This is tape two, side A. What information do you have about your father's experience?

Really none because all my mother had papers and conversation with survivors that have seen my father in Auschwitz.

They have not seen him going either to the gas chamber, or they have seen him because he was a spiritual leader despite what was going on.

He thought, I was told-- that he told them, eat what you can. Do what you can.
Pray in your own way, and have faith.

He was a good man.

He believed in people.

He was an optimist.

He had a tremendous sense of humor, which maybe I inherited, and I'm glad.

My father was the man who couldn't see bad in anything.

He had a good marriage with my mother.

He was well-liked by his mother-in-law.

They were proud of him.

My grandfather, his father-in-law,
was a wine merchant near Westerburg, Germany. He was the-- because he was an educated person. The others were all businessmen, and he was the best-liked of them all. My mother was a strict disciplinarian. I had no fear of my father. I could talk to him when I was scared. My mother-- I had fear. In my dreams at night, I still see my father walking the other night, walking with me in the park.
And this is so funny.

That doesn't make sense.

I had a dream my father was walking with me on a Jewish holiday.

I don't know if it was Pesach or if it was Sukkot I have no idea.

It was not Yom Kippur.

We were walking in the park after shul,

and my father was smoking a cigar.

And another Jewish fellow came to him and said, Herr Lehrer,

you don't smoke on yontef.

And he said to him, I did not light the cigar myself.
I can smoke on yontef.

That is-- it did happen, but I saw it again.

And these things are not going away.

I came to this country--

When did you arrive?

--in 1947.

What month?

June 13, I think.

And you came with--

I came on about called SS America, paid

for by my mother's uncle in Argentina,

a rich uncle with money who paid for the affidavit and all
this stuff, and he-- with my mother and my brother.

The three of you?

Yeah.

My brother is the one that learned to speak English in Switzerland, and he ordered on, Friday nights, a meal which came, bacon and eggs.

That was-- he knew about English.

These are little things that I remember.

Anyway, we came to the country.

We had a little storm and stood outside of the Harbor in New York.

We were supposed to come in six days.
We came in seven days.

And at night it's a beautiful sight outside of New York.

I had no idea where the Statue of Liberty was.

Did you know any English?

Me?

Chair, ceiling, boy, girl.

No idea.

The first words I learned in this country were bad words, which we're not supposed to use.

And we arrived--

So the Statue of Liberty-- did that mean anything?
Yeah, they told us, this is a Statue of Liberty.

What do I know?

I was more interested in the lights going down the Hudson West Side Highway.

I never seen so many lights flickering.

This was-- and I made the acquaintance with an English young woman on the boat,

and we were standing there, holding hands.

That was my--

I was 21 years old.

And when we came here, there were

people standing at the pier.
I think it was pier 32 in New York.

And the first thing they said, like they all do--

and they have done it before and do it again--

forget the past, forget about it.

That's easy to say.

Now.

I'm 21 years old.

They drove me through New York and showed me the tall buildings, which I didn't want to see because I was more interested in the girls on the street by this time.
And I had an uncle here who was with me, who came through, and he says, you leave the American girls alone.

If you kiss the girls here, you have to marry them.

Anyway, I came here, and everyone said, forget your past.

And I have not spoken about this until 1985. Yes, but not in public or anything.

I think Rabbi Schlosberg, my rabbi, my boss--

he convinced me to speak about Kristallnacht.

At one [INAUDIBLE] we observed Kristallnacht.

That was the 45th or 50th.
Anyway, we had--

Did you speak with your mother and your brother about your experiences after you--

My mother-- she didn't remember everything because she lost memory.

My brother lived with my mother, never got married.

He died in a car accident in 1970 outside of Indianapolis, the same day I had a child that also died that same day.

But anyway, I have survived, and I'm not in bad shape as far as mentally.

But I have, like Rabbi Schlosberg and other people
told me-- that I have an obligation to spread the word.

Reluctantly, I do this.

Now I get a satisfaction of speaking to people in the hinterlands of the Midwest.

You're not talking about New York, Washington, Chicago, or Detroit.

We are talking about where I live, where a Jew is still seen with horns, that I get a satisfaction out of speaking to schools and tell them not necessarily in my life but what a Holocaust can do to you because many of these kids, parents don't believe the Holocaust happened.
It's everywhere.

00:08:29,450 --> 00:08:33,429
When I talk-- I remember one school.

00:08:33,429 --> 00:08:38,200
I talk about the STEN gun I had in the Maquis.

00:08:38,200 --> 00:08:40,750
The kids write me letters afterwards,

00:08:40,750 --> 00:08:43,030
which are very interesting.

00:08:43,030 --> 00:08:48,550
None is alike because I asked the teacher that the kids write

00:08:48,550 --> 00:08:51,470
something about the speech.

00:08:51,470 --> 00:08:52,780
Some of them go over.

00:08:52,780 --> 00:08:55,420
Some of them don't.

00:08:55,420 --> 00:09:02,770
One of them, a kid writes, I like Mr. Marx's talk about guns

00:09:02,770 --> 00:09:04,690
because I love guns.

00:09:04,690 --> 00:09:08,110
The kid is 10 years old or 12 years old.

00:09:08,110 --> 00:09:13,210

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media. It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.
We shoot every Sunday, and I love to play with guns.

Well, my mission wasn't done.

I had one experience in one high school, spoke to 200 juniors, seniors, and exchange students from Switzerland, Germany, and Poland, I think, it was.

And I told them.

My message there is different than when I tell you my story.

My message is, it shouldn't happen ever again because it can.

A young woman from Germany comes to me.

I want to show you something.

Do you speak German?
I said, yeah, but speak to me in English.

This is America.

I can speak English.

I want to show you something.

She opens her purse and shows me the picture of her grandfather in an SS black uniform with all kinds of ribbons.

Proudly she showed me this picture.

What shall I do?

I had enough-- how do you say that in English,

联系 reference@ushmm.org 了解更多信息。

这是一个忠实转录的口头表达，由3Play Media生成。

它不是主要来源，可能包含拼写或准确性的错误。
to walk away, not to get involved with this child

00:10:38,620 --> 00:10:40,750
because they don't--

00:10:40,750 --> 00:10:41,920
and I tell this to people.

00:10:41,920 --> 00:10:44,420
They says, you should have taken the picture and tear it up.

00:10:44,420 --> 00:10:47,410
That's not the answer, but it did happen.

00:10:47,410 --> 00:10:51,620
These experiences are still out there,

00:10:51,620 --> 00:10:56,470
that a 17, 18-year-old young woman

00:10:56,470 --> 00:10:58,180
is proud to have that picture.

00:10:58,180 --> 00:11:00,700
She probably doesn't know what that man did.

00:11:00,700 --> 00:11:02,215
He probably killed a few hundred.

00:11:02,215 --> 00:11:05,935

00:11:05,935 --> 00:11:07,890
What did you do professionally?
And did you go back to school when you got here?

Did you continue?

Here I went to work.

I worked in a delicatessen in Indianapolis.

I made sandwiches in the window because I couldn't talk.

How did you end up in Indianapolis?

We had an uncle.

My mother had eight brothers and sisters.

One of them was here, and he wouldn't hire me

in his business because I couldn't speak English.

He couldn't either, and his name was John Steinberger.

And he died since, and he is
the one who gave me that ring.

201
00:11:46,730 --> 00:11:48,590
How long did you stay in Indianapolis?

202
00:11:48,590 --> 00:11:52,610
I stayed in Indianapolis in 1959.

203
00:11:52,610 --> 00:11:59,480
Then I got married, and I worked in the delicatessen.

204
00:11:59,480 --> 00:12:05,990
And I got fired because I wanted more money.

205
00:12:05,990 --> 00:12:08,750
I was tending bar and go to school

206
00:12:08,750 --> 00:12:11,840
at night at Indiana University.

207
00:12:11,840 --> 00:12:18,080
I didn't get a degree, but I went to business school

208
00:12:18,080 --> 00:12:27,140
because a long, long relative cousin picked me

209
00:12:27,140 --> 00:12:30,950
up and made me work for him.

210
00:12:30,950 --> 00:12:32,600
His name was Max Reese.

211
00:12:32,600 --> 00:12:35,780
I don't know if you ever heard that name before, Reese Finer
Foods.

He died since, too.

And I worked for him, and then I worked for his competitor.

I was in the food business.

I was in the--

I was moved to Minneapolis, and there I became part-time cantor.

on Friday.

I was home Friday, Saturday, Sunday,

got acquainted with--

because my background from home, from the seminary,

from the school in Paris, and the encouragement
of Rabbi Sacks in Minneapolis, who was a lousy shofar blower.

When I heard that, I says, give it to me,

and I've been blowing the shofar ever since.

But I became their cantor on Friday and Shabbat,

and there was no money.

And then I was moved to Dayton, Ohio, where

I did my voluntary services for the Wright Patterson Force base

on Friday nights and Saturday mornings.

I was divorced from my first wife

because I spent too much time on weekends instead of
with the children with the--

what she called me-- she came from a very formed environment.

She called me a religious nut, and I shouldn't have done it.

We didn't get along anymore on account of that.

I came to Louisville, Kentucky in 1978 because I wanted to settle down, not travel anymore,

and there was no opportunity for opening up a gourmet delicatessen food store, which I was knowledgeable.

And it didn't go over.

Rabbi [? Cling ?] from the congregation [INAUDIBLE]
said, we need a religious director.

247
00:14:47,700 --> 00:14:49,350
What's a religious director?

248
00:14:49,350 --> 00:14:52,990
A religious director is a glorified [INAUDIBLE]...

249
00:14:52,990 --> 00:14:54,270
I says, what is my job?

250
00:14:54,270 --> 00:14:57,930
He says, anything that I don't want to do, you do it.

251
00:14:57,930 --> 00:15:01,560
And I have been there ever since.

252
00:15:01,560 --> 00:15:03,360
Can we talk a little bit before we end about your feelings and your reflections.

253
00:15:03,360 --> 00:15:05,880
You had said that you have this sense of optimism

254
00:15:05,880 --> 00:15:08,700
that you probably inherited from your father.

255
00:15:08,700 --> 00:15:11,370
What else kept you going through these terrible times in the war?
Anything else besides that?

Well, one.

How can anyone believe six million, five million, four million, one million-

impossible.

OK, so they're put in a camp, don't get much to eat,

but killing?

How can-- and I was a young punk who loved life,

and I don't know.

I still do.
At the age of 70, I still believe that I'm one of the luckiest people in the world, and this is what I tell the people. What kept me alive is-- I don't know, but I wanted to stay alive because-- I don't want to be a saint or anything, but I hope the next day is better than the one yesterday. When Rabbi Kushner says bad things happen to good people, look, I'm not good people. Bad things happen anyway.
Bad things can happen to anyone, and not everybody is good.

It's easy to say.

Bad things happened to six million.

They were all good people.

And you asked me a while ago.

My father had a big influence on me despite that I only knew him for a few years.

And my love for him--

I don't know how.

Children ask me-- and this is what I say at the end--

why do you still believe in God?

I keep a kosher home.
I'm not what you call an Orthodox Jew.

I wear a kippah when I go to the Holocaust Museum.

I am not a fanatic.

As a child, I wore a tallit katan.

As a child, we were a very firm home.

The question is, why do I still believe in God?

The answer is, why not?

And that's me.

You were talking about the fact that you still had dreams about those times.
And in any other way has the Holocaust affected your everyday life?

Oh, I was told that I get very emotional at the time of Yom HaShoah, and I found out that other people are in the same boat, that it is amazing.

There is a scar.

We all have scars, and this scar maybe healed, but it's there.

Why did it take 50 years to get a Holocaust Museum?

All of a sudden--

in 1950, nobody wanted to talk about it.

Was America ashamed of it?
Maybe they should have, maybe not.

I'm not a politician, but America should have done more. And they know it.

All of a sudden, and not necessarily all of a sudden,

in the last 10 years or so, the stories come about.

There's a lot of people, myself, who--

I didn't mention what I saw when we were running from the Germans, that the Messerschmitts up there were shooting it at civilians running away from Paris.

We just saw people getting killed and bloody stuff
on the way to Limoges.

330
00:19:42,590 --> 00:19:46,570

It's impossible to explain these things.

331
00:19:46,570 --> 00:19:50,780
There are no witnesses to it.

332
00:19:50,780 --> 00:19:52,970
There are just those who survived.

333
00:19:52,970 --> 00:19:55,590
And they didn't want to talk.

334
00:19:55,590 --> 00:19:56,840
I know people that were in the same boat as I am.

335
00:20:01,590 --> 00:20:05,120
I met them out in Los Angeles.

336
00:20:05,120 --> 00:20:07,530
They didn't want to talk about it.

337
00:20:07,530 --> 00:20:10,160
They have a new life.

338
00:20:10,160 --> 00:20:11,610
Some of them went to school.

339
00:20:11,610 --> 00:20:14,270
Some of them became very wealthy.

340
00:20:14,270 --> 00:20:16,790
Some of them did well.
I don't know if they have done their share to Judaism or not because if I win the lottery tomorrow, that's another story.

But I think we have now and I realize--

and like I said, I'm not a good guy.

I'm not a saint.

We now have an obligation to spread the word.

And as a school--

I'll tell you, the teacher is waiting for me over there now in a little county.

She says I am her-- and she's
a very devout Christian.

354
00:20:50,570 --> 00:20:51,740
I am the Jewish--

355
00:20:51,740 --> 00:20:55,390

356
00:20:55,390 --> 00:20:57,810
what do you call it, preacher?

357
00:20:57,810 --> 00:21:00,410
Prophet, messenger?

358
00:21:00,410 --> 00:21:03,115

359
00:21:03,115 --> 00:21:05,540
The man that goes around
and makes speeches, like--

360
00:21:05,540 --> 00:21:10,750

361
00:21:10,750 --> 00:21:13,478
what's the name of the
preacher that is on radio TV

362
00:21:13,478 --> 00:21:14,020
all the time?

363
00:21:14,020 --> 00:21:14,800
Billy Graham?

364
00:21:14,800 --> 00:21:17,210
Yeah, what is he called, a--

365
00:21:17,210 --> 00:21:18,970
Minister?

366
00:21:18,970 --> 00:21:19,990

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Angelical?

367 00:21:19,990 --> 00:21:22,900
Well, whatever, it is, a messenger,

368 00:21:22,900 --> 00:21:28,450
that I have-- and the teachers really appreciate that.

369 00:21:28,450 --> 00:21:31,870
You said you never wore a Jewish star.

370 00:21:31,870 --> 00:21:33,040
I was supposed to.

371 00:21:33,040 --> 00:21:34,030
When?

372 00:21:34,030 --> 00:21:36,970
I was supposed to wear it in France.

373 00:21:36,970 --> 00:21:38,515
And why did you not wear it?

374 00:21:38,515 --> 00:21:39,741
I ran away, didn't I?

375 00:21:39,741 --> 00:21:42,510

376 00:21:42,510 --> 00:21:44,370
What were your thoughts on the star?

377 00:21:44,370 --> 00:21:47,460
[INAUDIBLE] was the one that--

378 00:21:47,460 --> 00:21:49,530
my thoughts on it?
Well, I don't know.

I disguised myself as a Frenchman to survive.

Why should I put a thing on there and give myself away?

That was my--

Do you receive--

Now, in the camp, where I wore the [INAUDIBLE]----

I never understood that.

Why wear in the camp a [INAUDIBLE]??

So you did not even wear it?

No.

I never had to.

I never was forced to.
You never were forced to, you said.

I never were forced.

Do you receive reparations?

Oh, my mother-- she messed this up years ago, years ago for education.

We got a lump sum or something.

Now, my mother was--

financially, she was all right, and I tell you why.

My father was an employee of the German government.

The clergy was paid by the government until 1938,

and she now--

all these years that she was in a nursing home
was paid with the pension from the German government.

How do you feel about her having gotten money from Germany?

Should have gotten more.

Money doesn't pay lives.

A lot of people say that, but it's not true.

Money can do a lot of things.

And I know people who went back to Germany.

It's amazing how long Jewish people feel that way,

and they say "my hometown."

Uh-uh.

I have no hometown.

My hometown is where I live now, where I have a wife.
That's my hometown.

I hear people, going back to my hometown in Kassel, wherever they are.

That's not a hometown.

She never had a home.

She got chased out of there.

We have our own Jewish people buy Mercedes-Benz, of course,

and to me--

I said at one time, I says, I won't go with that Nazi car.

And the man was very upset about that, what I said.

Let them do what they want.

I don't want to go to Germany.
People went to Germany as guests of the German--

I vote for the heck of it.

I go to the town of Speyer.

I am Ernst Marx, son of Lehrer Marx, [INAUDIBLE] Marx.

And I hear that I'm not welcome in your city.

When shall I-- we intend to visit you next year.

I don't know.

We wrote it in German.

Anyway, I said, what is your-- what do you-- help us out financially.
The answer came.

My name is not Burgermeister.

My name is Ober Burgermeister [INAUDIBLE]..

And he says, I am 42 years old.

I do not know anything about the past.

Our town is not in the position to finance your trip.

However, you will always be welcome in our city,

Hochachtungsvol, very truly yours.

So I am-- no, a lot of people ask me, do I want to go back?

I went to Israel three times.

I went to Israel to pick up my mother, who was in Israel
and had another stroke in Israel.

I had to bring her back, first class on Lufthansa through Frankfurt.

This is the funniest thing.

And because El Al didn't have any room.

And went back on two trips with the synagogue.

to Israel as part I was at the Yad Vashem.

And I said Kaddish at the plane down there.

I think this was the highlight of my whole life.

We have a beautiful museum right over here, which is historical.
It's not for us, I think, our--

it's not a museum, a
memorial museum in Israel.

They're building
more, understand?

Is there anything else
you'd like to add?

No.

Well, thank you very much
for doing the interview.

What are you going to
do with this thing now?

What are you going to
do with this, sell it?

Thank you for doing
the interview.
This concludes the interview of Ernst Marx.

It took place on July 26, 1995 in Washington, DC.

It was conducted by Gail Schwartz on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.