and two great aunts they lived there. But they have not been harmed, only they only wanted me.

And your aunts stayed there.

They stayed there. When I left, they were all there. Yes.

And so then what happened after you left Baden? What happened then?

Well it was very difficult. You could not leave Austria if you had property of any kind. You had to pay it was called, I can't remember the word. But you had to pay money which we didn't have. We had the property. But I was under age. I was just not quite, I was still under age, and I had to sign that I don't own anything. And so they let me go. I usually got through everywhere.

Oh, I was requested by people in England to come as a servant. But even so, you could only leave if they let you go, and they let me go that I signed I had nothing. I didn't own anything. And I was underage.

When did you decide to leave and how did that come about? Could you take back to that day.

I don't know. But my mother wanted me to go, go, go. I mean she was very worried. I don't know how it came about. But oh, yes, a friend of mine who studied with me, or I studied a lot at the time, he had gone to England and he met people in England. And he asked them to request me.

And what was his name? Do you remember his name?

Walter. I know Walter, but by Jove, I can't remember his last name.

Do you remember the name of the family in England that requested?

Oh, the family in England, I'm still friends. They're like my second family. They have been absolutely wonderful, and I still consider them, and they consider me right now still as like their child.

Karet and Solomon. They were the family. I was taken to Karet as a servant. But they soon decided that I was better fitted to look after the children. And boy, I didn't have any domestic experience really.

And their last name was Solomon?

Karet was the first, Karet And they had two children. And Solomon had two children. And I looked later that was in '38, we were going in summer to North Wales. And as we were there, war broke out.

Can we go back first to when you're leaving in Austria.

Austria. Yes, that still hurts now.

Let's talk a little bit about when you left, and how that happened.

When I left?

Yeah.

Do you know, it seems strange but I can't remember how it all worked. I just know that I got it through. Everybody was surprised. I got it through all myself to leave. And the day I left, my mother and my uncle took me to the train station. And they said it was like a boarding school, the whole train, because we were all practically all young girls there. Nobody else was permitted to leave, only if you were young. No, there were some older people, but in my compartment around there.

And my mother and my uncle, they saw me off. My mother, I never saw my mother again. She passed away. But she was sick I understand. My uncle was taken to Dachau. From there, it was the 10th of November 1938, which I understand is called Kristallnacht. I didn't even know that I just know it was the day of the pogroms. And well, the train left, and we came.

Could you talk about going on the train or how it was leaving your uncle and mom?

I can't recall really. It was strange. I mean I said goodbye. Well I laughed. I thought that was the only way. My mother was always I think she laughed. Also, we just smiled and said goodbye. And the train left. And as we came to the border, it was many hours. We went through Austria and through Germany. And at the border, and this is very vivid in my mind. At the border, they took us-- oh, several things. Well first of all, we all had to get off, and they put lined us up.

And they all were beating us up. It was the day, as I said, day of the pogroms. The last thing they could do to us, they were coming down. And I laughed and he yelled at me. And said, you Jew, you laugh. I'll show you so they came and beat us up. It's a line up. But then about an hour later, they let us go back onto the train.

Who was beating you up?

The Nazi guards. The Nazi guards at the border. And then when we were-- the train started to move, I don't know how much longer. We were a long time at that border. It was a pretty bad experience.

What were you feeling at that time?

Again, I was the one, I just wanted to hit them back. I was always the one who wanted to do something against it. I don't know. I was just furious. I was more furious than afraid. But when we were back on the train nobody talked. It was we were all silent and frightened. Until somebody came and said you are in Belgium. And that was the first moment we all started to breathe. And it was really a great relief that we had been out of Germany.

And then we came-- I don't know. I think I took a boat train. I don't even know. But when I arrived in London, Walter-- that's funny that I can't remember his last name. But he was at the station to pick me up. And I didn't know something. He said, you silly fool. And that made me feel good. Isn't that funny, that that made me feel much better for some reason? So I stayed with my friends for a day. And then I went to the other family. They have been very nice.

And when you were getting on the train in the station, what was that like, getting in? Were there are Nazis there? Were there just people there? Who was at the station when you were leaving Austria?

Only those who were on the train and Nazi-- Nazi military or SS or whatever. I don't know. I can't recall that.

Were they checking any documents or anything at the time?

I don't remember. I'm sure they did.

Did you know when you left that you might not be back?

No.

Or you weren't thinking that?

I didn't think of anything, no. No, no, no. I didn't think.

What did you take with you when you left?

Oh, that was another thing. You were permitted to take I think it was about the equivalent of \$5. And my mother put somewhere another \$5 or \$10 I had with me. And they discovered it. And they took it away and they were screaming. And they were again I almost didn't make the train. So I gave them the money. And I ran after. I just jumped on the train at the last minute. I still got on.

Wait. Hold it right there for a second. So she made us come and join me, because she knows me.

So what was the thing about--

OK, so we wanted to get back. What happened with your mom giving you the money, the extra?

Yeah. They discovered, the Nazi on the border discovered. I don't even know where I had it. But they discovered I had too much money. So there was a big thing about it. They took it away. But they did let me get on the train. But the train started already moving with my luggage and everything.

Go ahead. Just keep--

Yes, well my luggage, and I just jumped on the train. I just made it.

And what happened then? What happened with your luggage? What did you have with you in your luggage?

I had a lot of clothing with me, just clothes, nothing else, just clothing. Did you take anything from home at all?

No, I couldn't. No, no. I can't even remember. I think you were permitted a suitcase and money. But I must say I can't really remember completely.

OK. And is there anything else that you can remember? In Vienna, I think you had told me earlier that your friend was wearing a Nazi--

Yeah.

Could you get back and tell me that story about your friendship with a girl--

That was at a gymnasium where I was. They're not. Now they're going out. That was at the gymnasium. No. It's light here. You can't--

Go ahead.

And we were in a sports team, both of us. And we were good friends before. And we were still very good friends because we were what is the word? I can't even think of it anyway. For our school, we were both competing for our school. So normally, we wouldn't talk. But she was a swastika, and I was a Three Arrows. But when we were in the sports team, for the sake of the school, we both reluctantly, but we took off-- she took off the swastika and I took off the Three Arrows.

Because when there was a sport going on, we figured that has to be.

But she was still your friend, even though she was a Nazi?

Yeah, that was one thing, again, my mother said that she usually didn't say anything. I wonder who of the two of you has no character. We weren't really friends, but we did compete for the school.

Can you talk about the first instance that you could remember of any of your classmates becoming involved with the Nazis?

I don't. And I can't remember that anything against me. I can't remember at school. I don't remember it really.

But did you notice the first time someone was started wearing Nazi swastikas?

Oh yes, the moment I saw somebody wearing a swastika, I put on the Three Arrows, and that was that. I can't remember about discussions or what happened. That I don't remember. I just know that I was determined to prove that.

OK. Let's get then to your first awareness of the Nazis coming in. You were still--

[AUDIO OUT]

--at that time. That I have to know too. Because to me, this is as important.

OK.

OK. I wanted Louise just to go back a little bit to talk about, and if you can remember when you first noticed this one girl or other students wearing the swastika. Can you--

It's very strange that I just cannot really recollect. I just know about one, because we had been friends before. And the rest I just don't remember. How many there were with swastikas. I don't think there were too many. That may sound strange, but I was rather liked at school. And I think they didn't want to provoke a lot. I represented the school in all sports, in many sports, and they didn't want to give that up. I also was, in spite of it, a good student which doesn't usually go together.

And so they tried to not to do too much against me.

How were the teachers? Were the teachers Jewish, or were they--

No, no. And I did not feel too-- I did not feel bad about it. There was one I was convinced she was a Nazi. I was so

convinced because I almost failed in French. And I thought, and later I found out that she was half Jewish, and maybe that's why. It had nothing to do with it. I found that out much later, after I left. And I was convinced that she was a Nazi. But otherwise I cannot really complain. I have no recollection about it.

OK, and your uncle, could you give us his name? You said your uncle went to Dachau. What was his name? He had still a Hungarian name. My family originally came from Hungary, a very difficult name. The first name is Andor. That is not so difficult. And the second is Sekley.

Can you spell that?

S-C-E-L-E-Y. No, there's a K in it. I don't know. S-E-K-L-E-Y.

And what do you remember about first hearing about your uncle going to Dachau?

I did not hear for a long time because I went to England, and then it was difficult to correspond. And I think my mother didn't want to tell me. I did correspond with her. And I had everything ready to bring her over at one time. But she passed away in between. She didn't tell me that she wasn't well. And she did let me know that my uncle was in Dachau. She just wrote about it. And his son-in-law was in the same camp. But by letter, I only heard it by letter.

How did your mother know? Do you know how your mother knew that he went to Dachau?

No. No, and you couldn't write so easily. It was censored. A lot of things were censored. People didn't dare to write everything, very little actually.

And how long did this correspondence keep up with your mother in Vienna?

Well, she passed away just for a short time. About a year or two, a year, no, it was only a year.

Which would have been?

'39. It was just before war broke out. She passed away before the war broke out. How did you know that? How did you know that she did?

I got a letter from my aunt, from my great aunt. And she wrote to me about it by letter.

Do you know what happened with your great aunts at all? Do you have any--

Yes. One, they took her. She was in her almost 80s. They took her to prison. And they wanted her to sign the house away which was partly my own. And she refused. I heard that many years later, she was not going to sign because she thought she wanted to keep it for me. I was terribly upset when I heard about it, because I thought this is absolutely insane that she stayed in prison for my sake.

And my mother had a brother in Yugoslavia. And he came and got her out of prison, and took her to Yugoslavia. I heard all that much later. I don't know if she did-- 0 I don't know. I think he made her sign. He also thought it was insane, the whole thing.

And then what happened to them? Did you hear?

My uncle went underground and passed away. And my aunt also passed away. And I think she was-- she stayed for a while in Czechoslovakia. And she was very old.

So are there any relatives left from Vienna?

Yes, I have a first cousin, who is still in Vienna. As a matter of fact, she was married on May 1, it would have been 61

years that she was married. Her husband passed away four days before that. I heard that last week. It was quite-- I got a cable that was.

Did your cousin stay in Vienna throughout the war?

No. She, her husband, and her son went to Israel. And they came back to Vienna.

And what happened during the war? Was she in Vienna during the war?

No. She was in Israel.

Oh, so she--

She was in Israel. She left for Israel. And they came back much later.

I see.

And she lives there now.

I see. OK. Let's get into London then. And tell us about your experiences when you were in London.

In London? Well, I don't know how good a servant I was at the beginning because I didn't know too much. But I did. I even did some cooking there which they thought was pretty good and I had never done before. And then it wasn't very long that we went to North Wales. And it was a very big family. And they had a summer house in North Wales. And they used it a week at a time, each family. When war broke out, all the children and I think there were 14 of them, stayed in the same house. And there were only three adults. And I was one of them.

One mother, two mothers of the children. And a husbands stayed in London. They came at the weekend. So there were three people who looked after the children. I was one. And the oldest child was not much younger than I am. So we became very great friends. And we still are. And the little girl I used to look after, she was five years. We became the best of friends. And we still are. And her children have come over here. And I looked after them. She came here, to here I mean by now USA, in New York. And we were friends. We became very great friends and we still are.

And the mother who is now, both mothers, the two mothers, are in their 80s. But they really, they are like my parents. And I go to England quite often, quite frequently to visit them. In fact, this is the first year I haven't been there. Because it's a bit far from here. I stay with them and I'm like one of the family.

And what happened when the war broke out? Can you remember as a Jewish person in London what was your reaction?

I was glad that something happened. I was very glad about that.

About what?

That there was a war against the Nazis. I lived in North Wales. And we stayed in North Wales. And we stayed there. So I actually in the beginning, knew very little about the war. It was peaceful there and quiet, which actually I thought that is wrong, I should do something. And I did eventually go to London, because I felt I had to do something. I left the people. I went to London, and I volunteered. I worked in a secret scheduled war factory until the war was over.

And then the American army came to England, and recruited people who knew German. And I did volunteer immediately. I had to pass quite a difficult test, and they accepted me. And I went with the American army to Germany. And I stayed. I was stationed in also American towns, and near Frankfurt, near Esslingen, near Munich in camps. I was in censorship division.

And I had one dream I had for a long, long time. I wanted to go in American uniform to Vienna. It was so deep in me. I

had to do it. I did not get permission to do it, because I was born in Austria. I was not permitted to go there. But I did go anyway. And I had an aunt and uncle. The uncle came out of camp. I don't know. He was not in camp anymore. This uncle and my aunt, they lived in Vienna.

The one from Dachau?

The one from Dachau.

Survived?

Survived. And I went to there. It was very funny. I did get to Vienna. And I went to their home. And somebody rang the bell and two American soldiers rang the bell, and my uncle called. They were startled to see me. I was officer's rank, and they couldn't understand how I was there. So I talked to them. I don't know what they wanted from my uncle.

And then I went back. And on the train, I had a sleeper. And on the train back to Germany on the border, the Russians took me off the train, because I had no permission to be on that train. It was at the ends bridge. The bridge on one side was the Russians. On one side was the Americans. It was divided. And I was taken off the train. I was in pajamas. And I had to put something on. That was something I'll never forget.

I knew one word of Croatian which means [NON-ENGLISH] it means in translation, I don't love you. And they burst out laughing. And they couldn't believe it. And I was very calm apparently. I was sick inside. But they took me to headquarters. And I don't know. Somehow when I said that, they all laughed and they said they took me. They walked me. The train had left across the bridge to the American sector. They walked me across the bridge. They handed me over to the American MPs. And then they looked at me. They were mad with me.

I said, don't say anything until the Russians have gone. Actually, they were nicer to me. And the MPs, they were furious. They said, how could you go on that train without permission? And the train was there, and they said, well forget it. Get on the train. And the train left. The train had been waiting. It was a very, very bad experience for me. I made it, apparently being calm and laughing. But I was not that calm. And I thought I was going to have a court martial but somehow they forgot about that too.

What happened when you got back to your unit?

To Vienna?

Well, to your unit?

Well back to my unit? I don't know no. No, it wasn't reported. It wasn't reported. They didn't report it. I kind of-- I don't know I talked them out of it I think. It was not reported. And it was forgotten.

How did you feel when you went into Vienna?

I thought I would be deliriously happy to be there as an American officer. It wasn't quite as wonderful as I thought. I went to our old apartment, which we had. And I rang a bell. They wouldn't let me in, and they recognized me. I apparently looked very much like my mother at that time. I was about the age my mother was when I came back. They wouldn't let me in. And then suddenly, a door opened. An American officer came out. And he saw me and he said, what are you doing here? I said it used to be my apartment.

So he said, well, come on in. So they were upset, the people. I didn't know why. But he asked me to come in. And I saw that all our furniture, everything was still there, which I told my uncle. And then he got it away from them later. I got some money for it.

Who was living in your apartment?

Some people who just took it, some Austrians. They took the apartment when nobody was there. Just--

And they said nothing of use is here. And if the officer wouldn't have lived there, would have taken me in, and he said, just make yourself at home, which was strange, of course. So I did get some things back. I mean back, I got some money back. My uncle took them to court.

That must have been '47 I think.

And how did you find out your uncle had survived Dachau, and had gotten--

Oh, we were-- I don't know how we got together. But we were in correspondence. And whilst I was in the army, he came to Salzburg with his wife once. And there I could go, somehow. I don't know. I was there. We met in Salzburg. Somebody gave me a ride. I always got a ride. I just thumbed my way through all of Germany when I was in uniform.

And I was in Salzburg with them before I went to Vienna. I don't know that was American zone, so I could go there. Only I couldn't go through the Russian zone.

And when you were in Vienna at that time, and did you find your uncle and aunt very easily?

Yes. They were in the same place where they used to live. And of course, I pretended I spoke the language, of course. So I had no problem. I had no problem.

Did you see any of your friends or acquaintances?

Not at the time. But I have my aunt was a quite well-known pianist. Later, she played on the radio in Vienna. And my school friend saw her name and contacted her. And we got in touch later. And we are still friends. In fact, she has been calling me in Hawaii twice already.

Is she a Jewish friend?

No. But her father was a police president of Vienna. And they have lived underground for a long time. And after the Nazis left, he was put back into the same position. On that day, he had a heart attack and died. After he lived through all of the Nazis.

She is not Jewish, but well definitely she was definitely no Nazi.

And you're still friends? That's wonderful.

Friends, yes. Yes.

So did you feel uncomfortable at all about your uncle and aunt staying in Vienna after all of this happened?

No. No. I didn't. It was different than I thought I would feel when I went to Vienna. As I say, I had dreams of walking in as an American officer. But it wasn't all that wonderful really. I don't know. Somehow, and I wanted it so much.

No, my aunt and uncle seemed quite contented. So that also helped, of course.

What was your feeling? Why did you want to walk in as an American officer?

I felt that all what they have done, I wanted to-- I don't know. I thought the Austrians have not behaved well. And I don't know. It was just something I had to do, I wanted to do. I wanted to prove that they were wrong, and I was there now in a different way.

Did you go to Baden at all?

Oh every time, whenever I go to Vienna, and oh, I have now in USA, I have worked for the airlines. So I have had no problem traveling. And I have been almost every year in Vienna. And I always go to Baden, because well, the people haven't been too bad to me there. And it is a beautiful town, a small spa. But it is lovely, and I just love the countryside. So I always go there for the day or usually just for the day.

Well, let's get back to your being with the occupation forces in Germany. Yeah. Could you tell us a little bit about your experiences there?

Well, first of all, we lived in a compound. And it was kind of strange. You couldn't really, we are not supposed to go outside the compound. We lived inside. But I was very spoiled there, because I had officers rank. And I had a personal maid. I had my own room there. And when I walked in, I don't think she cared for me much. Of course, she was German. But I walked in, and she put water in my bathtub. And I just threw my clothes around, and she would wash it. And when I left the army, it was hard afterwards.

What was your feeling toward the German maid?

I disliked everybody in Germany. But I couldn't-- I'm sure she disliked me too. But there was nothing. We just were polite. That was it, just polite to each other.

Did you have much contact with the German populace when you were there?

No, not at all, not at all. The strange thing was that one of my colleagues, they had Danish people there, quite a few Danish people. She was a descendant of Goethe. And her family lived in Germany, and just about outside the compound. And she got there a few times, a great aunt. It was several generations back. But we were great friends. And so I did meet her family. That was very strange. And it was just outside. I don't know how we got in and out. I can't remember that. But we did visit.

And that was near Frankfurt?

That was near Frankfurt.

Did you get to Dachau or to Bergen-Belsen, any of the--

Yeah, I did. I went with a girlfriend. We hitchhiked. We always hitchhiked. That was the thing to do. We hitchhiked and we got to Dachau fairly late in the evening. And they told us that the people who were in Dachau, and also guards, but then it gets dark. They just shoot at people who walk around. But I don't know. It was a strange feeling. They were very grim people.

But we insisted on going in, and we walked. We didn't talk. It was the strangest feeling ever. I don't know. We walked through Dachau, and without talking. We were there about an hour and a half. And I don't think we talked for an hour afterwards either. I know my uncle was there, and my cousin was there. And I don't know. That was a friend of mine, she now lives in Los Angeles, we still sometimes talk about it. But it was very strange.

This is the friend who went into Dachau with you?

Yeah.

She was Jewish also?

Yes, yes. From Vienna, Jewish, and we were in the army together. There were several. In fact, there were quite a few people from Vienna.

That were in the American army?

Yes.

Did you go to any other camps at all?

No. That was the only one.

How far were you from Dachau from where the compound was?

I can't remember. I don't remember that. But quite a distance and we would hitchhike. It was quite a trip. We never had problems. We always got rides.

Did your uncle tell you anything about his experiences in Dachau?

No. no. He never talked about it. No.

Never talked about it?

Never talked about it, no.

You never talked about with your uncle about--

No. It was just forgotten. In fact, I have talked very little about anything until now. Just cut it out of my life somehow. I don't know.

You didn't talk with any of your friends or--

No.

Any of your other relatives?

He wants--

Is it time?

No you have about another minute and a half.

Do you have--

She wants [? outside. ?]

Did you talk with any of your friends or any--

Not too much, we didn't. No. No. We never talked too much about any of the experiences.

When you met with your friends in the American army who were also Jewish from Vienna, did you discuss any--

No. We lived for the moment at the time in the army. When we went to Dachau, but even then we didn't discuss too many past things. We didn't.

And did your friend's parents survive, do you know, your girlfriend that you went to Dachau with?

Her father survived. Yes, and I don't know. I think he was in camp, and came out of it.

I see. And did anyone in the American army when you were there talk about the concentration camps or was there any discussion that you can remember?

Well, yes. We did talk, of course, all the Germans at the time said nobody ever knew anything about anything. And we did talk. We said it is ridiculous that they didn't know. I mean we kept on talking about that. And I didn't want to have anything to do with Germans. Because I was sure that they knew about it, and they always would deny it, of course.

When you went into Dachau, what did you see there?

It wasn't too much to be seen anymore, really. It was just we walked through. And I don't even remember what we saw. It was just it was an eerie feeling. It was evening. It was dusk. And we were just I can't say exactly what it was. It was just strange.

[AUDIO OUT]

I think I was too serious. I usually smile and that is not me. I haven't smiled the whole time.

See, now you're getting-- just now we're getting to smile a lot. I wanted to talk a little bit about if you want to finish up with your experiences in the American occupation army in Germany, anything else you can remember, anything specific?

Well, I can only tell you one thing. I had a wonderful time there. And I don't know. I sent letters. And that was, of course, very strange also, to read also mail. That was one. I was for two years. And I can't-- I was young and I had a lot of fun. And it was great. We had I had officer's rank. We had wonderful food. We had for the first time in my life, I saw Bob hope. I'll never forget it. We had all the shows there. There was constant entertainment. Anywhere we went we had rest homes. I skied a lot. I was horseback riding, whenever I had. We had a train I know this is-- that's just what we did.

Was there any reaction to your being Jewish at that time in Germany?

Oh, no. Well, I didn't talk to the people. And in the army, of course, no. I didn't talk to German people.

And the Americans?

No, no. There were so many Jewish people in that army. I don't know. No, the army, the officers they weren't Jewish, no, no.

And how did you come to the United States?

I had applied a long time ago. You have to have an affidavit to come here. I had become a British citizen. And I forgot about that I requested to come here, as a matter of fact. And suddenly my affidavit came up. And I was quite happy in England. And I have a cousin here, a second cousin, but we were very close because we had very little family. I mean that was the family. And he said you of all people who likes traveling why on Earth don't you come and find out how you like it. That appealed to me.

I worked at the time in a travel agency in London already. It was very hard to get here, because you couldn't get passage. It was in '52. It was still very difficult.

You got out of the American army in what year '48. And from '48 to '52, I worked, that's another story. But that's too long. Somebody suggested I should work in a travel agency, because I love traveling. I worked in London in a travel agency. I took people to Austria at the time as a tour guide.

How did you feel about that?

The country is beautiful, and I love skiing. So I took people skiing, English and American people, I took them skiing to

the mountains in Austria.

Did you talk about your experiences as a child in Vienna?

Not too much, no. Well they knew I was born there, but no. I was with them, and I seldom. Of course I did speak German, and I did talk to local people sometimes. But no.

Did the Americans that you took there know that you were Jewish?

Oh, yes, of course. Yes. Yes, everybody. Whenever they wanted to know, I told them, yes, surely. And so I did. I did come. Yes, and so I said, OK. I worked in the travel agency. Nobody could get a passage. And I got three offers because I knew all the people for a ship to come over. So I said, all right. I came with The Liberte. I booked my own passage. I booked everything. And so I came here for one year, just for one year to try it out. And I wasn't too happy in the beginning. It took a while. I soon got a job with American Express, pretty soon because I had some experience.

And soon afterwards, I got a job with Sabena Airlines.

This is in New York?

In New York. And I have been working with Sabena for 30 years until my retirement. I took tours. I've been all over the world several times. I have been everywhere. I don't think there are many places I haven't been to. And I stayed on. I stayed on. I came for a year and I stayed on.

And of course, I have been to Hawaii quite a few times. In fact, I thought I would come to Hawaii. I never stopped in Hawaii on my way to the Orient. Whilst I worked with Sabena, twice a year I got a free ticket anywhere in the world I wanted to go. So I figured I'd go as far as possible. And I went through Hawaii a few times. And then suddenly I thought, well, I went everywhere. And I liked the climate here. I like mountains still. My love for mountains from Austria is in me. And I love the ocean. I love swimming. And I like the climate, so I decided that was the place to retire to.

I came several times since the last few years, until I decided this is it. And I'm here now, not too long. But I'm here. And I like it. I'm happy. And do you do you go to the Austrian club festivity activities at all in Hawaii?

I didn't even know it existed.

Yeah, there's an Austrian club here. Actually, some of the Jewish people do go on.

I met two or three, but I haven't-- I came here for good. And I was introduced to Oceanic Cablevision and that was interesting to me, and I didn't try anything else. I was studying for it. And I really didn't want to do anything. And I had to find a place to stay.

Well, I have a few other questions that we wanted to ask.

Have you been receiving any restitution from Germany?

Yes. Not actually restitution. I get money for having worked. I worked for about four months there. That's all. But it was a-- I don't know. They had me on an interrupted work. So I get like a Social Security.

And what about from Austria?

That is from Austria.

Oh, from Austria.

And has there been any reparations or anything for what was taken?

No. No. Oh yes, that was a long time ago for the furniture. I got money. It was just enough I took a trip to Capri and spent it in one month. That was me. What about the house in Baden? I don't know. It was supposed to be-- I don't know. The Russians were there afterwards. So I don't know what happened. I was not there. I could have claimed it. And I didn't, and I don't know what happened.

OK. Have you experienced any antisemitism since the Nazi experience at all during World War II?

In Austria?

Anywhere?

No. Personally I have not felt it too much, no. I have never felt it too much. And if it ever came up, I was fighting for it. I would never underline that I'm Jewish. And maybe because I don't look particularly Jewish, I did not have any problems. And if it came up, then I would tell them what I thought of everybody, and I would go into an argument. But only if it came up, I wouldn't start it.

What about in Austria? Have you ever--

Now?

Yes.

I have a lot of friends there, quite a lot of friends. I've met some other school friends and half Jewish people I met. And the rest of the people I haven't talked to. I don't know.

In Austria?

Yeah. My cousin, of course they lived there and they are quite contented and so I stayed with them. I don't meet the people.

And is there anything that I know you have no children. But is there anything that you feel we should tell the American people about the experiences?

Yes, just to tell them that it existed. That we suffered. That everybody suffered, and that they should believe it, and not think it isn't true. Because I've heard again and again that it is all talked about.

What have you heard?

Oh, that there were no concentration camps. People didn't suffer.

Who told you that.

I heard it, now just on television, and sometimes people say it. Oh, not true. I want them to know that it is true. That is all.

Did you hear this in Austria at all? Did people say in Austria and Germany that it was not?

No. But I have a friend. She is half Jewish. In fact, we lived in the same house in Vienna. And she came here. And after the war, she took an apartment in Vienna, a condominium. She lives half the time in New York, half the time in Vienna. And she said recently, especially because of war time, she goes there quite often. She feels very uncomfortable. I stayed with her when she's in. She stays a few months in Austria, a few months in New York. And she says recently she feels very uncomfortable.

Why is that?

Since Waldheim there. Since Waldheim, here so people don't know that much about it. But Waldheim maintained that he never has been a Nazi. He is now the president in Vienna. And there's a lot of friction now. I understand that there is again antisemitism. And my girlfriend said she feels uncomfortable. I have been there one month last year and a few times I thought it wasn't too good, but then I haven't talked to too many people. She's not happy now. And she said she can finally understand why I'm not happy here now when I stayed with her.

Anything else you'd like to tell us before we turn off?

Nothing special, except that people should believe it existed, all existed and is true.

Thank you very much, Louise.