

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins January 31, 1997 RG-50.106*0059

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.
This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

PREFACE

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

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

Transcribed by Patty Lopez, National Court Reporters Association.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

HUGH MONTFORT JENKINS

January 31, 1997

Question: This is United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Hugh Jenkins conducted by Margaret Garrett on January 31, 1997 in Washington, D.C. Tape one, side one. What was your name at birth?

Answer: My name at birth was Hugh Montfort Jenkins.

Q: And what was the date and place of your birth?

A: I was born on the 29th of December 1914 in Leicester, England.

Q: Would you talk some about your early childhood, your family, your growing up?

A: Well, I am the youngest son of a family of eight. And my father was a Baptist minister and I grew up in, mostly in England. I – I was born in Leicester and then we went to live in Luton when my father moved to another church. Then we went to London, and I was sent to a boarding school in Somerset. And --

Q: How old were you when you were sent to boarding school?

A: Oh, quite young. About ten or something like that. I went to one of these schools which is erroneously known as a public school, named as public school, but the public school in those days was a private --

Q: Excuse me --

A: What's that? Private boarding school. And so it was considered a very good thing, if you could afford it, to send your child to be at the boarding school, one of these boarding schools. And that's where I went.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

4

Q: Now, you were the youngest of eight?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were the older ones boys, girls?

A: Well, my eldest brother, my oldest two brothers were twins. And for reasons which I will never know, my father called them Lincoln and Garfield. Then I had two sisters, Myrtle and Iris. And then there were four boys, four more boys, Luke, David, Noel and me.

Q: And how much older than you were the twins?

A: Oh, 14 years older than I was.

Q: So there were eight children spread out over 14 years and mostly boys?

A: Yeah.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: And --

Q: And what was your father like?

A: He was a great man. He was a marvelous -- he was a Welshman and he was a wonderful speaker and he just had a, I guess, a very satisfactory career as a minister of different Baptist churches in England. And he was mildly active in politics, but not too much so. And he devoted himself a lot to his chapel and his family.

Q: And your mother?

A: My mother was also Welsh. Her name was Mary Elizabeth Peugh {ph}. And she was a very good singer. In fact, she and my father met, I think, when -- at a temperance meeting, you know, against drinking, where she was a soloist and he was a speaker. And that was in

Wales many, many years ago. And, well, she had a major job, obviously, was bringing up

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

5

a family. She had four children under three, twins and two more right off just after they were married. And then there was a gap and then four more, so she was busy. And she was also very active in the life of the church.

Q: So what was the atmosphere in your home like?

A: Very much family oriented. I want to divert, I think one of the great tragedies of today's life is the fact that so many kids grow up without families. I can't imagine not having grown up in a family, as part of a family. And, obviously, when I was -- by the time was five or six my oldest brothers had already gone off to university. But we all came back for Christmas, and I can still remember the family gatherings at Christmas and other special occasions. My two sisters ran a private school and two of my brothers also became ministers and the other brother was a businessman and then there was me. And, well, we lived through some difficult times. A minister's salary, I don't know about nowadays, but in those days was not very adequate. And we lived through First, when I was born in 1914, right at the beginning of the First World War, and so my father had to bring up eight children. And so we were all very busy. My sisters realized that being two ladies amongst -- two girls amongst -- with six boys, that unless they put their foot down very early on they would finish up by being kind of housekeepers. So we all had duties, somebody had to do the washing out, somebody else had to clean all the shoes, somebody else had to make the beds. And we were a fairly close-knit family.

Q: And did you have chores also?

A: Oh, yes, yes. You have to wash up. They say that the male members of my generation of our family were marvelous husbands because they all had this training from their sisters.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

6

Q: So even though you were the youngest, you had your chores to do?

A: Yes, Bible. And --

Q: So then you went away to school when you were ten. Did you want to go?

A: Yes, I think so. It was a -- it was a very good experience, one I wouldn't have missed.

It was a very tough experience because when you are at a boarding school away from your parents, a long way away from your parents, school discipline is quite tough, but as I say, I wouldn't have missed it. And then I -- when I came back to -- to when I finished school, I went into business and worked for a big international company, Kelly's Directory of Merchants, Manufacturers and Shippers of the World. And then I worked for one of the big building societies, I think they are called mortgage and loan societies here.

Q: What kind of work did you do for these companies?

A: Accountant, bookkeeping.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: And then the war came.

Q: Backing up a bit, how far did you go in school?

A: Oh, I went through -- I graduated from this public school. In those days, going to one of those schools was considered very adequate education. Some of the -- can I stop for a minute?

Q: Sure.

{Pause.}

Q: You were saying that you went about as far in school as was usual for that time?

A: For the kind of career that I had in mind. Several of my older brothers went to

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

7

university.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: But they went into the church or into teaching. But I went into business and then the war came and the --

Q: Now, you had been working for how many years before the war came?

A: Let's see, 19 -- about eight years in business.

Q: About eight years in --

A: My last job was in a town called Guildford in Surrey in England, and it was with the Abbey Road Building Society where I worked as a bookkeeper -- sorry --

Q: You were about 25 years old then when the war started?

A: Yes. And before the war started I had been involved somewhat with the Quakers and their work and the victims of the Spanish Civil War. And, in fact, my wife is a Basque from the north of Spain. When the Spanish Civil War broke out, the British government sent over a mission to bring over children from Spain to England to look after them while the war was going on. The idea was that it would be a temporary arrangement. And with every 40 children they sent one teacher. And they asked various cities all over England if they would take one group of these children. And the city where I was working, Guildford, said they would take a group. And they asked for volunteers, and I volunteered to help prepare the hostel where the kids were going to live. And then later they asked me if I would go and live in the hostel, because there were 40 children and two girls, two teachers, a teacher and a teacher's aid. And there were a lot of chores to do about the house, and

they wanted some manpower, so they asked me to go live in the house. I went to live in the

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

8

house and went to the office every day as usual.

Q: Now, was this your first association with the Quakers?

A: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: Had you done other kinds of volunteer -- other volunteer work similar to that previously?

A: No, no.

Q: But that had some special appeal to you?

A: Well, I was there, you know. The children came to Guildford, and then one of my friends was a Quaker, who was very much involved in developing this project. And he said, you know, we need somebody to help, how about it? And I said, fine.

Q: So it was through a friend in large part?

A: A friend, yes. So then also I had some kind of sympathy with the Quaker point of view. In fact, I was a conscientious objector during the war and worked on the land when I was called up, and had in the meantime registered with the Quakers as a volunteer for any work they wanted me to do. And in 1944 --

Q: Could you -- could we back up? Could you say a little bit more about the working on the land? You were called up for the Army and you said that you were a conscientious objector?

A: I went to the tribunal and they were very fair, I guess. They listened to what I had to say and their first response was, well, we think you are quite sincere, but wrong, and so you had better go work in the Army medical corps. And I said, no, I wouldn't do that because

that would mean I wouldn't be bearing witness that I was a conscientious objector because

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

9

I would be wearing a cocky uniform like everybody else and I wouldn't do that. And so then they went back and forth some more. And they came back and said, in that case you will work on the land. And I said, well, that's fine.

Q: So you did that in what capacity? Was it a government unit that you were with?

A: Well, no, they gave me so many days to find a job on the land.

Q: I see.

A: And I went to one of the local farmers and he looked at me in my office clothes and kind of grinned and he said, well, I disagree with you, but I need -- we need workers, and if you want to come and work for me, you can. But you are going to have to work as a -- just like a laborer. There is no fancy business. And so I did. I worked on the land and --

Q: Was that a difficult decision for you to make? To take that course?

A: Yeah, because -- because lots of people that I very greatly admired disagreed with me. My own family --

Q: Your family disagreed?

A: Well, they didn't support me. I mean, my brother-in-law was an officer in the Army and my brothers were both ministers at that time, and so that one of my brothers was working for the Navy. So I was the only one who became a conscientious objector and went to a tribunal and so forth. But the family were very supportive, again, they didn't agree with me, but that didn't affect their affection for me.

Q: Was there -- did you have anybody or any people who did agree with you and could support you with their agreement?

A: Well, of course, a lot of the Quakers were passivists. And on the land, I was working on

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

10

this big farm and there were quite a lot of other conscientious objectors all working on the land. And so that, well, you weren't entirely alone. On the other hand, there were a lot of people who very vehemently disagreed with us and didn't -- didn't bother to hide their feelings. Indeed, when I got married, in those days accommodation was very difficult and you were appointed places to live. That is to say, if you couldn't find a place -- and teachers had a priority. And my wife was teaching in the nursery school for little children, so she had a priority and she got a place, found a place. But when we went there, the landlady said -- looked at me and said I understand you are a conscientious objector, and I said yes. And she said, well, you're not going to live in my house. And so we had to go find somewhere else. But --

Q: So you did get a lot of hostility?

A: Yes, yes. Not a lot, but enough to make you realize that you were in an awkward position. And it was a difficult --

Q: Excuse me --

A: It was an awkward situation, after all. It was what everybody felt was a very just war. I felt the cause was just, I just didn't believe that war would ever answer it. And so that you are living in -- England was in a pretty rough position from the beginning, the first few years. It was very difficult. We had all sorts of, you know, military preparations for a possible invasion going on, so that kind of mindset. But I just went out and worked and did my job on the land. And in the meantime I had, as I said, registered with the Quakers that I was on their list of potential volunteers.

Q: Now, this was a list of volunteers who would go overseas?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

11

A: Yeah, anywhere. You see, I actually signed up during the Spanish Civil War, I would be a volunteer and I was going to Spain, but the war ended before -- before I got an assignment.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: And so then in 1944 they called me up.

Q: Excuse me. But somewhere along here you got married; is that right?

A: Yeah. It was very important, 1942 I got married.

Q: So that was after you were working on the land?

A: Yeah, after working on the land.

Q: I have to stop for a minute.

{Pause.}

Q: You were talking about that you got married in 1942?

A: Yeah.

Q: And that was while you were working on the land?

A: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: And your wife you met because she came with the children from the Spanish Civil War?

A: Yes.

Q: Was she a Quaker or --

A: No, no.

Q: But she was an assistant -- she was with the Quaker refugee effort?

A: No, she was just with the children.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

12

Q: Yes.

A: The mission for the children was arranged by the Basque government, and in conjunction with and in response to this invitation from England they would take these children. And so Juanita was just finishing her career, her education as a teacher, and so she volunteered to come with the children.

Q: Okay.

A: But it was -- she volunteered to the Basque government when they were looking for teachers to go with the children. And when the -- the end of the Spanish Civil War, when that home was closed down, and some of the children went back to Spain and some went to France where their parents were refugees, she became a teacher in an English nursery school, in a wartime nursery for children of mothers who were working in the factories. And this was in Guildford. And just near Guildford was the factory where they made the Churchill tanks. And there were a lot of women working there, so they had this nursery school right by the factory and she taught there. And so she was teaching there and I was working on the land. We -- at first we thought we would not get married till the war was over, but we had been engaged since 1939 or something, and by 1942 we decided why wait any longer, because there seemed to be no prospect the war was going to be over any quick moment. So we got married and I -- just after that in 1944, as I say, the Quakers got in touch with me and said they wanted me to come up to London to go to their training institute to work for -- to join the team that was to go and work in Europe. And so I did, I left the job in Guildford. And this was an acceptable alternative under the laws which

govern me being a conscientious objector, this was something I could do. And so I was

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

13

trained by the Quakers, very interesting experience.

Q: What was that like?

A: It was wonderful, because they did everything -- their objective was not to make you into a highly-skilled technician or anything like that, but to make you into a person who could cope with things without the usual facilities. So, I mean, they had the -- in the team there were social workers and people like that. But the training was more to teach you how to cope with new situations. So they had a lot of, kind of, make-believe. We lived in a big house in Hampstead and they would -- one day they would decide that this house was a refugee center and that thousands of refugees were coming out of Germany and they had to be taken care of. So half the team would be the people looking after the house and the other half of the team would be the refugees. And they were instructed to behave like people who are very desperate, who didn't trust anybody after their treatment in Germany, so they wouldn't want to be registered, they wouldn't want to have their names taken. And our job was to learn to try and cope with them and, yes, it was -- it sounds a bit odd, but it was really very useful. Another day they -- they said, well, we just had an air raid and there is no -- the house is being destroyed and so we have got to make do. And so we were shoved out in the garden. And in the garden there were just a few vegetables that have to be in the garden, and we were told to find a way of keeping ourselves alive for the day. We were told to dig up the potatoes and make some soup out of boxes because there were no stoves or anything. And so it was this idea of being on your own, having to do things that you had never done before, and not running away from the job. And that certainly was very useful.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

14

Q: Did you train with the team that you eventually worked with?

A: Yes.

Q: So you started together from the beginning?

A: Yeah, we started together as kind of a miscellaneous group, but then they gradually selected the people that were going to be on the team. And then we went on training as a team and we were supposed to go to Holland.

Q: Before we do that, as part of the training was religion a big part or any part of the training?

A: Quaker -- Quaker practices were part of the training. We went -- in our team, I think there were only two Quakers, people who were -- people who were members of a Friends Meeting. The rest of us were Baptists, Congregationalists, Jews and -- but we did have -- we started all our like team meetings, discussion groups, with a fairly long period of silence, which is, you know, the way the Quakers generally prepare themselves for -- in their religious service. So we were very much aware that we represented the Quakers and that we would be expected to behave like -- carry out the principles of the Friends. And this did -- this was an important factor because subsequently when we were working in Germany under the -- while the war was on, and afterwards and the occupation, there were times when what the military authorities wanted us to do and what the Quakers would think would be the appropriate thing to do weren't quite the same. And so we had to face up to that.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: Our typical job was housing, you know. In one town where we were, this is before

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

15

Belsen, in one town where we were, the Army billeted us on a house that belonged to a German family. And the technique was the family just had to leave and find their own place and the house was taken over by the occupation authorities. We didn't -- we realized that we had to be housed somewhere. We realized that the family that we were -- to whom the house belonged were obviously very unhappy about the whole situation. So we came to a compromise. So we -- two or three members of the family lived in the very top floor of the house, which we didn't have to use, and we took over the rest of the house so that we didn't feel that we were kind of being part of an action to take the property away from the family. Plus, obviously, the army would have given it back to the family eventually. But in the meantime they were very anxious to be able to keep some out of the place. That was only a little example. But we, actually, got on very well with the military authorities. They were very, very understanding of what we were doing, appreciative of what we were doing, because we did lots of jobs. Belsen was only one of many jobs.

Q: Could we go back to when you were called up --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- in 1944?

A: Yeah. Well, after the training we were assigned to go to Holland. And the idea was that probably in the fighting the dikes would be broken and the place would be flooded and they would need urgent, emergency relief. Well, as it happened, we never did go to Holland. We went to Belgium and we were working as kind of just relief work, as in Antwerp, doing all sorts of odd jobs, but kind of replacing the normal civic services which would be disrupted by the war, et cetera. And while we were there, we got a message

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

16

saying that we had to pack up our goods and be prepared to be on the road at six o'clock the next morning. Well, there were 12 of us in this team and we had been living in Antwerp doing odd jobs and we had our own headquarters.

Q: Men and women?

A: Men and women.

Q: And what age range?

A: I should think we were all in our mid 20s or early 30s. There was one woman who was I think in her mid 40s or perhaps even later than that. She was the oldest of the lot. But, you know, we kind of spread around in our lodgings and so on. And we, of course, had our own cooking things, field kitchen and all that kind of thing, and we were situated in a school that was our center of activity. And, you know, an empty school. And so it was some job to put all this stuff, get all our personal belongings and the team belongings and the team equipment and get it all packed up in our -- we had five vehicles attached to us, one ambulance -- two ambulances, one big truck and two small personnel trucks.

And we were on the road at six o'clock the next morning. And our destination after three days driving, I think it was two days driving, was Belson. And we didn't know we were going -- we knew we were going to a camp somewhere in Germany. And we arrived at Belson about four or five days after the camp being uncovered. So it was all just like it was, 10,000 unburied dead.

Q: It is almost time to change the tape, so maybe this would be a good place to stop so we won't have to interrupt.

{Pause.}

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

17

Q: Hugh Jenkins, tape one, side B. You were saying that you arrived in Belson on April --

A: Sunday, April the 22nd. The camp, I think, was -- had been found just about a week before. And that's the day -- I arrived in Belson on Saturday, on Saturday evening. And then on Sunday, when we got ourselves a place to park ourselves, I went into the camp on Sunday, the 21st -- the 22nd to Camp No. 211, which was the place where they had kept all the children. One of the magnificent things about the camp was the fact that -- well, let me go back a bit. The camp was in terrible state because it had, by lack of concern and so forth, it had been allowed to get into a horrible condition. It was originally a camp for about 3,000 people and there were about 50,000 people in there. There were, I think, 600 people in a hut that was designed for 50 and they were layered. But despite that, and then as the last days before the camp was overtaken, everything broke down, food, no food supply, no water supply. And -- but despite that, the people had put the children -- the inmates, not the -- the authorities, had put the children all into one barrack where they could look after them specially. And whereas in those last days it was a kind of every man for himself as far as food was concerned, they made sure that the children were looked after as best as they could in those terrible conditions. And my first job was to drive an ambulance down into the camp and start getting the children out. The arrangement was that about three miles up the road from the camp, the concentration camp, there was a big German Army establishment which, of course, was empty and -- but it had big concrete buildings, you know, barracks and so on. So that was made into a reception center. And the -- between the concentration camp and the new camp, there was what was known as a

kind of human laundry. And we had -- the ambulances were divided into two groups. And

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

some ambulances were in the camp, going from the camp to this mid station, which was just on the side of the road, it was a stable. But there they had set up a whole -- an arrangement for disinfecting and cleaning people up and so on. And then the other side of this place there were clean ambulances which were going from the -- from this place to the new -- to the new establishment. So that there was a kind of an insulation between the diseases and the lice and everything that the people, that the camp inmates had, that were all washed off and disinfected and stripped of their clothing and wrapped in a clean blanket. And then the other end of the -- the other side of the building, they would be loaded into another ambulance which took them to the -- to this new establishment. So you had one series of ambulances going between the camp of what they called the human laundry and another series of ambulances going from the laundry to the new camp.

Q: So there were dirty ambulances taking them and then clean ambulances after they got through their laundry?

A: They were kept separate, yeah.

Q: And you were driving one of the dirty ambulances?

A: Yeah. And so that was my first job, going in and helping get these children out of the -- out of the -- then because I was the truck driver in charge of the big truck. Well, one of the things, when we first arrived there, the authorities would not allow the girls, the female members of the team to enter the concentration camp. There were seven girls and five men. But the men were all assigned to work in the camp and the girls were all assigned to work in the new, you know, reception center in the hospital.

Q: What do you think the reasoning was for that?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

19

A: Well, I think to begin with, things were so -- when we first got there things were so unsettled in the camp. There were -- the SS guards were still there. They were being forced to help bury the dead, and the SS women were still there. And it was pretty rough kind of situation and I think that the people in authority felt that they didn't want to risk the girls going into the camp.

Q: For their physical safety or just what they would have to --

A: Well, I think probably it was such a -- it was -- it was such an outrageous situation. Nobody, you know, people had heard of Auschwitz and the death camp and so on. But Belson was different. Belson -- nobody really knew about Belson until it was discovered because it had never been identified particularly as an extermination camp. So you had this peculiarly -- {beeping sound} -- turn that off -- had this peculiarly unsettled and unpleasant situation. And I guess the Army authorities in charge, they had the Army medical corps men working there, and in any case there were so many jobs to be done because what we were really doing was creating a new -- creating a hospital as we went along --

Q: Um-hmm.

A: -- you know. Empty buildings and so on were being furnished and all the supportive services that you have in a hospital were trying to be set up as quickly as possible to cope with the situation. We -- a lot of the first things I think they did, we I think were the very first people, non Army people in the camp. We went up -- there were six teams that were called in, I think five -- four Red Cross teams and one girls -- girl guides team, and the one Quaker team were called in in that very first appeal for immediate help. But then soon

after that they got a whole group of volunteer young medical students from England who

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

20

came out. But it was a -- it was the kind of thing to begin with when everybody was doing whatever immediately needed to be done. There was not a highly organized and orderly procedure because you had the terrible pressure of the fact that while we were evacuating the camp I think another 15,000 died. 25,000 were -- were saved, were taken to the new camp. But it was very, very haphazard. So, for example, after that first run in the ambulance, I was sent off in my truck and told to find whatever I could that would be useful for the camp. Bed linen, towels.

Q: This is outside of the camp?

A: Yeah. So I went to the -- where this German establishment, military establishment was, there was a set of big houses which belonged to the high command. And the first place I went was there. I went through all the places -- all the houses.

Q: Were the houses empty?

A: Oh, yes. The Germans had gone a long time -- well, not a long time ago, but had gone. And so I used to go around picking up, getting all the bed linen, all the towels, all the kitchen utensils, anything that I could pick up in my truck and take it back to the new camp to help furnish it. And then after that we discovered -- I think it was our team that discovered that there were around the camp a number of farms which had vegetables, leeks, carrots and what have you, you know, just lying unharvested. And so my job from then on was to go out every day and go around and scour around the countryside and find out where there was a field of leeks or vegetable garden and so on and get local -- I worked with a -- a German local fellow who helped me identify a place where -- a local inhabitant who knew the country. So he knew where the stuff were, and also he knew the villages.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

21

And he used to recruit people from the village. And I would take them in my truck, which had a big Red Cross flag on the front of it, and take them to this field and stay with them all the while they were working, because they wouldn't work unless they had the protection of the truck and the Red Cross flag. And when we got -- when we got the load of vegetables, I would take these people back to the village and then would take the food back to the camp kitchens, and that's what I did most of the time.

Q: What was the attitude of this young German man toward you and your efforts?

A: Oh, he was very helpful. He wasn't -- he was -- I'm not sure how much of a resister he was, but he certainly wasn't -- he was very anti Nazi. And he was known in the district for being a very -- I forget what his job was. I think he was working in some factory or something. Anyhow, he was quite well respected and known in the district, and so he helped me organize this. But some of the people, of course, were not very friendly.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: I remember one lady who we went to her farm. She was married to some high official, who wasn't there, of course. And she was grumbling about the fact that, you know, these workers, they are terrible, the moment they got the chance they ran away. These are forced laborers, mind you. I said, well, what did you expect them to do? And so she was going on about this. And I said to her, you see that? You know that place over there, that concentration camp? And she said, well, she kind of denied knowing anything about it. So I told her what it was like there, and the Red Cross was there, because she was so unsympathetic. Lots of the people were. We had a lot of, I mean, you know, we weren't sunk in a sea of Nazis or anything like that. Most of the people who were the local

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

inhabitants were very understand -- you know, weren't bitter or antagonistic. Although they did, the Army, I remember, did one day while we were there bring the mayors and the senior citizens of the -- from around Belson and make them walk through the camp, walk through all these dead bodies, et cetera. So I think that -- so they should know exactly what they had been putting up with.

Q: Were you there when that happened?

A: Then, well, we had a little hospital in the camp, I remember.

Q: Inside the camp?

A: Yeah. It was really kind of a first aid stand. Our main -- obviously, the whole priority was getting the people out. We had a kind of a scoreboard we used to keep of the number of people we evacuated each day. Like a competition, you know. Yesterday it was 310 people, today we managed to do 370 people. Always trying to beat the previous day's record. And the -- I forgot my train of thought now.

Q: You were talking about what you were doing inside the camp and that you had the first aid station.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Did you work at the first aid station?

A: Oh, yes, excuse me. And in the meantime, because there were, you know, several thousand people in the camp, we had this set up, this little first aid station to give whatever assistance one could give in a temporary way. And -- but the station was actually operated by inmates, by doctors who had been -- who were part of the people inside the

concentration camp. So it was -- we had to have hours. We just couldn't keep the place

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

open 24 hours a day because these people themselves were suffering. So we had to kind of have it open from 9:00 in the morning until 6:00 in the evening or something. I used to go down there occasionally to take some supplies or something. And, obviously, I went one day when we had to close the camp, close the doors. And it was a terrible job because there were people outside that probably spent the last two days gradually making their way to this thing because they couldn't walk, they, you know, they were too weak to just walk there. So you felt that, at least I felt, you know, when you looked at these people and you thought, my gosh, some of them will probably be dead before the camp -- before the place is open in the morning. And when I was closing the camp a young girl came up to me and said you must give me something for my mother. She is very ill. And I said, well, the aid center is closed. And she said but you must get me something. So I went inside and got some aspirins and gave them to her and said, well, maybe these will help your mother. It was just a gesture. I didn't know, the mother wasn't there. But, on the other hand, the girl was so desperate to have somebody do something. And about three or four -- three weeks later when we were in the -- when the camp was emptied eventually and it was burned down and all the people that were in the camp were now in this new -- in this new establishment, this young lady came up to me and said, oh, you are the man who saved my mother's life. And I -- because I didn't recognize her because before I had seen her in a concentration camp, filth, you know, now she was -- after the camp was dressed nicely and so on. But apparently I was the -- she was the girl I gave the aspirins to.

Q: That's quite a story.

A: And then we had a -- we had a very, very impressive concert in the new camp. The day

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

24

the last barrack -- the barracks were burned down. And the concert was given by the ex-inmates and it really was terrific. I mean, inside the camp there were people who had been in symphony orchestras and opera singers and all that, lots of people, mostly of Jewish extraction. And so they gave the concert. And it was really most moving. Everybody singing their hearts out. It was very good.

Q: And this was the night before the camp was burned down?

A: Yes, it was in the new camp. The old camp was burned down.

Q: Yeah, right. Was the old camp all burned at once or in parts?

A: Well, it was burned hut by hut. But it was obviously -- it was kind of accelerated as time went on. To begin with, obviously, it was very dangerous to start burning once you evacuated a hut. You couldn't burn it right away because there were huts all around.

Q: So did you do other jobs inside the camp, inside the old camp?

A: Yes, because I was a kind of general errand boy. I used to take the -- anything that needed a truck.

Q: And who would ask you to do something? Would it be one of the Friends group or would it be one of the Army or anybody would ask you?

A: Well, obviously, my first channel of authority was our own team and our team leader.

Q: You had a team leader for the 12 of you?

A: For us 12, yes. So she would give me maybe some general instructions, saying why don't you go report to so-and- so and see what they need to be done.

Q: That would be an Army person?

A: Yeah, an Army person. Or as time went on, of course, more people came in, doctors

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

25

and things like that. But most of the time, most of the time my primary job was going around and each day I did a vegetable run, which didn't take the whole day, of course.

Q: But that was your primary job, to go out of the camp --

A: To get supplies.

Q: -- into the surrounding area?

A: Yeah.

Q: That's because you had a truck?

A: Yeah.

Q: That you were the one with the truck, that made you the logical person to do that?

A: My job on the team was transport officer. So I was responsible for keeping all the vehicles, the five vehicles operating, but -- and I myself drove the big truck.

Q: So that got you away from the horror for part of the time?

A: Yes, yes. And --

Q: And then for the rest of the day, what would you do after you did your vegetable run?

A: Oh, let me see if I can remind myself.

Q: Did you have to work on your trucks and keep them running or were they working pretty well?

A: Well, the trucks, yeah, the trucks went well. But it was -- most of the work inside the camp was taking workers around.

Q: Taking who around?

A: Workers.

Q: Oh, workers, I see. So you take them from one area of the camp to another?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

A: Yeah. The camp was under the control, obviously, of the British Army, but they had a lot of Hungarian soldiers who were prisoners of war as it were, who were used to work in the camp doing various jobs. Another of my jobs was to report to the person in charge to take these men down to hut number so-and-so where we have a clean-up job to do or --

Q: Were they strong enough to work?

A: Oh, yeah, these were Hung -- these were not camp inmates. These were part of the Hungarian Army. When the camp was taken over by the British, it was taken over in a truce between the Eighth Army, the British Eighth Army and the German Army, whichever it was, the idea being to create a sanitation zone and there would be no fighting in that zone. So that you wouldn't have -- that was the great problem that when -- to begin with everybody was afraid of, but this camp was a, a hive of illness, tuberculosis, typhus and everything you can think of. And people were afraid, I think, the Germans were afraid that if the fighting went through that zone, then people in the camp would all get out and start trying to find their way back home and then you would have kind of a wave of diseased people off on their own. And so it was arranged that the camp should be handed over intact by the Germans to the British and with the condition that all the people, the Germans who had been working in the camp as guards and so on, would have to be -- would be retained there, whereas the German Army retreated from that area and the British entered without fighting.

Q: Okay.

A: And part of the deal was that among the German Army were these Hungarian troops.

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

27

A: And they were considered neutrals at that point and, I mean, they weren't the prime enemy. And they were -- it was agreed that -- presumably that they should stay and guard the perimeter of the camp to make sure that nobody got out. But under the control, obviously, of the British. So that at the same time they would -- they were manpower and there were lots of jobs to be done. The water system broke down, so you had to -- we had to find a -- and the drainage system. Everything was in kind of a state of disrepair and needed temporary --

Q: So after the beginning when you were driving the ambulance, you did not have a lot of direct contact with the former --

A: No, no.

Q: -- concentration camp survivors? You were more involved in collecting vegetables and maintenance --

A: Yeah. I was in and out of the camp all day.

Q: Were you concerned that you would get sick if there was so much disease around?

A: No, you really didn't have time to think about it.

Q: What kind of a day did you work? How long a day?

A: Oh, as long as was necessary. I mean --

Q: I should say, how long did you get to sleep at night?

A: Well, I guess we probably got to bed about ten o'clock, eleven o'clock at night. But -- and, of course, it was an increasing deceleration as the -- each day there were less people in the camp, and each day therefore there were less crises in the camp. So it gradually got easier and easier. But --

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

28

Q: Where did you sleep?

A: We slept in the -- in barracks in the new camp.

Q: Um-hmm. And is that where you had your meals also?

A: Well, I think we had our meals at field kitchens.

Q: Um-hmm. They were army field kitchens?

A: I seem to remember -- I have some pictures over here of a whole group of us standing around, just around a field kitchen eating.

Q: And did you have any time when you weren't working that you had a chance to feel or talk to your team members?

A: Oh, yes, we had -- we met -- we were all housed in the same area and we used to have team meetings quite regularly.

Q: And what were they like?

A: Well, they were -- they were mostly reporting sessions because all of us were doing different things and quite often we didn't see each other during the day. The girls were mostly working as like nurses or one of the girls was a cook -- not a cook -- a caterer and was working in the kitchens. And the -- we had one Jewish girl who was a very, very important member of the team. She got into the camp, frequented, before there was any kind of relaxation of the rules she got into the camp because she was, obviously, terribly motivated to see exactly what was happening to her people in the camp. And she used to wear a big copper Star of David or bronze Star of David on her uniform. And when she went into the camp wearing this, it was very, very impressive because for the camp

inmates the Star of David was the kind of thing you had sewn on your sleeves or on your

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

29

back as something to be ashamed of. And to see this girl wearing the Star of David as something to be proud of was -- meant a lot to them.

Q: So what was the morale like in your team?

A: I think it was pretty good because we were too busy to allow the environment to affect us. We always had something to do. And everything we had to do, even if I can't remember what it is now, what it was now, was urgent. And we had completely separate responsibilities, like I was on my own in this truck. And I think that the real impact came when we left the camp and in our next assignment when we became, I think, where we suffered a kind of delayed shock. We were very highly disciplined and neat and tidy team. But I think in our next assignment after Belson we went through a period when we were kind of untidy and people didn't turn out meals at the right time and undisciplined. But then we settled down again and --

Q: Did people talk about it?

A: Only in terms of things to do.

Q: No, but I mean in the next assignment when --

A: No, no, it wasn't --

Q: -- when the shock hit?

A: No.

Q: People didn't say, oh, that was really horrible?

A: No, no, I mean, that went without saying. And then when you see perhaps -- fortunately for us, after our -- we left the day the camp was burned down, I think, the next day or something like that. We were sent off to another job.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

30

Q: How did that feel?

A: Well, it was another rush job.

Q: I mean to leave. Was it a relief to get away from there or -- also hard to go?

A: No, I think there was nothing more for us to do. We had done our job so it was just a question of getting on with the next job.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: And it became part of the, well, we just focused our attention on our new work.

Q: Um-hmm. What was your new work?

A: Well, to begin with we had a very interesting job. Very temporary. The railways in Germany had all been very badly bombed. And after the war they were reconstructing the, well, they were reconstructing the railways. So thousands of forced laborers who wanted to get back to their homes in Holland and France and so on, and so they had trains coming into Germany to the point where the German railways were bombed and trucks coming out of Germany to this point where the -- where the railway started. And the people were transferred from trucks to the train. And our job was to -- to assist in this transfer. People had all sorts of problems and there was a question of food and things like that. To get the people off the trucks and into the trains and the trains went back to say Belgium, Holland, France and so on. And we did that for -- not for very long, about a week or so, because very quickly the railway was repaired to another station farther on, and so -- and then we were sent to Brunswick, and we -- that was our biggest and most time-consuming job. We eventually became in charge of a huge Polish camp of 3,500 Poles, and the Quaker team, the 12 of us administered it. And that was quite an experience.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Q: What was that like?

A: Well, it was -- it was very interesting because, see, it was a very difficult situation in some ways because the Poles consider themselves -- considered themselves the first fighters in the war. They were the first country attacked by Germany. And they, of course, the country was very badly beaten up. And the Germans were very bad to the Poles because they considered them kind of second-class citizens and brought them in for forced labor and so -- but when the war was over the Poles kind of felt, well, you know, they ought to be all considered heroes because they were the ones who first started to fight the Germans. And so they used to get -- and they wanted to go home, but they couldn't go home because there was a problem inside Poland as to who was going to govern the country. So they lived in this camp and we -- we looked after them, you know. We were the kind of town council -- like city government. One was looking after schools, one was looking after clothing. I was in charge of what was known as the camp commandant, and it was quite fun. Well, fun isn't the word. But it was very interesting.

Q: We will have to turn over the tape.

End of File One

Beginning File Two

Q: Mr. Jenkins, what are some of the reflections that you have on the Belson camp?

A: Well, the most obvious one, obviously, was its relationship to my being a conscientious objector. I remember standing in the camp very early on and looking at the terrible -- and I guess the people who upset me most in the camp were the living because they -- the

walking dead as it were. They were so -- I mean, there were people who had gone beyond

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

the state of recovery. The dead were dead and they were in peace. But the -- and the ones who were -- the survivors were getting out of the camp. But, in the meantime, there were these thousands of people dying. And they were the people, I guess, who upset me most because you see them walking around, walking from nowhere to nowhere, and then they would just kind of fall down and there you were. I remember thinking to myself, well, you know, while I was working on the land and the sun was shining, but under this same sky only relatively a few miles away, because England isn't all that far from Germany, these people were living under the same sky and comparing the, you know, the fact that they were so hopeless and without any -- any hope of being saved or anything because, well, before the war ended, I mean, all the while the concentration camps were going, they were going on for eternity, I mean, the people -- the Germans gave up the camps only when the war was at their very doorstep. And so day after day these people were in this camp and having to live under these terrible conditions. And it made me think about being a conscientious objector and refusing to participate in the struggle. And I thought about it a great deal. The only thing I could -- the only conclusion I kept on coming to was that I still believed that war was not the answer. That there must be some other answer. And that eventually we had to get -- we had to get rid of war as a means of settling things. And the only way we will do that is if -- hopefully the next generation there will be conscientious people that feel the same kind of mind and eventually come to a time where people will say we are not going to have an army, we are not going to have arms, there have to be other ways of settling our differences. And that's -- may seem kind of high-minded

theory, but on the other hand, that was as far as I got. I couldn't believe, I couldn't persuade

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

33

myself that I -- that it was wrong, that I should have been fighting instead, been in the army instead. But --

Q: And do you have some of those thoughts now?

A: No, except a sense of desolation when I see the way we seem to have -- still use war as a method of settling -- maybe that also has an argument in the fact that the third -- the Second World War didn't solve problems. There are just as many problems in Europe, people fighting each other. So, obviously, there must be some other way. But whatever the way was, it was too late to save all the people who were victims of the Nazis. But that may be rationalizing it, but, no, I still think, I still believe that war is not -- never will be an answer to our problems.

Q: Could we go back to a summary of what you did from the time you were commandant of the Polish camp until you returned home?

A: Yes. Well, I was in charge of that camp. Well, the team was in charge of the camp. But my particular job was kind of the chief administrator, I guess, whatever you call it, which was kind of fun because it put me in some very awkward situations. I remember the 3,500 Poles, we had a Polish police force of young Poles who kind of ran the place, who looked after the security of the place. And, of course, we had a lot of young people in there. And one day there had been some fighting and the police brought these -- had to break it up and they brought these young men in to me as camp administrator to be punished. And so I gave them a nice Quakerly lecture about we all ought to live together like we were members of a family and things like that and sent them off. And about five minutes later

the head of the police force, a very nice young man, came in and said that the police force

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

34

had resigned en masse. So I said, well, why? He said, look, we have this problem in the camp. We have a kind of a riot. We go in and break it up. We get beaten up in the process. And eventually we manage to settle everything and we bring the ringleaders in to see you, and you tap them on the head and say, well, go home and be good boys. That's not going to work. So I consulted with myself and my friends and decided we would have to have some kind of system. And so I used to dock them their cigarette rations and things like that. Which, of course, in those days cigarettes were a form of currency practically. Everybody loved to smoke. That was quite a punishment to be told you were losing one month's ration of cigarettes. But I left the camp and went back to England. Oh, in the meantime, my wife had joined me because she was -- she also became a member of the Quaker elite and was trained in the same place where I was trained. And then she was sent out to join me in the camp. And she was by that time a very highly-qualified and very experienced nursery school teacher and so she came and looked after the -- because we had a lot of children of all ages, little children in the camp, she set up the nursery school in the camp and she set it up so well that the UNRA, United Nations Rehabilitation Agency, were running a lot of the camps, came to our camp and saw the nursery school and borrowed her and sent her to other camps to set up nursery schools. Then we both left and were assigned to this job of working with the young Spaniards, well, all the Spanish refugees in the south of France, because at the end of the Spanish Civil War there was a tremendous wave of refugees who fled over the frontier into France. And while a lot of them had gone back, a lot were still there. And the ones that were still there were very much in need of various social services. We had schools, retraining schools, and a lot of

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

activities like that. And so I was in charge of that for six months. And then the Quakers brought me back to London and I was the overseas secretary for the European world.

Q: Was that a full-time activity?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah. That was kind of -- I was responsible for all the work in Germany, Austria, Poland, wherever it was.

Q: And that was a big job?

A: Well, yeah, except in the Quaker thing you had the responsibility, but you also -- you work very much as a group. We had a committee that was in charge, so -- so I was the overseas secretary. I also had a -- I used to work very closely with the people in Friends House in London. But I used to have to travel to Poland to meet -- visit the teams. And then the Friends Relief Service was a temporary organization that -- it was kind of peculiar. The Friends in England did not have a permanent service group. What they did was to create a group or a service in time of need. So, for example, as I remember, there was one Quaker service in Ireland during the potato famine. There was one Quaker service in the Franco-Prussian War. There was one Quaker service in the First World War. And there was one Quaker service in the Second World War. And the Quaker service in the Second World War was -- it was agreed, long before the war ended it was agreed that failing any other unforeseen events, that would come to an end in May 1948.

Q: And it was called the British --

A: Friends Relief Service. And it was to come to an end in May 1948. So that was the period that I was the overseas secretary. So I -- one of my jobs was going around to all the

teams that we had in Germany and Austria and working out with them the way they would

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

hand over their work to local sources. It was a difficult job because -- and everybody falls in love -- when you are in relief work you fall in love with your work and you fall in love with the people you are working with. I mean -- I don't mean fall in love with individuals, but you fall in love with the whole situation and your companions and the local -- and it is very difficult to leave. You feel, you know, the job is not finished, why should we have to leave? But, on the other hand, the Quakers, I believe, felt very strongly that this was a job that they had to do in time of need, but they weren't about to start a permanent social service agency. Or they do have continuing programs right now that the British and the American Quakers, you know, countries where there are -- where there is need. And so I did that until May 1948. And then in May 1948 the American Friends Service Committee said, well, you've been working for British Friends Relief Service, and now that job is finished, why don't you come work with us for a little while. So I came over from England technically for two years and worked in Philadelphia: And then I was going to leave and they said we have a very funny project in Washington. We have a house which was given to us to provide accommodation and that, kind of a center for international students. So why don't you go and run that. So we came to Washington in 1951 to run the International Student House, which we did for six years. And we never left. I became -- I went from that to being the director of the Foreign Student Service Council and from that to being --

Q: Director of Foreign Student Service Council?

A: Foreign Student Service Council in Washington.

Q: Was that a Quaker --

A: No. The International Student House was owned by the Quakers, but it is now run, I

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

think, by a local committee. The Quakers may still own the building. But they pulled out the administration. When I went to the International Student House, I went as part of the American Friends Service Committee, so kind of employed from Philadelphia to come. But when I left, it was sometime after I left, it became -- they divested their direct interest, involvement, and had the local committee take it over, which it is still running, of course. It is a very beautiful house on R Street. And then at the time I was leaving the International Student House there was a feeling there was a great deal of need for some service to foreign students who visited Washington on the basis of practically every student who comes to the United States will at some time during their stay here want to come to the nation's capitol. So they started the Foreign Student Service Council and I was the director of that, perhaps ten years, I guess. And then I became the executive vice-president of the National Association for College Student Affairs. And then I retired.

Q: And were you -- did you at any time become a Quaker?

A: Yes.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah. Not a very active one, but I am a member of the Meeting.

Q: And what time -- at what point was that that you became a member of the Meeting?

A: Well, now, I was very much involved, I think I became a member of the Meeting in Philadelphia.

Q: But you -- so you were working for them for a few years --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- before you became a member of the Meeting?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Interview with Hugh Montfort Jenkins

38

A: Yeah, as I said, in our team, when I joined the Friends Relief Service, in our team I think only -- I think the team leader and one other person were Quakers. But a lot of them were -- several of them were, I think, kind of attenders but not members. Went to Friends Meetings but were not members. But there were others who were quite different. Like myself, I was a Baptist, son of a Baptist minister. So there we are.

Q: Okay. Is there -- is there anything else that you would like to add?

A: I don't think so.

Q: Well, you have told us quite a bit and you have a very interesting and important story.

Thank you very much.

A: Oh, it was a pleasure.

Q: This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Hugh Jenkins.

End of File Two

Conclusion of Interview

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record. This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.