

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,720  
Taped on behalf of the United  
States Holocaust Memorial

2  
00:00:03,720 --> 00:00:04,920  
Museum.

3  
00:00:04,920 --> 00:00:09,240  
The date is February  
the 28th, 1997.

4  
00:00:09,240 --> 00:00:11,610  
I'm interviewing Frank Ephraim.

5  
00:00:11,610 --> 00:00:14,220  
My name is Nancy Alper.

6  
00:00:14,220 --> 00:00:18,330  
This is tape number  
one, side A. Frank,

7  
00:00:18,330 --> 00:00:21,780  
please tell me your name at  
birth, your date of birth,

8  
00:00:21,780 --> 00:00:23,640  
and your place of birth.

9  
00:00:23,640 --> 00:00:28,310  
My name at birth was  
Franz Gunter Ephraim.

10  
00:00:28,310 --> 00:00:30,810  
I was born on the  
19th of February,

11  
00:00:30,810 --> 00:00:35,370  
1931 in Berlin, Germany.

12  
00:00:35,370 --> 00:00:39,690  
The actual district of

birth was Charlottenburg,

13  
00:00:39,690 --> 00:00:42,910  
district of Berlin.

14  
00:00:42,910 --> 00:00:45,640  
Why don't you tell me a  
little bit about your parents

15  
00:00:45,640 --> 00:00:48,550  
and their background?

16  
00:00:48,550 --> 00:00:54,370  
My father, who was born in  
1903, was a businessman.

17  
00:00:54,370 --> 00:00:57,590  
He originally was an  
inventor and held patents

18  
00:00:57,590 --> 00:01:01,360  
of things like an alligator  
clip for the electrical or radio

19  
00:01:01,360 --> 00:01:02,740  
industry.

20  
00:01:02,740 --> 00:01:07,450  
And after the crash, he went  
into another kind of business.

21  
00:01:07,450 --> 00:01:11,710  
He worked for a large firm  
that made diesel engines,

22  
00:01:11,710 --> 00:01:16,830  
narrow gauge engines for  
sugar cane plantations

23  
00:01:16,830 --> 00:01:20,110  
in South America  
and parts of Asia.

24

00:01:20,110 --> 00:01:26,680  
And he worked there until the  
Nuremberg laws 1936 no longer

25

00:01:26,680 --> 00:01:28,960  
allowed him to work in an  
organization of that kind.

26

00:01:28,960 --> 00:01:31,610  
Then he went to work  
for a textile firm.

27

00:01:31,610 --> 00:01:37,180  
And that's where he was until  
we left Germany in 1939.

28

00:01:37,180 --> 00:01:38,950  
His father and  
mother actually owned

29

00:01:38,950 --> 00:01:42,040  
a clothing store in one  
of the sections of Berlin

30

00:01:42,040 --> 00:01:44,640  
called Friedenau.

31

00:01:44,640 --> 00:01:49,140  
My mother was born in a  
town called Schneidemuhl,

32

00:01:49,140 --> 00:01:51,630  
which is in West Prussia.

33

00:01:51,630 --> 00:01:55,460  
And her father  
was a veterinarian

34

00:01:55,460 --> 00:01:59,660  
who had to do with  
mostly farm animals.

35

00:01:59,660 --> 00:02:04,850  
They were married in 1928  
and came to live in Berlin.

36  
00:02:04,850 --> 00:02:07,670  
And there she was  
basically a housewife

37  
00:02:07,670 --> 00:02:11,030  
and did some work  
for a advertising

38  
00:02:11,030 --> 00:02:12,650  
firm for some years.

39  
00:02:12,650 --> 00:02:14,250  
But then most of the  
time she did not.

40  
00:02:14,250 --> 00:02:16,970  
She was at home.

41  
00:02:16,970 --> 00:02:19,520  
Why don't you tell me  
your mother's maiden name

42  
00:02:19,520 --> 00:02:22,110  
and a little bit  
about her family,

43  
00:02:22,110 --> 00:02:25,670  
including where they came from?

44  
00:02:25,670 --> 00:02:30,020  
As I mentioned, they came from a  
town called Schneidemuhl, which

45  
00:02:30,020 --> 00:02:33,110  
actually served as a railhead  
for the Battle of Tannenberg

46  
00:02:33,110 --> 00:02:34,940  
in the First World War.

47  
00:02:34,940 --> 00:02:41,030  
My grandfather, whose name  
was Heymann, H-E-Y-M-A-N-N,

48  
00:02:41,030 --> 00:02:43,040  
served in that first World War.

49  
00:02:43,040 --> 00:02:46,010  
He was a major of cavalry,  
a veterinary surgeon

50  
00:02:46,010 --> 00:02:49,670  
for a cavalry regiment that  
served also in Tannenberg

51  
00:02:49,670 --> 00:02:51,890  
as well as Verdun.

52  
00:02:51,890 --> 00:02:54,770  
My mother grew up  
in Schneidemuhl.

53  
00:02:54,770 --> 00:02:59,300  
And her mother, again, was  
a housewife that did not

54  
00:02:59,300 --> 00:03:01,490  
have a particular profession.

55  
00:03:01,490 --> 00:03:05,510  
My mother had a twin brother  
and sister, eight years younger

56  
00:03:05,510 --> 00:03:06,890  
than she.

57  
00:03:06,890 --> 00:03:13,130  
And they emigrated early from  
Germany to the United States.

58  
00:03:13,130 --> 00:03:17,420

Actually, they first  
went to Italy and in 1934

59  
00:03:17,420 --> 00:03:22,110  
after the rise of  
Adolf Hitler in 1933.

60  
00:03:22,110 --> 00:03:25,870  
So she lived in  
Berlin with my father,

61  
00:03:25,870 --> 00:03:28,160  
and I was born, say,  
three years after they

62  
00:03:28,160 --> 00:03:31,610  
were married in 1931.

63  
00:03:31,610 --> 00:03:34,180  
Tell me a little bit about  
the Jewish background

64  
00:03:34,180 --> 00:03:37,160  
both of your parents.

65  
00:03:37,160 --> 00:03:39,290  
Both of my parents  
came from Jewish homes.

66  
00:03:39,290 --> 00:03:41,940  
Both grandparents were Jewish.

67  
00:03:41,940 --> 00:03:46,610  
They were members of a  
Jewish temple in Berlin.

68  
00:03:46,610 --> 00:03:50,420  
It was a synagogue on  
Prinzregentren Strasse.

69  
00:03:50,420 --> 00:03:55,970  
And they attended that  
relatively regularly.

70  
00:03:55,970 --> 00:03:59,300  
And even though during the  
somewhat difficult times

71  
00:03:59,300 --> 00:04:03,570  
after the rise of Adolf  
Hitler, they still, of course,

72  
00:04:03,570 --> 00:04:06,922  
went to the synagogue.

73  
00:04:06,922 --> 00:04:12,140  
In fact, my father was there  
on the night of Kristallnacht,

74  
00:04:12,140 --> 00:04:18,470  
November the 9th, 1938 and did  
see the ruins of the synagogue

75  
00:04:18,470 --> 00:04:19,310  
that next morning.

76  
00:04:19,310 --> 00:04:22,250

77  
00:04:22,250 --> 00:04:26,930  
Was theirs a more orthodox  
background, either one of them

78  
00:04:26,930 --> 00:04:32,450  
or did they both come from  
very assimilated families?

79  
00:04:32,450 --> 00:04:34,880  
They were relatively  
assimilated.

80  
00:04:34,880 --> 00:04:36,260  
They were not orthodox.

81  
00:04:36,260 --> 00:04:38,810

My grandfather on my mother's side, the veterinarian,

82  
00:04:38,810 --> 00:04:40,460  
of course, in his profession, it was

83  
00:04:40,460 --> 00:04:44,600  
extremely difficult to practice any orthodox religion,

84  
00:04:44,600 --> 00:04:46,460  
because he had to deal with farm animals,

85  
00:04:46,460 --> 00:04:48,780  
including pigs and cattle.

86  
00:04:48,780 --> 00:04:51,500  
So that he was not orthodox.

87  
00:04:51,500 --> 00:04:53,840  
On my father's side, they were also not orthodox.

88  
00:04:53,840 --> 00:04:56,570  
We're what one would consider conservative,

89  
00:04:56,570 --> 00:04:59,390  
and they went to a conservative synagogue

90  
00:04:59,390 --> 00:05:01,570  
as far back as I can remember.

91  
00:05:01,570 --> 00:05:04,700  
So I was brought up in the conservative level of Judaism.

92  
00:05:04,700 --> 00:05:07,640



93

00:05:07,640 --> 00:05:10,180

How long, as far  
as you know, were

94

00:05:10,180 --> 00:05:12,860

both of your  
families in the area

95

00:05:12,860 --> 00:05:17,210

that today we would think  
of as Germany or Prussia?

96

00:05:17,210 --> 00:05:20,030

Well, my grandparents  
on my mother's side,

97

00:05:20,030 --> 00:05:24,590

the veterinarian, he died in  
1933, not long after Adolf

98

00:05:24,590 --> 00:05:25,670

Hitler came to power.

99

00:05:25,670 --> 00:05:28,830

And my grandmother  
died six months later.

100

00:05:28,830 --> 00:05:29,780

So I barely knew them.

101

00:05:29,780 --> 00:05:31,310

I was two years old.

102

00:05:31,310 --> 00:05:34,970

On my father's  
side, both parents,

103

00:05:34,970 --> 00:05:40,460

both his parents  
were born in Berlin.

104

00:05:40,460 --> 00:05:44,870

And my grandfather died actually  
the day before Kristallnacht

105  
00:05:44,870 --> 00:05:51,680  
on November the 8th, 1938 after  
a illness, a heart problem.

106  
00:05:51,680 --> 00:05:55,790  
My grandmother lived,  
and she and my uncle,

107  
00:05:55,790 --> 00:05:57,410  
my father's younger  
brother, were

108  
00:05:57,410 --> 00:06:02,150  
both taken to Litzmannstadt,  
which the Germans named

109  
00:06:02,150 --> 00:06:03,830  
for Lodz in Poland.

110  
00:06:03,830 --> 00:06:09,860  
My grandmother died on the  
transport nearing the ghetto,

111  
00:06:09,860 --> 00:06:13,250  
and my uncle died in  
the ghetto itself.

112  
00:06:13,250 --> 00:06:18,080  
I believe was 1942  
that he died there.

113  
00:06:18,080 --> 00:06:20,810  
How were you able  
to ascertain that?

114  
00:06:20,810 --> 00:06:22,650  
At what point did  
you find out what

115  
00:06:22,650 --> 00:06:25,820

had happened to  
those family members?

116  
00:06:25,820 --> 00:06:27,590  
Shortly after the  
Second World War,

117  
00:06:27,590 --> 00:06:31,670  
the Red Cross had  
gathered names of people

118  
00:06:31,670 --> 00:06:35,300  
based on lists that  
were available to them

119  
00:06:35,300 --> 00:06:37,250  
as to place of death.

120  
00:06:37,250 --> 00:06:42,210  
And my father just  
found that out.

121  
00:06:42,210 --> 00:06:47,060  
Oh, it must have been  
sometime in 1949 or so.

122  
00:06:47,060 --> 00:06:49,880  
Now, both names are  
listed in the Gedenkbuch,

123  
00:06:49,880 --> 00:06:53,240  
which the Germans  
have published in 1986

124  
00:06:53,240 --> 00:06:55,330  
I believe was the first edition.

125  
00:06:55,330 --> 00:06:58,580  
It's a two volume book  
that lists apparently

126  
00:06:58,580 --> 00:07:01,285  
over 100,000 German

Jews that perished.

127  
00:07:01,285 --> 00:07:05,720  
And it shows where they were  
from, their maiden names,

128  
00:07:05,720 --> 00:07:10,310  
and where they were taken and  
death if the date of death

129  
00:07:10,310 --> 00:07:11,360  
was known.

130  
00:07:11,360 --> 00:07:14,330  
And they were designated as  
missing if the date of death

131  
00:07:14,330 --> 00:07:14,870  
is unknown.

132  
00:07:14,870 --> 00:07:17,390  
For example, people who  
perished in Auschwitz,

133  
00:07:17,390 --> 00:07:19,550  
there would be no  
date of death known.

134  
00:07:19,550 --> 00:07:22,150

135  
00:07:22,150 --> 00:07:24,520  
You may have said this,  
but I didn't get it.

136  
00:07:24,520 --> 00:07:26,840  
What was your  
mother's maiden name?

137  
00:07:26,840 --> 00:07:31,070  
Mother's maiden name  
was Charlotte Heymann.

138

00:07:31,070 --> 00:07:33,920

She also had three  
other middle names.

139

00:07:33,920 --> 00:07:36,490

It was Rosa Ernestine.

140

00:07:36,490 --> 00:07:39,440

I've forgotten the third one.

141

00:07:39,440 --> 00:07:42,170

How did your parents meet?

142

00:07:42,170 --> 00:07:46,850

My parents met when my  
father visited Schneidemuhl,

143

00:07:46,850 --> 00:07:50,480

I guess visiting other relatives  
that lived in the area.

144

00:07:50,480 --> 00:07:53,150

And they met in that area.

145

00:07:53,150 --> 00:07:55,040

My mother belonged  
or my grandfather,

146

00:07:55,040 --> 00:07:57,580

actually, belonged to a lodge.

147

00:07:57,580 --> 00:08:00,250

In those days, that was  
sort of a common thing,

148

00:08:00,250 --> 00:08:02,390

particularly for people  
in the professions.

149

00:08:02,390 --> 00:08:05,670

And it was actually, it was  
known as the Odd Fellows Lodge.

150  
00:08:05,670 --> 00:08:08,540  
It's an international  
organization.

151  
00:08:08,540 --> 00:08:10,730  
But they have branches  
all over the world,

152  
00:08:10,730 --> 00:08:12,350  
and he was a member of that.

153  
00:08:12,350 --> 00:08:13,940  
And there was a lot  
of social activity

154  
00:08:13,940 --> 00:08:16,310  
that went along with being  
a member of the lodge.

155  
00:08:16,310 --> 00:08:19,710  
And at one of the affairs  
there, they were introduced

156  
00:08:19,710 --> 00:08:23,270  
and that's how they met.

157  
00:08:23,270 --> 00:08:28,040  
Both of them it sounds  
like led an integrated life

158  
00:08:28,040 --> 00:08:31,820  
with the general social  
life in the area at the time

159  
00:08:31,820 --> 00:08:34,250  
and they didn't  
just function within

160  
00:08:34,250 --> 00:08:35,960  
their own Jewish communities.

161

00:08:35,960 --> 00:08:37,730  
Is that correct?

162  
00:08:37,730 --> 00:08:40,220  
To a large degree,  
although they were always

163  
00:08:40,220 --> 00:08:42,049  
close to the Jewish community.

164  
00:08:42,049 --> 00:08:44,450  
They were part of it.

165  
00:08:44,450 --> 00:08:46,280  
In a place like  
Schneidemuhl, which

166  
00:08:46,280 --> 00:08:49,670  
was a town or city  
probably somewhere

167  
00:08:49,670 --> 00:08:52,670  
in the neighborhood of  
80,000 or 90,000 people,

168  
00:08:52,670 --> 00:08:58,070  
there were naturally only  
a few Jewish families

169  
00:08:58,070 --> 00:09:00,800  
who, of course, knew one another  
and went to the same synagogue

170  
00:09:00,800 --> 00:09:03,350  
or there may have been  
more than one synagogue.

171  
00:09:03,350 --> 00:09:05,620  
However, they did deal  
with everyone else.

172  
00:09:05,620 --> 00:09:08,380  
Certainly my grandfather

being a veterinarian

173

00:09:08,380 --> 00:09:12,020  
did all the veterinary work  
of the whole farming area

174

00:09:12,020 --> 00:09:13,260  
in the area.

175

00:09:13,260 --> 00:09:19,530  
And he was also the  
town's meat inspector,

176

00:09:19,530 --> 00:09:22,320  
which sort of went along  
with being a veterinarian.

177

00:09:22,320 --> 00:09:28,170  
So that integrated him with  
the rest of the population

178

00:09:28,170 --> 00:09:29,850  
as the family.

179

00:09:29,850 --> 00:09:32,160  
Very often farmers  
did not pay in cash.

180

00:09:32,160 --> 00:09:34,470  
They paid in goods  
like eggs or butter.

181

00:09:34,470 --> 00:09:37,500  
So that was the  
practice in those days.

182

00:09:37,500 --> 00:09:42,330  
So they were more or less part  
of the rest of the community,

183

00:09:42,330 --> 00:09:44,610  
not segregated or separated.



184

00:09:44,610 --> 00:09:47,220

There was no ghetto  
in that town,

185

00:09:47,220 --> 00:09:49,920

as there were few  
ghettos in Germany.

186

00:09:49,920 --> 00:09:54,240

There may have been districts  
which were largely Jewish,

187

00:09:54,240 --> 00:09:58,980

but as a rule, not.

188

00:09:58,980 --> 00:10:00,630

Your father grew up in Berlin.

189

00:10:00,630 --> 00:10:02,270

Is that correct?

190

00:10:02,270 --> 00:10:04,060

That's correct.

191

00:10:04,060 --> 00:10:06,240

Yes, my father  
grew up in Berlin.

192

00:10:06,240 --> 00:10:07,800

And he went to school.

193

00:10:07,800 --> 00:10:10,890

He was a teenager during  
the First World War

194

00:10:10,890 --> 00:10:13,230

and sort of took  
care of the family

195

00:10:13,230 --> 00:10:17,360

because his father was in the  
military, the German army,

196  
00:10:17,360 --> 00:10:20,940  
the Kaiser's army at that  
time and was on the front.

197  
00:10:20,940 --> 00:10:23,910  
I think he was on the  
Western Front near Verdun.

198  
00:10:23,910 --> 00:10:27,840  
So he had to take care of his  
mother and younger brother.

199  
00:10:27,840 --> 00:10:29,580  
So he was working.

200  
00:10:29,580 --> 00:10:34,680  
And as I mentioned  
before, he did very well

201  
00:10:34,680 --> 00:10:37,590  
at inventions, holding patents.

202  
00:10:37,590 --> 00:10:40,080  
And then later on that  
sort of dissipated

203  
00:10:40,080 --> 00:10:45,900  
as the crash 1929 occurred.

204  
00:10:45,900 --> 00:10:48,163  
And then he went to work  
for this engineering

205  
00:10:48,163 --> 00:10:50,080  
locomotive-- this  
locomotive engineering firm.

206  
00:10:50,080 --> 00:10:52,630  
It was called  
Orenstein und Koppel.

207

00:10:52,630 --> 00:10:55,500  
They're a well known firm  
in that field in Germany.

208  
00:10:55,500 --> 00:10:57,540  
Still exist.

209  
00:10:57,540 --> 00:11:00,780  
Why don't you tell me a little  
bit about the family store

210  
00:11:00,780 --> 00:11:02,320  
that you mentioned?

211  
00:11:02,320 --> 00:11:02,820  
Yes.

212  
00:11:02,820 --> 00:11:05,220  
My grandfather, that's  
my father's father

213  
00:11:05,220 --> 00:11:09,440  
who had the strange  
name of Adolf.

214  
00:11:09,440 --> 00:11:12,630  
Because in those days, that  
was a fairly common name.

215  
00:11:12,630 --> 00:11:14,490  
Adolf Ephraim.

216  
00:11:14,490 --> 00:11:19,350  
And he and my grandmother owned  
a clothing store in a district

217  
00:11:19,350 --> 00:11:22,290  
called Friedenau,  
which is sort of south

218  
00:11:22,290 --> 00:11:24,510  
of the center of Berlin.

219

00:11:24,510 --> 00:11:28,240

And they ran that store  
throughout their life.

220

00:11:28,240 --> 00:11:32,850

And my father, though,  
never actually worked there.

221

00:11:32,850 --> 00:11:36,160

He did his own thing.

222

00:11:36,160 --> 00:11:39,150

And I think his  
younger brother too

223

00:11:39,150 --> 00:11:42,190

was interested in other areas.

224

00:11:42,190 --> 00:11:44,700

So they ran the store  
until they retired.

225

00:11:44,700 --> 00:11:50,280

And that must have  
been in 1936 or so,

226

00:11:50,280 --> 00:11:55,240

because my grandfather then took  
ill and died two years later.

227

00:11:55,240 --> 00:11:58,230

But they ran this--

228

00:11:58,230 --> 00:11:59,963

it was a general clothing store.

229

00:11:59,963 --> 00:12:01,380

That's all I really  
know about it.

230

00:12:01,380 --> 00:12:03,600

I don't recall having

ever been there,

231

00:12:03,600 --> 00:12:07,650

but that's what I had heard.

232

00:12:07,650 --> 00:12:10,440

Why don't you tell me a little  
bit about your childhood?

233

00:12:10,440 --> 00:12:13,410

And I realize you were very  
young when you left Germany,

234

00:12:13,410 --> 00:12:20,610

but what do you recall about  
your family and your Jewishness

235

00:12:20,610 --> 00:12:24,920

in Berlin at that time  
when you were growing up?

236

00:12:24,920 --> 00:12:27,150

Well, my first  
recollections as a kid

237

00:12:27,150 --> 00:12:30,990

were probably when I was  
perhaps two or three years old.

238

00:12:30,990 --> 00:12:32,550

I'm estimating that.

239

00:12:32,550 --> 00:12:36,330

We were living in an area  
of Berlin called Steglitz

240

00:12:36,330 --> 00:12:39,510

and it was an apartment flat.

241

00:12:39,510 --> 00:12:43,650

And I played in a  
large area nearby.

242

00:12:43,650 --> 00:12:49,830

And then we moved  
to an area called

243

00:12:49,830 --> 00:12:55,770

Charlottenburg in the district  
of Halensee specifically.

244

00:12:55,770 --> 00:12:59,550

And there I went  
first to something

245

00:12:59,550 --> 00:13:02,610

like a nursery school.

246

00:13:02,610 --> 00:13:05,280

And I played with a  
lot of different kids.

247

00:13:05,280 --> 00:13:06,660

We lived on the street.

248

00:13:06,660 --> 00:13:09,870

The street's name  
was [PLACE NAME]..

249

00:13:09,870 --> 00:13:13,740

It was a dead end street which  
led off a larger street called

250

00:13:13,740 --> 00:13:16,570

Paulsborner Strasse, which  
was one of the larger

251

00:13:16,570 --> 00:13:18,690

streets in Berlin.

252

00:13:18,690 --> 00:13:23,820

And there we also lived in an  
apartment on the ground level.

253

00:13:23,820 --> 00:13:25,890

And the street, there  
were lots of kids

254  
00:13:25,890 --> 00:13:29,700  
on the street from  
different families.

255  
00:13:29,700 --> 00:13:32,550  
Predominantly, they  
were non-Jewish.

256  
00:13:32,550 --> 00:13:37,015  
Since again, one did not live  
necessarily in a Jewish area,

257  
00:13:37,015 --> 00:13:38,640  
since there weren't  
very many of those.

258  
00:13:38,640 --> 00:13:40,950  
There was one, I recall.

259  
00:13:40,950 --> 00:13:44,190  
And I played with  
all these other kids.

260  
00:13:44,190 --> 00:13:50,400  
However, one began to notice  
even at the age of four or five

261  
00:13:50,400 --> 00:13:55,583  
that there were kids who  
had joined the Hitler Youth,

262  
00:13:55,583 --> 00:13:57,000  
and they would  
occasionally appear

263  
00:13:57,000 --> 00:13:59,550  
in uniform, sort of a  
khaki top and black pants

264  
00:13:59,550 --> 00:14:01,260

and they all wore daggers.

265

00:14:01,260 --> 00:14:03,870

And they would say that  
the dagger should not

266

00:14:03,870 --> 00:14:06,660

be pulled out of a scabbard  
unless you actually

267

00:14:06,660 --> 00:14:08,370

plan to use it.

268

00:14:08,370 --> 00:14:09,990

The other game  
and toys that they

269

00:14:09,990 --> 00:14:14,220

liked to play with at the  
time were ball bearings.

270

00:14:14,220 --> 00:14:17,910

Germany had been up  
front in the development

271

00:14:17,910 --> 00:14:20,070

in a factory of ball bearings.

272

00:14:20,070 --> 00:14:22,650

So the big thing was for a  
kid to have a ball bearing.

273

00:14:22,650 --> 00:14:24,108

And they would roll it along.

274

00:14:24,108 --> 00:14:26,400

But of course, the Jewish  
kids couldn't get hold of one

275

00:14:26,400 --> 00:14:28,180

of those, because  
for some reason,



276

00:14:28,180 --> 00:14:30,870

they were only available  
from certain sources

277

00:14:30,870 --> 00:14:34,050

and perhaps through the Nazi  
youth movement or the Hitler

278

00:14:34,050 --> 00:14:34,860

Youth.

279

00:14:34,860 --> 00:14:37,410

And so these kids had  
these ball bearings

280

00:14:37,410 --> 00:14:38,970

with which they played.

281

00:14:38,970 --> 00:14:43,080

And they would always ask  
me as a little kid, are you

282

00:14:43,080 --> 00:14:46,360

a full Jew, are you  
a half a Jew or what?

283

00:14:46,360 --> 00:14:48,420

Because by then, of  
course, they were

284

00:14:48,420 --> 00:14:53,430

being indoctrinated thoroughly  
as to the ills of the Jews,

285

00:14:53,430 --> 00:14:57,000

which they just simply  
accepted and practiced.

286

00:14:57,000 --> 00:14:58,620

I mean, you were  
considered to be

287

00:14:58,620 --> 00:15:04,050  
a Jew and as such and not  
really a member of their group

288  
00:15:04,050 --> 00:15:06,180  
or their society.

289  
00:15:06,180 --> 00:15:10,650  
Although they would not take  
an active or physical role

290  
00:15:10,650 --> 00:15:13,390  
in that, certainly at that time.

291  
00:15:13,390 --> 00:15:15,180  
Two of the kids I  
remember very well.

292  
00:15:15,180 --> 00:15:16,080  
One was my age.

293  
00:15:16,080 --> 00:15:17,640  
One I was a little younger.

294  
00:15:17,640 --> 00:15:20,730  
They were the sons of  
what we call the portier.

295  
00:15:20,730 --> 00:15:24,900  
The portier of an apartment  
building is like the,

296  
00:15:24,900 --> 00:15:27,060  
I don't know what do  
we call it today here.

297  
00:15:27,060 --> 00:15:28,500  
Concierge.

298  
00:15:28,500 --> 00:15:31,530  
This man was responsible for  
all the maintenance and repair

299

00:15:31,530 --> 00:15:33,090  
and he lived in one  
of the apartments

300

00:15:33,090 --> 00:15:37,090  
also on the ground floor,  
just sort of next door.

301

00:15:37,090 --> 00:15:42,170  
In fact, they invited me to one  
of their Christmas Eve fairs.

302

00:15:42,170 --> 00:15:44,830  
Well, he got dressed up as Santa  
Claus and handed out goodies.

303

00:15:44,830 --> 00:15:50,220  
And he also gave me a packet  
of German style cookies.

304

00:15:50,220 --> 00:15:52,680  
And so that was  
kind of interesting.

305

00:15:52,680 --> 00:15:55,678  
I mean, they were not  
openly anti-Semitic.

306

00:15:55,678 --> 00:15:57,720  
They were, of course,  
aware of what was going on.

307

00:15:57,720 --> 00:16:00,870  
I mean, whenever there was  
a major holiday in Germany,

308

00:16:00,870 --> 00:16:05,010  
Adolf Hitler's birthday,  
for example, April the 20th,

309

00:16:05,010 --> 00:16:08,400  
the Nazi swastika flags would  
be hanging from the balconies

310  
00:16:08,400 --> 00:16:09,580  
three stories down.

311  
00:16:09,580 --> 00:16:15,900  
It was very obvious that they  
were all hanging up the flag.

312  
00:16:15,900 --> 00:16:19,890  
Very often there would  
be a uniformed SS,

313  
00:16:19,890 --> 00:16:23,340  
the black uniform,  
the Schutzstaffel,

314  
00:16:23,340 --> 00:16:25,600  
that would be hanging  
around the area

315  
00:16:25,600 --> 00:16:28,770  
or have families living there.

316  
00:16:28,770 --> 00:16:36,060  
This was I'm estimating  
1935, '36 by then.

317  
00:16:36,060 --> 00:16:38,010  
I was four or five years old.

318  
00:16:38,010 --> 00:16:41,400  
In Germany, you started  
school at the age of six

319  
00:16:41,400 --> 00:16:43,440  
and you did not start  
in kindergarten.

320  
00:16:43,440 --> 00:16:46,980  
That's something that is really  
and more of an American thing.

321

00:16:46,980 --> 00:16:49,690  
Although there were  
kindergartens in Germany,

322  
00:16:49,690 --> 00:16:51,870  
these were the nursery schools.

323  
00:16:51,870 --> 00:16:54,630  
So you started the  
equivalent of first grade.

324  
00:16:54,630 --> 00:16:56,690  
Actually, in German  
it's the eighth grade

325  
00:16:56,690 --> 00:16:59,280  
and then went to  
seventh and sixth.

326  
00:16:59,280 --> 00:17:03,840  
Eighth would be achte, which is  
the German term for the eighth.

327  
00:17:03,840 --> 00:17:08,250  
I went to school  
started in 1937.

328  
00:17:08,250 --> 00:17:12,690  
The school was a Jewish  
school, because at that time

329  
00:17:12,690 --> 00:17:16,290  
Jews were no longer allowed  
to go to the regular schools,

330  
00:17:16,290 --> 00:17:18,640  
the public schools in Germany.

331  
00:17:18,640 --> 00:17:20,700  
So this Jewish school  
had been founded

332  
00:17:20,700 --> 00:17:24,180

by a woman of the  
name of Toni Lessler.

333  
00:17:24,180 --> 00:17:26,970  
And she was an  
experienced educator

334  
00:17:26,970 --> 00:17:30,840  
and opened up this  
school in a former villa

335  
00:17:30,840 --> 00:17:34,380  
near the Grunewald, which  
is a very nice area.

336  
00:17:34,380 --> 00:17:38,170  
And I went to school there.

337  
00:17:38,170 --> 00:17:40,510  
The way it worked is  
my parents had a dog.

338  
00:17:40,510 --> 00:17:42,400  
And actually, the  
dog was older than I.

339  
00:17:42,400 --> 00:17:43,900  
And he had an English name.

340  
00:17:43,900 --> 00:17:45,730  
His name was Monkey.

341  
00:17:45,730 --> 00:17:48,100  
And he was a white  
haired terrier.

342  
00:17:48,100 --> 00:17:52,720  
And I would head off for  
school down the street, head

343  
00:17:52,720 --> 00:17:57,450  
for the well known street in  
Berlin called Kurfurstendamm,

344  
00:17:57,450 --> 00:17:58,870  
where I pick up a street car.

345  
00:17:58,870 --> 00:18:00,530  
It was a number 76.

346  
00:18:00,530 --> 00:18:03,040  
And I took it to school.

347  
00:18:03,040 --> 00:18:07,970  
And on my way back, my  
mother would meet me.

348  
00:18:07,970 --> 00:18:09,740  
The dog would sort  
of run back and forth

349  
00:18:09,740 --> 00:18:11,580  
as I was coming down the street.

350  
00:18:11,580 --> 00:18:15,020  
And so I remember that very  
well, of course, in those days.

351  
00:18:15,020 --> 00:18:19,760  
But also that street  
would often be used by--

352  
00:18:19,760 --> 00:18:24,020  
I would often see people  
wearing the Nazi uniform,

353  
00:18:24,020 --> 00:18:28,490  
the Stormtrooper uniform, the  
tan and black or the SS all

354  
00:18:28,490 --> 00:18:29,660  
black.

355  
00:18:29,660 --> 00:18:32,570  
And they would march

up and down the street.

356

00:18:32,570 --> 00:18:35,510

There were lots of them  
around in Berlin, obviously.

357

00:18:35,510 --> 00:18:41,390

So these people-- at  
that time, my looks

358

00:18:41,390 --> 00:18:44,750

were such that I was never  
considered to be Jewish.

359

00:18:44,750 --> 00:18:47,180

I had sort of white  
blond hair and blue eyes.

360

00:18:47,180 --> 00:18:53,300

So at first glance, nobody would  
recognize me as a Jew, at least

361

00:18:53,300 --> 00:18:57,620

from their description of  
what you would look like.

362

00:18:57,620 --> 00:19:00,980

However, once we got on  
the streetcar nearing

363

00:19:00,980 --> 00:19:03,080

Lessler Schule,  
the Jewish school,

364

00:19:03,080 --> 00:19:04,790

there were often  
people on the streetcar

365

00:19:04,790 --> 00:19:07,970

who would make cracks about  
the kids getting off there.

366

00:19:07,970 --> 00:19:12,680



Like, these damn Jews, and something of that order.

367  
00:19:12,680 --> 00:19:15,020  
So you were familiar  
with anti-Semitism right

368  
00:19:15,020 --> 00:19:16,220  
off the bat.

369  
00:19:16,220 --> 00:19:18,372  
Also whenever we  
walked down the street,

370  
00:19:18,372 --> 00:19:20,330  
there were restaurants  
which had signs on them,

371  
00:19:20,330 --> 00:19:22,760  
so Jews not allowed.

372  
00:19:22,760 --> 00:19:27,830  
And then of course in 1937,  
by that time park benches,

373  
00:19:27,830 --> 00:19:30,050  
which were mostly painted  
green, a few of them

374  
00:19:30,050 --> 00:19:34,640  
were repainted yellow and had a  
black J in the center of them.

375  
00:19:34,640 --> 00:19:36,098  
Those were for Jews.

376  
00:19:36,098 --> 00:19:38,390  
Jews were not allowed to sit  
on the green benches, only

377  
00:19:38,390 --> 00:19:40,080  
the yellow benches.

378  
00:19:40,080 --> 00:19:41,510  
So I saw that.

379  
00:19:41,510 --> 00:19:44,960  
And on occasion, my  
father, who was always

380  
00:19:44,960 --> 00:19:47,360  
very interested in many  
different technical things,

381  
00:19:47,360 --> 00:19:50,900  
being sort of an  
engineering mind,

382  
00:19:50,900 --> 00:19:54,140  
we would visit parts of town.

383  
00:19:54,140 --> 00:19:56,930  
He took me to the  
middle of Berlin,

384  
00:19:56,930 --> 00:19:59,910  
called the Berlin Mitte,  
the Unter den Linden,

385  
00:19:59,910 --> 00:20:02,000  
a very famous Avenue.

386  
00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:04,620  
And there was some sort  
of a parade going on.

387  
00:20:04,620 --> 00:20:09,140  
And one of the things that I  
noticed was that Berlin had

388  
00:20:09,140 --> 00:20:14,540  
a police force that wore blue  
uniforms and had sort of black

389  
00:20:14,540 --> 00:20:15,770

shiny [? schÄckels ?].

390  
00:20:15,770 --> 00:20:19,470  
That was a particular style of  
uniform for the Berlin police.

391  
00:20:19,470 --> 00:20:21,410  
They were called Schutzpolizei.

392  
00:20:21,410 --> 00:20:23,930  
But that was  
contracted to Schupo.

393  
00:20:23,930 --> 00:20:27,407  
So you always know that  
was the cop on the beat.

394  
00:20:27,407 --> 00:20:29,240  
And they were usually  
very competent people.

395  
00:20:29,240 --> 00:20:32,120  
They were typical policemen.

396  
00:20:32,120 --> 00:20:37,460  
Except they changed the green  
uniforms for special occasions

397  
00:20:37,460 --> 00:20:40,260  
when they had a Nazi parade  
or something like that.

398  
00:20:40,260 --> 00:20:43,130  
So that was something  
that sticks in my mind

399  
00:20:43,130 --> 00:20:45,260  
as seeing a whole group of  
them rather than wearing

400  
00:20:45,260 --> 00:20:49,970  
their regular blue  
were now wearing green.

401  
00:20:49,970 --> 00:20:52,750  
Unter den Linden, often  
there was a parade

402  
00:20:52,750 --> 00:20:55,690  
and we would watch that, even  
though it was a Nazi parade.

403  
00:20:55,690 --> 00:21:00,340  
I mean, you could still see  
that and see who was marching

404  
00:21:00,340 --> 00:21:02,530  
and you could see them with  
their drums and banners

405  
00:21:02,530 --> 00:21:03,900  
and that sort of thing.

406  
00:21:03,900 --> 00:21:06,400  
The other thing is he would  
take me to the railroad station.

407  
00:21:06,400 --> 00:21:08,112  
He was interested in trains.

408  
00:21:08,112 --> 00:21:09,820  
So there we would see  
all different kinds

409  
00:21:09,820 --> 00:21:10,630  
of trains coming.

410  
00:21:10,630 --> 00:21:15,190  
And one of the famous trains in  
Germany at the time in English

411  
00:21:15,190 --> 00:21:17,500  
would be called the  
flying hamburger.

412

00:21:17,500 --> 00:21:19,100  
[SPEAKING GERMAN]

413  
00:21:19,100 --> 00:21:21,225  
It was a train that ran  
between Hamburg and Berlin.

414  
00:21:21,225 --> 00:21:23,590  
It was a high speed  
train in those days,

415  
00:21:23,590 --> 00:21:25,967  
as fast as you could  
get in that time.

416  
00:21:25,967 --> 00:21:27,800  
So these are some of  
the things we would do.

417  
00:21:27,800 --> 00:21:31,300  
We were still able to do  
these kinds of excursions.

418  
00:21:31,300 --> 00:21:34,240  
However, entrance to  
restaurants or entrance

419  
00:21:34,240 --> 00:21:37,420  
to certain movie  
theaters and entrance

420  
00:21:37,420 --> 00:21:40,090  
to-- in fact, I  
don't recall, I only

421  
00:21:40,090 --> 00:21:42,610  
recall having been  
to a movie once

422  
00:21:42,610 --> 00:21:45,730  
in my whole time in  
Berlin, which was I

423

00:21:45,730 --> 00:21:47,770  
was born in '31 I left in '39.

424  
00:21:47,770 --> 00:21:49,620  
So in those eight years.

425  
00:21:49,620 --> 00:21:54,430  
And that was when I was  
taken one weekend to an aunt

426  
00:21:54,430 --> 00:21:56,260  
of my mother's.

427  
00:21:56,260 --> 00:21:59,350  
She had six aunts  
and two uncles.

428  
00:21:59,350 --> 00:22:04,000  
And the aunt lived in a  
sort of a suburb of Berlin

429  
00:22:04,000 --> 00:22:05,410  
called Karlshorst.

430  
00:22:05,410 --> 00:22:07,945  
It was on the eastern  
part of Berlin.

431  
00:22:07,945 --> 00:22:10,090  
My uncle there was a physician.

432  
00:22:10,090 --> 00:22:11,650  
And they had no children.

433  
00:22:11,650 --> 00:22:13,270  
So I stayed with  
them for the weekend,

434  
00:22:13,270 --> 00:22:15,830  
and she did take me to a movie.

435  
00:22:15,830 --> 00:22:18,670

They were playing a movie  
with Shirley Temple in it.

436  
00:22:18,670 --> 00:22:20,530

It was something where  
she was being chased

437  
00:22:20,530 --> 00:22:23,517

by hordes of horsemen that  
I don't recall exactly

438  
00:22:23,517 --> 00:22:25,600

on the subject or what the  
title of the movie was,

439  
00:22:25,600 --> 00:22:29,305

but that was one of my  
entertainments in Berlin.

440  
00:22:29,305 --> 00:22:32,330

441  
00:22:32,330 --> 00:22:36,880

But going back to the school,  
the Lessler Schule, that

442  
00:22:36,880 --> 00:22:38,860

had a sort of an interesting--

443  
00:22:38,860 --> 00:22:40,440

I don't know if I  
should move ahead.

444  
00:22:40,440 --> 00:22:42,760

This is like a flashback thing.

445  
00:22:42,760 --> 00:22:46,390

Lessler Schule, as I mentioned,  
was run by Toni Lessler.

446  
00:22:46,390 --> 00:22:50,050

It had all the grades up through  
the, well, the last years

447  
00:22:50,050 --> 00:22:54,160  
of the equivalent of  
high school in Germany.

448  
00:22:54,160 --> 00:22:59,440  
So it must've been about 12  
different grades in the school.

449  
00:22:59,440 --> 00:23:02,710  
There was a dean of  
students who my parents knew

450  
00:23:02,710 --> 00:23:04,150  
sort of socially.

451  
00:23:04,150 --> 00:23:07,990  
And he was a sort  
of disciplinarian.

452  
00:23:07,990 --> 00:23:10,270  
And I had a few run ins  
with him because I always

453  
00:23:10,270 --> 00:23:13,720  
was the kind of kid  
that liked to goof off

454  
00:23:13,720 --> 00:23:16,750  
or do different things.

455  
00:23:16,750 --> 00:23:21,940  
When I entered the first  
grade, before we go further,

456  
00:23:21,940 --> 00:23:23,440  
I just want to  
identify the district

457  
00:23:23,440 --> 00:23:24,970  
that I lived in in Germany.

458



00:23:24,970 --> 00:23:27,480  
As I mentioned, the street's  
name was [INAUDIBLE]..

459  
00:23:27,480 --> 00:23:28,990  
Sort of a weird name.

460  
00:23:28,990 --> 00:23:32,440  
And it was just a short  
block dead end street

461  
00:23:32,440 --> 00:23:36,070  
and led off from a larger street  
called Paulsborner Strasse.

462  
00:23:36,070 --> 00:23:39,730  
The actual area's  
name was Halensee.

463  
00:23:39,730 --> 00:23:42,220  
And it was sort of near  
Charlottenburg, which

464  
00:23:42,220 --> 00:23:44,980  
is a major district of Berlin.

465  
00:23:44,980 --> 00:23:48,100  
If one were to look at a  
map, it would be sort of

466  
00:23:48,100 --> 00:23:56,140  
in the slightly south  
central area of Berlin.

467  
00:23:56,140 --> 00:24:00,070  
It is today close to the  
Konrad Adenauer Platz.

468  
00:24:00,070 --> 00:24:04,330  
That, of course, that name  
is more recent than that,

469  
00:24:04,330 --> 00:24:05,680

dating back from that period.

470  
00:24:05,680 --> 00:24:08,710  
There is a very large  
church, a red brick church,

471  
00:24:08,710 --> 00:24:09,760  
in that neighborhood.

472  
00:24:09,760 --> 00:24:15,520  
And there is a playground that  
my mother used to take me to.

473  
00:24:15,520 --> 00:24:17,550  
It had a large sandlot.

474  
00:24:17,550 --> 00:24:19,510  
And I recall playing there.

475  
00:24:19,510 --> 00:24:22,180  
In fact, I recall playing  
there with a Turkish kid.

476  
00:24:22,180 --> 00:24:23,980  
He was a son of a  
consul or something

477  
00:24:23,980 --> 00:24:27,280  
like that and in the sandlot.

478  
00:24:27,280 --> 00:24:31,090  
And strangely enough, a few  
years ago in 1992 and also

479  
00:24:31,090 --> 00:24:37,360  
again 1995, I was back  
in Berlin and went back

480  
00:24:37,360 --> 00:24:39,050  
to that same playground.

481  
00:24:39,050 --> 00:24:41,890

It's still there and  
has the same name.

482  
00:24:41,890 --> 00:24:47,440  
It's Hochmeisterplatz is  
the name of the playground.

483  
00:24:47,440 --> 00:24:50,770  
And the name of the church  
is the Hochmeisterkirche,

484  
00:24:50,770 --> 00:24:52,840  
which is about a block away.

485  
00:24:52,840 --> 00:24:54,610  
Would you characterize  
this neighborhood

486  
00:24:54,610 --> 00:24:55,990  
as upper middle class?

487  
00:24:55,990 --> 00:25:00,260  
And I assume also it  
was mixed religiously.

488  
00:25:00,260 --> 00:25:00,760  
Yes.

489  
00:25:00,760 --> 00:25:03,430  
It was, of course,  
mixed religiously.

490  
00:25:03,430 --> 00:25:07,630  
Predominantly German  
Lutheran or Evangelisch

491  
00:25:07,630 --> 00:25:11,710  
is what the Germans call  
the Protestant faith.

492  
00:25:11,710 --> 00:25:14,390  
Jews live there.

493

00:25:14,390 --> 00:25:15,910

I think if you take  
a look at Berlin

494

00:25:15,910 --> 00:25:19,810

with probably population  
of a million or more,

495

00:25:19,810 --> 00:25:23,560

Jews numbering about 150,000.

496

00:25:23,560 --> 00:25:28,420

We're talking anywhere from  
6% to 10% or more Jewish,

497

00:25:28,420 --> 00:25:30,580

something in that neighborhood.

498

00:25:30,580 --> 00:25:32,500

Relatively well mixed  
throughout Berlin

499

00:25:32,500 --> 00:25:38,350

except for one area, which was  
where the name of the streets

500

00:25:38,350 --> 00:25:41,950

were like Grenadierstrasse  
or [PLACE NAME]..

501

00:25:41,950 --> 00:25:46,390

That area was largely  
inhabited by Jews

502

00:25:46,390 --> 00:25:49,780

who were more recent immigrants  
from places in the east,

503

00:25:49,780 --> 00:25:52,920

such as Poland.

504

00:25:52,920 --> 00:25:55,210

Had a fairly good  
sized community

505  
00:25:55,210 --> 00:26:00,610  
of people who were refugees  
from Polish persecution

506  
00:26:00,610 --> 00:26:07,210  
and became integrated into the  
German Jewish community slowly.

507  
00:26:07,210 --> 00:26:11,320  
But they in many cases  
lived in one area,

508  
00:26:11,320 --> 00:26:14,720  
as is fairly usual  
for new immigrants.

509  
00:26:14,720 --> 00:26:18,950  
But the area we lived  
in is hard to classify.

510  
00:26:18,950 --> 00:26:21,890  
Probably middle class  
to upper middle class.

511  
00:26:21,890 --> 00:26:23,720  
In that particular  
area of Halensee,

512  
00:26:23,720 --> 00:26:27,650  
there were villas, individual  
homes in those days,

513  
00:26:27,650 --> 00:26:32,090  
which of course were  
relatively expensive and used

514  
00:26:32,090 --> 00:26:33,860  
by the well-to-do.

515  
00:26:33,860 --> 00:26:37,850

There was a railroad  
station not far away.

516  
00:26:37,850 --> 00:26:42,370  
There was-- I don't  
recall too much else.

517  
00:26:42,370 --> 00:26:47,770  
Primarily residential,  
most of that area.

518  
00:26:47,770 --> 00:26:50,930  
We were talking about  
the school, I believe.

519  
00:26:50,930 --> 00:26:55,030  
Oh, and I wanted to ask you, was  
this a public school or was it

520  
00:26:55,030 --> 00:26:56,500  
a private school?

521  
00:26:56,500 --> 00:27:01,000  
And were you required to go to  
a Jewish school at that time?

522  
00:27:01,000 --> 00:27:02,740  
Yes, the school was  
a private school,

523  
00:27:02,740 --> 00:27:06,610  
as I mentioned, run by  
Toni Lessler and her staff.

524  
00:27:06,610 --> 00:27:11,020  
And we were forced to  
go to schools like that

525  
00:27:11,020 --> 00:27:13,330  
because we were no  
longer allowed to attend

526  
00:27:13,330 --> 00:27:15,730

German public schools.

527

00:27:15,730 --> 00:27:19,060

All Jewish children  
were sent off away

528

00:27:19,060 --> 00:27:23,300

from the public schools and  
had to attend a private school,

529

00:27:23,300 --> 00:27:25,480

a Jewish school.

530

00:27:25,480 --> 00:27:27,910

Let me rephrase the  
question slightly.

531

00:27:27,910 --> 00:27:32,960

I've interviewed people who  
had to go to Jewish schools,

532

00:27:32,960 --> 00:27:36,890

but those Jewish schools  
were funded by the government

533

00:27:36,890 --> 00:27:39,140

for the public.

534

00:27:39,140 --> 00:27:42,620

It sounds like that what you're  
saying, at least about Berlin

535

00:27:42,620 --> 00:27:45,800

in particular, if not  
Germany as a whole,

536

00:27:45,800 --> 00:27:50,510

you couldn't go to the  
normal public schools,

537

00:27:50,510 --> 00:27:53,570

but public Jewish schools  
were not furnished for you

538  
00:27:53,570 --> 00:27:56,520  
or paid for by the government.

539  
00:27:56,520 --> 00:27:59,870  
I don't remember that precisely.

540  
00:27:59,870 --> 00:28:06,290  
There may have been some public  
schools financed by the state.

541  
00:28:06,290 --> 00:28:07,700  
I'm not aware of it, though.

542  
00:28:07,700 --> 00:28:10,640  
I wouldn't have that  
piece of information.

543  
00:28:10,640 --> 00:28:12,440  
This particular  
school I don't believe

544  
00:28:12,440 --> 00:28:14,780  
was financed by the state.

545  
00:28:14,780 --> 00:28:17,150  
There were several  
schools like that.

546  
00:28:17,150 --> 00:28:19,520  
An interesting facet  
about this school

547  
00:28:19,520 --> 00:28:23,150  
was the fact that Toni  
Lessler left Germany

548  
00:28:23,150 --> 00:28:25,310  
in the middle of 1939.

549  
00:28:25,310 --> 00:28:28,540  
We left in February of '39.



550

00:28:28,540 --> 00:28:34,670

And I only found out  
a year ago, 1996,

551

00:28:34,670 --> 00:28:39,440

through an interesting  
method that currently

552

00:28:39,440 --> 00:28:42,200

in the '90s, '80s  
and '90s, Berlin

553

00:28:42,200 --> 00:28:45,740

publishes a little  
newsletter which

554

00:28:45,740 --> 00:28:50,920

they send to former inhabitants,  
Jewish inhabitants of Berlin.

555

00:28:50,920 --> 00:28:54,470

And in it, I found  
an ad by a man who

556

00:28:54,470 --> 00:28:56,960

attended this Lessler Schule.

557

00:28:56,960 --> 00:28:58,700

This was the first  
time I'd ever heard

558

00:28:58,700 --> 00:29:03,070

of anyone that went to  
the same school as I did.

559

00:29:03,070 --> 00:29:04,280

I contacted him.

560

00:29:04,280 --> 00:29:06,100

He lives in Toronto.

561

00:29:06,100 --> 00:29:08,830  
And I actually had lunch  
with him on one of my trips

562  
00:29:08,830 --> 00:29:10,600  
up to Toronto.

563  
00:29:10,600 --> 00:29:17,740  
And he revealed to me that  
when this Toni Lessler left

564  
00:29:17,740 --> 00:29:21,520  
the school, another woman  
educator took it over,

565  
00:29:21,520 --> 00:29:23,410  
and her name was Goldschmidt.

566  
00:29:23,410 --> 00:29:27,300  
And from then on, the school was  
called the Goldschmidt Schule.

567  
00:29:27,300 --> 00:29:30,530  
The Goldschmidt Schule is  
well known for two reasons.

568  
00:29:30,530 --> 00:29:36,310  
Number one, the book  
Stella by Whitmer.

569  
00:29:36,310 --> 00:29:37,080  
I forgot.

570  
00:29:37,080 --> 00:29:43,270  
Anyway, a person, Stella, went  
to the Goldschmidt Schule.

571  
00:29:43,270 --> 00:29:44,480  
That's one thing.

572  
00:29:44,480 --> 00:29:47,230  
The other is the United  
States Holocaust Memorial

573  
00:29:47,230 --> 00:29:49,060  
Museum on the fourth  
floor where you

574  
00:29:49,060 --> 00:29:52,570  
begin the permanent  
exhibition, there is a video.

575  
00:29:52,570 --> 00:29:56,590  
It's close to where the  
movie on anti-Semitism is.

576  
00:29:56,590 --> 00:29:59,290  
And that video shows  
children in a school.

577  
00:29:59,290 --> 00:30:01,180  
Which when I always  
looked at it, the school

578  
00:30:01,180 --> 00:30:02,950  
looked awfully familiar.

579  
00:30:02,950 --> 00:30:06,190  
And it shows that kids writing  
Hebrew on the blackboard

580  
00:30:06,190 --> 00:30:08,020  
and shows them at  
various activities,

581  
00:30:08,020 --> 00:30:09,500  
all Jewish children.

582  
00:30:09,500 --> 00:30:12,690  
And at the end it says,  
Goldschmidt Schule.

583  
00:30:12,690 --> 00:30:14,470  
And I always thought,  
well, that must

584

00:30:14,470 --> 00:30:16,840

have been that other school  
called Goldschmidt Schule.

585

00:30:16,840 --> 00:30:19,600

I now know that was my  
school, Lessler Schule,

586

00:30:19,600 --> 00:30:23,820

because it changed names  
in the middle of 1939.

587

00:30:23,820 --> 00:30:26,133

57 years later, I  
finally discovered

588

00:30:26,133 --> 00:30:27,550

that that's what  
I've been looking

589

00:30:27,550 --> 00:30:31,320

at when I'm on duty up on the  
fourth floor as a volunteer.

590

00:30:31,320 --> 00:30:37,280

I see that and I now realize  
that was really my school.

591

00:30:37,280 --> 00:30:39,310

So it's a strange feeling.

592

00:30:39,310 --> 00:30:42,100

593

00:30:42,100 --> 00:30:44,620

You were going to tell me  
something about the school

594

00:30:44,620 --> 00:30:45,400

itself.

595

00:30:45,400 --> 00:30:48,460

And I assume there were  
certain unique characteristics

596  
00:30:48,460 --> 00:30:53,230  
of her teaching methods or the  
way this school was conducted.

597  
00:30:53,230 --> 00:30:55,450  
Well, the unique  
thing about the school

598  
00:30:55,450 --> 00:30:57,930  
was that certainly  
at that time, we're

599  
00:30:57,930 --> 00:31:02,170  
talking now about the  
years 1936 through 1939,

600  
00:31:02,170 --> 00:31:06,640  
I went there actually for  
two years, '37 through '39.

601  
00:31:06,640 --> 00:31:11,410  
The school mixed the required  
curriculum in all the fields,

602  
00:31:11,410 --> 00:31:13,060  
arithmetic and writing.

603  
00:31:13,060 --> 00:31:15,490  
And at that time,  
the first year,

604  
00:31:15,490 --> 00:31:17,890  
we had to learn the old  
German style script,

605  
00:31:17,890 --> 00:31:22,110  
which is called SÄ¼tterlin,  
which no one else could read.

606  
00:31:22,110 --> 00:31:23,710

But that's how we began school.

607

00:31:23,710 --> 00:31:26,195

Only in our second year  
did we learn the Latin,

608

00:31:26,195 --> 00:31:27,070

which is very useful.

609

00:31:27,070 --> 00:31:30,550

Because once I emigrated,  
Latin was the only thing,

610

00:31:30,550 --> 00:31:34,480

and SÄ¼tterlin would have  
really fouled me up royally.

611

00:31:34,480 --> 00:31:37,310

However, this school  
also, of course,

612

00:31:37,310 --> 00:31:41,650

had a Jewish component,  
which meant that everyone who

613

00:31:41,650 --> 00:31:44,290

went there took the  
religious part of it, which

614

00:31:44,290 --> 00:31:47,890

is the holidays, the  
practices, the Jewish religion,

615

00:31:47,890 --> 00:31:52,000

its history, its  
current condition.

616

00:31:52,000 --> 00:31:56,092

We learned Hebrew,  
to write and to read.

617

00:31:56,092 --> 00:31:57,550

And of course, at

the same time, we

618  
00:31:57,550 --> 00:32:00,010  
learned to read  
and write German.

619  
00:32:00,010 --> 00:32:03,400  
So it had all those  
features of a complete

620  
00:32:03,400 --> 00:32:05,620  
what you say in the  
United States would

621  
00:32:05,620 --> 00:32:09,370  
be a Jewish high school  
or Jewish day school.

622  
00:32:09,370 --> 00:32:12,520  
And it had excellent teachers,  
because those teachers also

623  
00:32:12,520 --> 00:32:15,790  
were no longer able to work in  
the public or other schools.

624  
00:32:15,790 --> 00:32:18,050  
So they went to  
work in this school.

625  
00:32:18,050 --> 00:32:20,185  
So we had some of the  
finest teachers in Germany

626  
00:32:20,185 --> 00:32:22,240  
in these schools.

627  
00:32:22,240 --> 00:32:26,390  
And Jews, of course,  
value education,

628  
00:32:26,390 --> 00:32:28,990  
and so this worked

extremely well.

629

00:32:28,990 --> 00:32:33,520

People who went to those schools  
got an excellent education.

630

00:32:33,520 --> 00:32:38,570

I only attended two years,  
so my experience is limited.

631

00:32:38,570 --> 00:32:41,890

However, we also did excursions.

632

00:32:41,890 --> 00:32:46,360

We were still able to go out  
of town or in town to parks

633

00:32:46,360 --> 00:32:49,270

to view things as a group.

634

00:32:49,270 --> 00:32:51,550

This was always awkward,  
because in public

635

00:32:51,550 --> 00:32:53,860

with a large group  
of Jewish children,

636

00:32:53,860 --> 00:32:55,810

there would be all  
kinds of things

637

00:32:55,810 --> 00:32:58,720

that you'd hear from  
bystanders, Germans.

638

00:32:58,720 --> 00:33:02,830

Any notion that the Germans had  
no knowledge or had no feeling

639

00:33:02,830 --> 00:33:07,510

or had no sense of what  
was occurring is not true.



640  
00:33:07,510 --> 00:33:08,830  
They certainly did.

641  
00:33:08,830 --> 00:33:11,920  
They were fully aware  
of the situation.

642  
00:33:11,920 --> 00:33:17,340  
Anti-Semitism at that time  
in Germany was predominant.

643  
00:33:17,340 --> 00:33:19,420  
You find it at  
every street corner.

644  
00:33:19,420 --> 00:33:22,950  
That was a given.

645  
00:33:22,950 --> 00:33:25,840  
For example, there  
was a small store

646  
00:33:25,840 --> 00:33:27,287  
on the corner of  
our street where

647  
00:33:27,287 --> 00:33:29,370  
you could buy milk and  
bread and things like that.

648  
00:33:29,370 --> 00:33:30,490  
So a small chain.

649  
00:33:30,490 --> 00:33:34,510  
The actual name of the chain was  
Bolle B-O-L-L-E with a little

650  
00:33:34,510 --> 00:33:38,460  
accent on the E. And  
they also had a logo,

651

00:33:38,460 --> 00:33:42,280  
which is like a little man  
but just a line drawing.

652  
00:33:42,280 --> 00:33:45,280  
And you'd walk in there and the  
Germans would come in there.

653  
00:33:45,280 --> 00:33:49,570  
Very often they would walk  
in and give the Nazi salute

654  
00:33:49,570 --> 00:33:52,570  
and say Heil Hitler as a common  
greeting, and when they left

655  
00:33:52,570 --> 00:33:55,060  
they did the same thing.

656  
00:33:55,060 --> 00:33:59,860  
And as a Jew, the  
discrimination was

657  
00:33:59,860 --> 00:34:02,230  
rampant and obvious and open.

658  
00:34:02,230 --> 00:34:05,530  
There was no covert activity.

659  
00:34:05,530 --> 00:34:08,380  
Sure, many Germans were  
uncomfortable with this

660  
00:34:08,380 --> 00:34:14,179  
and openly did not participate,  
but a great many did.

661  
00:34:14,179 --> 00:34:17,320  
So you were always  
in that situation

662  
00:34:17,320 --> 00:34:19,840  
where either you

could not enter,

663

00:34:19,840 --> 00:34:27,070

you were cursed or somehow  
excluded or whatever.

664

00:34:27,070 --> 00:34:30,250

You were certainly not a  
equal member of society.

665

00:34:30,250 --> 00:34:33,639

That was obvious every day  
and every hour of the day,

666

00:34:33,639 --> 00:34:35,580

essentially, once you  
were out in the open.

667

00:34:35,580 --> 00:34:38,679

And every time you listened  
to the radio, same thing.

668

00:34:38,679 --> 00:34:41,750

669

00:34:41,750 --> 00:34:43,340

When you were with  
your school, you

670

00:34:43,340 --> 00:34:46,880

said that there were  
anti-Semitic comments or acts.

671

00:34:46,880 --> 00:34:49,650

I assume that you were  
identifiably Jewish

672

00:34:49,650 --> 00:34:52,130

as a group of  
children with teachers

673

00:34:52,130 --> 00:34:55,550

and the people around you

knew that you were Jewish.

674

00:34:55,550 --> 00:35:02,030

And I wanted to ask you  
if you remember armbands

675

00:35:02,030 --> 00:35:05,180

and any other characteristics  
that would have told people

676

00:35:05,180 --> 00:35:07,550

that you were Jewish.

677

00:35:07,550 --> 00:35:12,260

At that time, that is where  
I'm going up through 1939,

678

00:35:12,260 --> 00:35:14,600

Jews in Germany were  
still not required

679

00:35:14,600 --> 00:35:15,740

to wear the yellow star.

680

00:35:15,740 --> 00:35:18,800

That occurred some years  
later, a year or so later.

681

00:35:18,800 --> 00:35:20,830

There were no actual  
badges required,

682

00:35:20,830 --> 00:35:24,380

no armbands required,  
nothing of that sort.

683

00:35:24,380 --> 00:35:27,110

These things did  
come about later.

684

00:35:27,110 --> 00:35:33,200

However, let's face it,  
a small group or a larger

685  
00:35:33,200 --> 00:35:37,670  
group of children  
with teachers, I

686  
00:35:37,670 --> 00:35:42,680  
guess there were characteristics  
that identified us as Jews.

687  
00:35:42,680 --> 00:35:47,130  
And since perhaps the largest--

688  
00:35:47,130 --> 00:35:49,210  
there were not a  
large number of people

689  
00:35:49,210 --> 00:35:52,870  
with blond hair and  
blue eyes like mine

690  
00:35:52,870 --> 00:35:56,020  
and perhaps some  
darker in complexion

691  
00:35:56,020 --> 00:35:59,830  
possibly or with other  
facial characteristics

692  
00:35:59,830 --> 00:36:05,800  
that one would expect to  
find among Jews, particularly

693  
00:36:05,800 --> 00:36:06,910  
if you were a German.

694  
00:36:06,910 --> 00:36:08,410  
Because by that  
time, they were so

695  
00:36:08,410 --> 00:36:12,820  
keyed on the racial and  
physical characteristics

696

00:36:12,820 --> 00:36:16,450

as being depicted on  
the pictures and posters

697

00:36:16,450 --> 00:36:21,340

and other descriptions  
that they began

698

00:36:21,340 --> 00:36:26,470

to sense very quickly  
that you were Jewish.

699

00:36:26,470 --> 00:36:31,270

In the school itself, and  
you may have been too young,

700

00:36:31,270 --> 00:36:35,980

but if you were discussing  
any kind of German history

701

00:36:35,980 --> 00:36:39,010

or information about  
the German government,

702

00:36:39,010 --> 00:36:40,810

I was curious what  
you remembered

703

00:36:40,810 --> 00:36:45,580

about how that material was  
presented to the children.

704

00:36:45,580 --> 00:36:47,450

I was perhaps too  
young for classes

705

00:36:47,450 --> 00:36:50,990

that dealt in politics  
or in government.

706

00:36:50,990 --> 00:36:53,270

By and large, those  
subjects were not

707  
00:36:53,270 --> 00:36:57,950  
taught at the elementary level.

708  
00:36:57,950 --> 00:37:02,070  
There was some history  
dealing with, well,

709  
00:37:02,070 --> 00:37:04,640  
in those days, of course,  
the First World War and times

710  
00:37:04,640 --> 00:37:05,980  
before.

711  
00:37:05,980 --> 00:37:10,190  
And the First World War saw Jews  
as part of the German society.

712  
00:37:10,190 --> 00:37:12,920  
Although, again, there was  
certainly anti-Semitism.

713  
00:37:12,920 --> 00:37:15,170  
However, as I mentioned  
about my two grandfathers,

714  
00:37:15,170 --> 00:37:18,020  
both served in the German army.

715  
00:37:18,020 --> 00:37:19,722  
My grandfather had  
the rank of major.

716  
00:37:19,722 --> 00:37:21,680  
That's from my mother's  
side, the veterinarian.

717  
00:37:21,680 --> 00:37:24,350  
He was the regimental  
veterinarian.

718

00:37:24,350 --> 00:37:27,700  
And the other grandfather,  
I don't know what he was.

719  
00:37:27,700 --> 00:37:31,370  
I'm just guessing he probably  
was an enlisted person.

720  
00:37:31,370 --> 00:37:37,940  
So the history was given--

721  
00:37:37,940 --> 00:37:41,690  
I don't remember as  
having gotten much there.

722  
00:37:41,690 --> 00:37:46,220  
Certainly at my age, I was  
six, seven, eight years old.

723  
00:37:46,220 --> 00:37:49,790  
Politics, they stayed  
away from that by

724  
00:37:49,790 --> 00:37:53,390  
and large, a Jewish school with  
the conditions and situation

725  
00:37:53,390 --> 00:37:55,010  
as it was.

726  
00:37:55,010 --> 00:37:57,920  
There was at one time when  
another group of children

727  
00:37:57,920 --> 00:38:01,250  
joined us because they  
had to leave the building

728  
00:38:01,250 --> 00:38:06,290  
and that was their school  
that was being taken over,

729  
00:38:06,290 --> 00:38:07,100



expropriated.

730  
00:38:07,100 --> 00:38:10,300  
And so they had to  
join our school.

731  
00:38:10,300 --> 00:38:15,080  
And so there was this  
tremendous tension.

732  
00:38:15,080 --> 00:38:19,280  
However, I do  
recall one episode.

733  
00:38:19,280 --> 00:38:21,635  
Well, this had to do  
more with Judaism.

734  
00:38:21,635 --> 00:38:24,370

735  
00:38:24,370 --> 00:38:25,450  
There was the-- I forgot.

736  
00:38:25,450 --> 00:38:28,580  
It was one of the  
festival, Jewish festivals.

737  
00:38:28,580 --> 00:38:33,060  
It was Sukkot, where we  
were given a grapefruit.

738  
00:38:33,060 --> 00:38:37,010  
And that was an unusual fruit  
for that part of the world,

739  
00:38:37,010 --> 00:38:39,260  
but they were  
available, apparently.

740  
00:38:39,260 --> 00:38:43,820  
And our teacher, who was called  
Miss Fraulein [PERSONAL NAME]

741  
00:38:43,820 --> 00:38:48,350  
was her name, and explained  
the meaning of all of this.

742  
00:38:48,350 --> 00:38:51,420  
But I don't recall a  
great deal of politics,

743  
00:38:51,420 --> 00:38:54,880  
history being taught or  
discussed at that level,

744  
00:38:54,880 --> 00:38:56,440  
anyway.

745  
00:38:56,440 --> 00:38:59,560  
Do you remember government  
inspectors or any government

746  
00:38:59,560 --> 00:39:04,990  
officials coming to the school  
to look it over for any purpose

747  
00:39:04,990 --> 00:39:06,910  
while you were there?

748  
00:39:06,910 --> 00:39:07,920  
No, I don't.

749  
00:39:07,920 --> 00:39:15,980

750  
00:39:15,980 --> 00:39:17,510  
This is Nancy Alper.

751  
00:39:17,510 --> 00:39:21,140  
I'm interviewing Frank Ephraim  
for the United States Holocaust

752  
00:39:21,140 --> 00:39:22,910  
Memorial Museum.

753  
00:39:22,910 --> 00:39:27,140  
It's February the 28th, 1997.

754  
00:39:27,140 --> 00:39:30,090  
And this is the  
second side, side B,

755  
00:39:30,090 --> 00:39:33,770  
of the first tape  
of our interview.

756  
00:39:33,770 --> 00:39:37,280  
Frank, I was getting  
ready to ask you,

757  
00:39:37,280 --> 00:39:42,710  
I know that by then the ban  
on Jews being in public places

758  
00:39:42,710 --> 00:39:45,950  
had occurred, or at least  
that's my understanding.

759  
00:39:45,950 --> 00:39:50,270  
And you mentioned the schools  
going out occasionally

760  
00:39:50,270 --> 00:39:51,980  
on excursions.

761  
00:39:51,980 --> 00:39:55,460  
And I'm wondering how that  
worked, given that there

762  
00:39:55,460 --> 00:39:57,610  
was a ban on Jews in public.

763  
00:39:57,610 --> 00:40:00,250

764  
00:40:00,250 --> 00:40:04,670

The way it worked, the  
excursions were very limited.

765  
00:40:04,670 --> 00:40:09,340  
They were in one instance I  
recall going out to a park.

766  
00:40:09,340 --> 00:40:11,330  
Or actually that  
was the Grunewald,

767  
00:40:11,330 --> 00:40:15,550  
which is a park in  
the city of Berlin.

768  
00:40:15,550 --> 00:40:18,670  
Where we just walked, took  
sort of a nature walk,

769  
00:40:18,670 --> 00:40:20,770  
if you will and had a picnic.

770  
00:40:20,770 --> 00:40:23,680  
We brought our own food  
and looked at trees

771  
00:40:23,680 --> 00:40:26,440  
and looked at birds and  
looked at foliage and shrubs.

772  
00:40:26,440 --> 00:40:28,960  
And the teachers  
accompanying us were

773  
00:40:28,960 --> 00:40:32,720  
[INAUDIBLE] explain things.

774  
00:40:32,720 --> 00:40:36,200  
The other thing, quite  
aside from the school

775  
00:40:36,200 --> 00:40:42,130  
I went to in Berlin, my

parents sent me for two summers

776

00:40:42,130 --> 00:40:46,600

and, let me see, it must  
have been the summer of '36

777

00:40:46,600 --> 00:40:50,350

and the summer of '37  
or it was '37 and '38.

778

00:40:50,350 --> 00:40:52,150

I forgot which one.

779

00:40:52,150 --> 00:40:58,060

They sent me to a camp  
in the Riesengebirge,

780

00:40:58,060 --> 00:41:00,550

which is near Czechoslovakia.

781

00:41:00,550 --> 00:41:03,790

And that camp was  
actually a mountain camp.

782

00:41:03,790 --> 00:41:08,560

A huge home, all Jewish,  
run by two women.

783

00:41:08,560 --> 00:41:10,940

One was a PhD, a doctor.

784

00:41:10,940 --> 00:41:12,820

One was actually  
a medical doctor

785

00:41:12,820 --> 00:41:16,030

and the other one was  
a PhD in education.

786

00:41:16,030 --> 00:41:19,000

And they ran this home  
all year, actually.

787

00:41:19,000 --> 00:41:24,610

But in the summer, they would  
take children of various ages.

788

00:41:24,610 --> 00:41:27,340

And it was a full  
boarding and everything.

789

00:41:27,340 --> 00:41:30,790

And there we actually  
went on long excursions

790

00:41:30,790 --> 00:41:35,740

in the mountains and the  
forests and over rushing

791

00:41:35,740 --> 00:41:38,620

streams that we had to cross.

792

00:41:38,620 --> 00:41:40,870

So that was a very  
delightful experience.

793

00:41:40,870 --> 00:41:42,070

I would go up by train.

794

00:41:42,070 --> 00:41:43,420

My mother would take me.

795

00:41:43,420 --> 00:41:46,210

She would actually take me to  
the place and then go back.

796

00:41:46,210 --> 00:41:50,450

And I would stay there for  
approximately six weeks.

797

00:41:50,450 --> 00:41:54,180

And again, this was  
during the Nazi regime.

798

00:41:54,180 --> 00:41:57,240

That place was operating.

799

00:41:57,240 --> 00:41:59,130

It was all Jewish.

800

00:41:59,130 --> 00:42:04,170

And as far as I know, I don't  
know how long it operated.

801

00:42:04,170 --> 00:42:06,990

I doubt much past 1939.

802

00:42:06,990 --> 00:42:11,940

But that was an extra added  
experience in the summer.

803

00:42:11,940 --> 00:42:17,150

Going back to the  
Lessler Schule in Berlin,

804

00:42:17,150 --> 00:42:20,960

as I mentioned before, it  
was a mix of education.

805

00:42:20,960 --> 00:42:24,350

There was a fairly strong  
effort to educate children

806

00:42:24,350 --> 00:42:28,790

in the Jewish faith and  
the Jewish practices.

807

00:42:28,790 --> 00:42:34,040

This was not a reform  
type of Judaism.

808

00:42:34,040 --> 00:42:37,130

Perhaps people  
often misunderstand.

809

00:42:37,130 --> 00:42:40,340

Although Reform Judaism was  
perhaps first formulated

810  
00:42:40,340 --> 00:42:42,650  
in Germany or in  
Europe, it never

811  
00:42:42,650 --> 00:42:44,810  
grew to any kind of  
dimension that we

812  
00:42:44,810 --> 00:42:48,850  
know of in this country,  
in the United States today.

813  
00:42:48,850 --> 00:42:52,280  
It was a very small affair.

814  
00:42:52,280 --> 00:42:59,450  
The predominant gradations  
were the orthodoxy and even

815  
00:42:59,450 --> 00:43:02,080  
much larger were the  
conservative movements

816  
00:43:02,080 --> 00:43:05,150  
of various shades or levels.

817  
00:43:05,150 --> 00:43:10,588  
So that most of the synagogues  
in Berlin were conservative.

818  
00:43:10,588 --> 00:43:12,130  
There was none that  
I recall that was

819  
00:43:12,130 --> 00:43:15,120  
quote "reform" unquote.

820  
00:43:15,120 --> 00:43:18,690  
So that's pretty much all I  
remember about the school.

821



00:43:18,690 --> 00:43:21,040  
Although one thing,  
the very first day

822  
00:43:21,040 --> 00:43:24,930  
that I went to school, we all  
followed the German tradition,

823  
00:43:24,930 --> 00:43:29,880  
which is every child received  
from parents and relatives sort

824  
00:43:29,880 --> 00:43:36,900  
of a large bag full of candy,  
of different kinds of candy.

825  
00:43:36,900 --> 00:43:38,872  
It's shaped like a  
cone, a huge cone.

826  
00:43:38,872 --> 00:43:40,080  
And it came in various sizes.

827  
00:43:40,080 --> 00:43:42,690  
Anything from about a  
foot to about three feet

828  
00:43:42,690 --> 00:43:47,400  
long, which was filled with  
boxes of candy or candies

829  
00:43:47,400 --> 00:43:50,050  
in bags or that sort of thing.

830  
00:43:50,050 --> 00:43:54,330  
It's a traditional  
German type of event

831  
00:43:54,330 --> 00:43:58,140  
which occurs when the  
child goes to his very

832  
00:43:58,140 --> 00:44:00,940

first class in a school.

833

00:44:00,940 --> 00:44:05,970

So the Jewish school also followed that practice.

834

00:44:05,970 --> 00:44:08,340

In fact, they followed every German practice.

835

00:44:08,340 --> 00:44:10,620

Because after all, the people that

836

00:44:10,620 --> 00:44:15,240

went there and their parents were of the German culture

837

00:44:15,240 --> 00:44:17,610

in addition to being Jewish.

838

00:44:17,610 --> 00:44:19,170

So it was a dual thing.

839

00:44:19,170 --> 00:44:24,240

But things of that nature were done in German style.

840

00:44:24,240 --> 00:44:30,780

Do you remember supplies or materials changing,

841

00:44:30,780 --> 00:44:33,200

conditions changing at the school,

842

00:44:33,200 --> 00:44:38,400

I understand this is the child's impression, up until the time

843

00:44:38,400 --> 00:44:43,470

that you and your parents fled Berlin?

844  
00:44:43,470 --> 00:44:47,220  
Well, I did not notice  
anything in particular.

845  
00:44:47,220 --> 00:44:49,620  
One of the things  
that I did notice

846  
00:44:49,620 --> 00:44:54,720  
was that the Germans certainly  
in Berlin, as far as I know,

847  
00:44:54,720 --> 00:44:59,160  
began a program of conservation.

848  
00:44:59,160 --> 00:45:02,160  
In other words, they  
offered two or three

849  
00:45:02,160 --> 00:45:08,040  
different kinds of garbage cans,  
and they had a cardboard pig

850  
00:45:08,040 --> 00:45:10,060  
that they handed  
out to everyone.

851  
00:45:10,060 --> 00:45:14,760  
There was a placard in the shape  
of a pig and the color pink.

852  
00:45:14,760 --> 00:45:16,920  
And on it were  
written all the things

853  
00:45:16,920 --> 00:45:20,940  
that were to be put in  
this one garbage can that

854  
00:45:20,940 --> 00:45:23,010  
could be used to feed pigs.

855

00:45:23,010 --> 00:45:24,640

That was the idea.

856

00:45:24,640 --> 00:45:27,420

So that they would  
have pig food available

857

00:45:27,420 --> 00:45:30,480

based on the garbage  
that was dumped by people

858

00:45:30,480 --> 00:45:32,370

in apartment houses and homes.

859

00:45:32,370 --> 00:45:37,290

So that was one of the beginning  
practices of conserving

860

00:45:37,290 --> 00:45:39,960

materials and food.

861

00:45:39,960 --> 00:45:44,310

They, of course, had  
various programs.

862

00:45:44,310 --> 00:45:45,930

The collection of silver paper.

863

00:45:45,930 --> 00:45:50,610

I recall that everyone even in  
the Jewish school, mind you,

864

00:45:50,610 --> 00:45:53,850

was collecting silver paper,  
wrappings from chocolate

865

00:45:53,850 --> 00:45:56,190

and putting it into a ball.

866

00:45:56,190 --> 00:45:57,990

And that would  
eventually, once the ball

867  
00:45:57,990 --> 00:46:00,750  
was about three or four  
inches in diameter,

868  
00:46:00,750 --> 00:46:05,640  
would be turned in, and that  
went to some sort of war effort

869  
00:46:05,640 --> 00:46:10,080  
to be melted down  
for its content.

870  
00:46:10,080 --> 00:46:13,310  
There was other  
conservation moves.

871  
00:46:13,310 --> 00:46:18,240  
A clothing collection for what  
the Germans called [GERMAN]

872  
00:46:18,240 --> 00:46:19,785  
winter help for the poor.

873  
00:46:19,785 --> 00:46:22,320

874  
00:46:22,320 --> 00:46:26,070  
I also recall, and  
we go back nowadays,

875  
00:46:26,070 --> 00:46:29,220  
we talk about the  
persecution of the gypsies.

876  
00:46:29,220 --> 00:46:32,190  
There was quite a gypsy  
community in Berlin.

877  
00:46:32,190 --> 00:46:36,090  
They used to come down the  
street with a horse and wagon

878  
00:46:36,090 --> 00:46:40,650  
and either beg or offer  
to work or whatever

879  
00:46:40,650 --> 00:46:42,900  
or pick up old things.

880  
00:46:42,900 --> 00:46:46,740  
And they would with horse  
drawn vehicle would then

881  
00:46:46,740 --> 00:46:48,330  
move through the streets.

882  
00:46:48,330 --> 00:46:52,260  
And gypsies were onboard.

883  
00:46:52,260 --> 00:46:57,760  
So we did get to know what  
gypsies, who they were and more

884  
00:46:57,760 --> 00:46:58,830  
or less what they did.

885  
00:46:58,830 --> 00:47:01,350

886  
00:47:01,350 --> 00:47:06,240  
There were also times  
I recall the first sort

887  
00:47:06,240 --> 00:47:10,980  
of as an aside the mail  
trucks that delivered the mail

888  
00:47:10,980 --> 00:47:16,620  
or brought mail to the area were  
electrically driven vehicles.

889  
00:47:16,620 --> 00:47:18,270  
It's very unusual for that time.

890

00:47:18,270 --> 00:47:20,890

891

00:47:20,890 --> 00:47:23,050

There were also interesting things about Berlin.

892

00:47:23,050 --> 00:47:24,910

For example, the streetcars always

893

00:47:24,910 --> 00:47:29,080

were a double, a main car and one that was hooked on.

894

00:47:29,080 --> 00:47:31,340

And the one that was hooked on was called a smoker.

895

00:47:31,340 --> 00:47:32,882

You were allowed to smoke on that one

896

00:47:32,882 --> 00:47:35,200

but not in the main car.

897

00:47:35,200 --> 00:47:36,940

Whereas Berlin had a major subway,

898

00:47:36,940 --> 00:47:41,680

and I went on that a couple of times with my father.

899

00:47:41,680 --> 00:47:43,900

Once he took me--

900

00:47:43,900 --> 00:47:46,818

he always wanted to see things and have me look at things.

901

00:47:46,818 --> 00:47:47,860

[? Whatever they were ?].

902  
00:47:47,860 --> 00:47:49,910  
Again, mostly in  
the technical area,

903  
00:47:49,910 --> 00:47:51,820  
because that was  
a great interest.

904  
00:47:51,820 --> 00:47:54,580  
Berlin has a very  
large tower, not

905  
00:47:54,580 --> 00:47:56,310  
as large as the  
Eiffel Tower, but it's

906  
00:47:56,310 --> 00:47:59,230  
a telegraph tower  
which is very high

907  
00:47:59,230 --> 00:48:01,930  
and has a restaurant halfway  
up and an observation platform

908  
00:48:01,930 --> 00:48:02,710  
at the top.

909  
00:48:02,710 --> 00:48:08,260  
It's called a [GERMAN],, meaning  
sparks, but it refers to radio.

910  
00:48:08,260 --> 00:48:13,730  
So we went up in that one time  
up to the top and down again.

911  
00:48:13,730 --> 00:48:15,460  
We were able to do that.

912  
00:48:15,460 --> 00:48:17,710  
At that point in that  
particular place,



913  
00:48:17,710 --> 00:48:21,430  
there was no sign  
no Jews allowed.

914  
00:48:21,430 --> 00:48:24,070  
But these places  
began to be rare.

915  
00:48:24,070 --> 00:48:27,250  
So that he had to sort  
of work hard to find out

916  
00:48:27,250 --> 00:48:32,380  
where one could go and not be  
confronted with these placards

917  
00:48:32,380 --> 00:48:34,960  
or this prohibition.

918  
00:48:34,960 --> 00:48:37,010  
You mentioned two  
things that I wanted

919  
00:48:37,010 --> 00:48:40,030  
you to amplify on if you could.

920  
00:48:40,030 --> 00:48:43,830  
One was antisemitic  
posters you mentioned.

921  
00:48:43,830 --> 00:48:47,680  
And the other was when  
you went out in such a way

922  
00:48:47,680 --> 00:48:51,040  
that you were recognizably  
Jewish, whatever the reason,

923  
00:48:51,040 --> 00:48:53,580  
people would make remarks.

924

00:48:53,580 --> 00:48:57,990  
And I was wondering if you had  
more specific memories of what

925  
00:48:57,990 --> 00:49:02,020  
those were, what  
people's attitude was.

926  
00:49:02,020 --> 00:49:03,910  
Well, basically the  
expressions that people

927  
00:49:03,910 --> 00:49:09,250  
used when they dealt with or saw  
Jews, those that made remarks,

928  
00:49:09,250 --> 00:49:13,330  
the English translation  
was a dirty Jew.

929  
00:49:13,330 --> 00:49:16,870  
Or they'd say  
Judenkinder, which is

930  
00:49:16,870 --> 00:49:22,060  
sort of a demeaning term for  
Jewish kids or Jewish children.

931  
00:49:22,060 --> 00:49:30,130  
Or they would say Jude, which  
means pig Jew or dirty Jew.

932  
00:49:30,130 --> 00:49:32,470  
They would also use  
expressions like that.

933  
00:49:32,470 --> 00:49:36,670  
As far as the advertising or  
billboard type of materials

934  
00:49:36,670 --> 00:49:39,760  
concerned, Berlin, like  
perhaps other large cities,

935

00:49:39,760 --> 00:49:44,700

has these large  
round poster kiosks.

936

00:49:44,700 --> 00:49:47,920

[GERMAN] as they  
called them in German.

937

00:49:47,920 --> 00:49:50,095

And on which were posted  
all kinds of things,

938

00:49:50,095 --> 00:49:51,220

announcements and so forth.

939

00:49:51,220 --> 00:49:54,520

And occasionally you'd  
see rallies announced.

940

00:49:54,520 --> 00:49:58,570

And sometimes you'd  
notice that the subject

941

00:49:58,570 --> 00:50:02,650

was the Jew and the  
problems that they're

942

00:50:02,650 --> 00:50:05,830

causing the Germans.

943

00:50:05,830 --> 00:50:11,360

Cartoons of the like  
I don't recall seeing.

944

00:50:11,360 --> 00:50:14,060

Sure, they were there,  
but for some reason,

945

00:50:14,060 --> 00:50:16,210

they were not that obvious.

946

00:50:16,210 --> 00:50:20,650

They were probably more obvious  
in little booklets or books

947  
00:50:20,650 --> 00:50:23,740  
that were given to German  
children in their schools.

948  
00:50:23,740 --> 00:50:25,450  
Since we didn't go  
to those schools,

949  
00:50:25,450 --> 00:50:28,390  
we did not see those books.

950  
00:50:28,390 --> 00:50:31,930  
On occasion, we might see  
them if other German children

951  
00:50:31,930 --> 00:50:34,960  
we were playing with  
had a book like that.

952  
00:50:34,960 --> 00:50:36,850  
But that was relatively rare.

953  
00:50:36,850 --> 00:50:40,280  
I don't recall seeing  
that a great deal.

954  
00:50:40,280 --> 00:50:44,140  
The friends in your neighborhood  
that you played with,

955  
00:50:44,140 --> 00:50:48,340  
you mentioned that some of  
them were in the Hitler Youth.

956  
00:50:48,340 --> 00:50:53,380  
And I'm wondering  
how you felt treated

957  
00:50:53,380 --> 00:50:59,110  
by most of those

children or what, if any,

958

00:50:59,110 --> 00:51:02,200

other individual

incidents you remember

959

00:51:02,200 --> 00:51:06,610

about how you were being treated  
when you went outside to play?

960

00:51:06,610 --> 00:51:11,920

Well, it was mostly

one of either exclusion

961

00:51:11,920 --> 00:51:16,720

or being part of the  
group but not at their,

962

00:51:16,720 --> 00:51:20,170

shall we say, level out there.

963

00:51:20,170 --> 00:51:23,830

However, you're still dealing  
with children, in most cases.

964

00:51:23,830 --> 00:51:27,728

And these were young children,  
my age, ages four, five, six,

965

00:51:27,728 --> 00:51:28,270

seven, eight.

966

00:51:28,270 --> 00:51:35,600

967

00:51:35,600 --> 00:51:39,740

And these children

were not as inculcated.

968

00:51:39,740 --> 00:51:45,380

They were not as rabid, because  
they had just sort of heard it.

969

00:51:45,380 --> 00:51:48,260

And like children hear  
things, they repeat them.

970

00:51:48,260 --> 00:51:51,960

But their heart wasn't  
necessarily into that.

971

00:51:51,960 --> 00:51:55,700

And you were still another  
person that they played with.

972

00:51:55,700 --> 00:51:58,190

Or if you had a toy  
that they liked,

973

00:51:58,190 --> 00:52:02,870

then you'd join them or we  
would wear hats of various kinds

974

00:52:02,870 --> 00:52:05,810

or whatever things  
we did as kids.

975

00:52:05,810 --> 00:52:06,740

We ran.

976

00:52:06,740 --> 00:52:11,340

We had a sleigh, had sleighs  
or sleds in the winter time.

977

00:52:11,340 --> 00:52:14,080

And so there was not--

978

00:52:14,080 --> 00:52:16,710

979

00:52:16,710 --> 00:52:19,680

the sort of discrimination  
there was not as great

980

00:52:19,680 --> 00:52:24,060

as it was among older children and adults, I'm sure.

981  
00:52:24,060 --> 00:52:25,680  
So I was still a fairly young fellow,

982  
00:52:25,680 --> 00:52:32,040  
so I didn't really get that much of a negative reaction

983  
00:52:32,040 --> 00:52:33,810  
from them.

984  
00:52:33,810 --> 00:52:37,560  
What do you remember about what your parents were

985  
00:52:37,560 --> 00:52:42,540  
saying when you were around either to each other or to you

986  
00:52:42,540 --> 00:52:47,130  
by way of explanation of this differentiation between Germans

987  
00:52:47,130 --> 00:52:50,340  
and Jews and just generally what was going on politically

988  
00:52:50,340 --> 00:52:51,920  
at the time?

989  
00:52:51,920 --> 00:52:54,390  
Well, they didn't say a great deal.

990  
00:52:54,390 --> 00:52:57,700  
For one thing, we would occasionally listen to--

991  
00:52:57,700 --> 00:52:59,880  
we had a radio, and

we listen to that.

992

00:52:59,880 --> 00:53:02,730

And speeches and occasionally  
to hear Hitler speak

993

00:53:02,730 --> 00:53:04,410

or what have you.

994

00:53:04,410 --> 00:53:09,630

They mostly practiced  
being careful.

995

00:53:09,630 --> 00:53:13,780

And they would be very careful  
of what they said in public

996

00:53:13,780 --> 00:53:16,890

and also what I might  
utter in public.

997

00:53:16,890 --> 00:53:20,460

They would prefer that we not  
speak too much or little at all

998

00:53:20,460 --> 00:53:22,030

in public.

999

00:53:22,030 --> 00:53:25,650

And as a result,  
these were things

1000

00:53:25,650 --> 00:53:28,800

that I always wondered  
why we are going about it

1001

00:53:28,800 --> 00:53:30,540

in this fashion.

1002

00:53:30,540 --> 00:53:33,540

I was a fairly open type  
of person even then.



1003

00:53:33,540 --> 00:53:37,230

And so that was a  
little bit dismayed

1004

00:53:37,230 --> 00:53:39,820

of having to keep my mouth shut.

1005

00:53:39,820 --> 00:53:42,190

But I realized  
the reason for it,

1006

00:53:42,190 --> 00:53:46,530

and that was because there  
was a rampant underlying

1007

00:53:46,530 --> 00:53:50,190

atmosphere of anti-Semitism  
with remarks with everything

1008

00:53:50,190 --> 00:53:51,870

else that one saw.

1009

00:53:51,870 --> 00:53:55,440

And the explanation,  
there wasn't any.

1010

00:53:55,440 --> 00:54:00,060

Because in many ways,  
many people initially

1011

00:54:00,060 --> 00:54:02,310

thought, at least certainly  
in the first years

1012

00:54:02,310 --> 00:54:04,590

of Hitler's regime, that  
this will blow over.

1013

00:54:04,590 --> 00:54:06,910

This guy wouldn't last  
very long or whatever.

1014

00:54:06,910 --> 00:54:08,640  
In this, they were all wrong.

1015  
00:54:08,640 --> 00:54:11,070  
And so perhaps they  
were just hoping

1016  
00:54:11,070 --> 00:54:15,150  
that things would subside  
and blow over or change.

1017  
00:54:15,150 --> 00:54:17,940  
The Nazis were capable of  
changing the atmosphere.

1018  
00:54:17,940 --> 00:54:20,460  
As we well know, in  
the 1936 Olympics,

1019  
00:54:20,460 --> 00:54:24,390  
they cleaned up things  
and subdued things

1020  
00:54:24,390 --> 00:54:27,670  
so that they would be  
recognized internationally.

1021  
00:54:27,670 --> 00:54:32,260  
So there was always, of course,  
there were newspapers around

1022  
00:54:32,260 --> 00:54:34,120  
and there were magazines around.

1023  
00:54:34,120 --> 00:54:38,555  
And we did not get, of  
course, the German Völkischer

1024  
00:54:38,555 --> 00:54:39,370  
Beobachter.

1025  
00:54:39,370 --> 00:54:43,510  
This was the Nazi paper.

1026  
00:54:43,510 --> 00:54:46,730  
We got the regular newspaper  
and it had some articles

1027  
00:54:46,730 --> 00:54:48,670  
from this and that.

1028  
00:54:48,670 --> 00:54:50,590  
Certainly it was anti-Semitic.

1029  
00:54:50,590 --> 00:54:53,987  
I didn't read the newspaper  
thoroughly at the time.

1030  
00:54:53,987 --> 00:54:56,320  
I read mostly the books and  
stuff that we got at school.

1031  
00:54:56,320 --> 00:54:59,950  
And we observed all  
the Jewish holidays

1032  
00:54:59,950 --> 00:55:04,360  
and I read some of the Jewish  
books and things of that sort.

1033  
00:55:04,360 --> 00:55:06,370  
We didn't go into  
great discussions.

1034  
00:55:06,370 --> 00:55:08,620  
My mother was of the  
kind that was always

1035  
00:55:08,620 --> 00:55:16,970  
more inclined to try  
to subdue the situation

1036  
00:55:16,970 --> 00:55:20,850  
and not give great explanations.

1037

00:55:20,850 --> 00:55:22,798  
It was difficult to explain.

1038  
00:55:22,798 --> 00:55:25,340  
It was very difficult. When you  
are in a situation like that,

1039  
00:55:25,340 --> 00:55:26,870  
what is there to explain?

1040  
00:55:26,870 --> 00:55:32,540  
It's there and you don't know  
why and you can't explain it.

1041  
00:55:32,540 --> 00:55:36,220  
So I don't think they  
were able to explain it.

1042  
00:55:36,220 --> 00:55:39,100  
No one was able to  
really explain it.

1043  
00:55:39,100 --> 00:55:41,640  
I assume too a lot  
of what they evolved

1044  
00:55:41,640 --> 00:55:44,170  
into doing by way of  
their public behavior

1045  
00:55:44,170 --> 00:55:45,730  
was pretty instinctive.

1046  
00:55:45,730 --> 00:55:49,030  
They just began to  
respond in a certain way

1047  
00:55:49,030 --> 00:55:51,890  
or anticipate things that  
were going to happen.

1048  
00:55:51,890 --> 00:55:54,490  
But as you say, it would

be very hard to articulate.

1049

00:55:54,490 --> 00:55:58,510

The primary reason for acting  
in the way they did and most

1050

00:55:58,510 --> 00:56:04,950

Jews did was there was no way  
out there was no one to go to.

1051

00:56:04,950 --> 00:56:06,850

There was no one to complain to.

1052

00:56:06,850 --> 00:56:08,710

The authorities were  
the ones that were

1053

00:56:08,710 --> 00:56:11,553

conducting these campaigns.

1054

00:56:11,553 --> 00:56:12,970

It's like say in  
the United States

1055

00:56:12,970 --> 00:56:16,360

you elected a President  
that suddenly decided

1056

00:56:16,360 --> 00:56:19,960

the same thing, that he'd  
like to get rid of the Jews,

1057

00:56:19,960 --> 00:56:21,690

like to keep them  
out of society,

1058

00:56:21,690 --> 00:56:25,420

would want to expropriate  
everything they owned.

1059

00:56:25,420 --> 00:56:30,300

And the judges and courts and  
the authorities and officials

1060  
00:56:30,300 --> 00:56:32,380  
all were along the same lines.

1061  
00:56:32,380 --> 00:56:35,700  
There is no one that  
you could complain to.

1062  
00:56:35,700 --> 00:56:39,150  
And that, of course, puts  
a crimp on everything

1063  
00:56:39,150 --> 00:56:40,360  
you wish to do.

1064  
00:56:40,360 --> 00:56:43,440  
The only way out is to  
leave, if you could.

1065  
00:56:43,440 --> 00:56:47,370  
And that's, of course,  
what they began to plan.

1066  
00:56:47,370 --> 00:56:50,730  
Why don't you tell me a  
little bit about your family

1067  
00:56:50,730 --> 00:56:54,150  
life within the  
apartment where you lived

1068  
00:56:54,150 --> 00:56:57,730  
and your life with your  
parents at that time,

1069  
00:56:57,730 --> 00:57:02,280  
including the Jewish part of it?

1070  
00:57:02,280 --> 00:57:06,870  
At that time, again, my  
age was approximately six,

1071

00:57:06,870 --> 00:57:08,150  
seven, eight.

1072  
00:57:08,150 --> 00:57:11,730  
As I recall, the apartment  
I had my own room.

1073  
00:57:11,730 --> 00:57:14,320

1074  
00:57:14,320 --> 00:57:19,810  
At the time, my father  
and then I and my mother,

1075  
00:57:19,810 --> 00:57:22,120  
we were great  
entertaining ourselves.

1076  
00:57:22,120 --> 00:57:25,810  
I got into that  
habit early in life,

1077  
00:57:25,810 --> 00:57:29,770  
perhaps because of the  
environment we lived in,

1078  
00:57:29,770 --> 00:57:32,770  
but also that was  
sort of my instinct

1079  
00:57:32,770 --> 00:57:37,420  
to be technically  
self-sufficient.

1080  
00:57:37,420 --> 00:57:41,260  
And I was interested  
in puppets and we

1081  
00:57:41,260 --> 00:57:47,800  
had those and built a small  
puppet theater that was built.

1082  
00:57:47,800 --> 00:57:50,230

And we had relatives  
in the United States

1083  
00:57:50,230 --> 00:57:54,520  
who lived in places like  
St. Paul, Minnesota.

1084  
00:57:54,520 --> 00:57:58,810  
This was a part of my  
grandmother's family.

1085  
00:57:58,810 --> 00:58:06,140  
It was my grandmother's brother,  
who came to the United States

1086  
00:58:06,140 --> 00:58:09,680  
in the late 1800s and  
established himself

1087  
00:58:09,680 --> 00:58:11,470  
as a rancher in North Dakota.

1088  
00:58:11,470 --> 00:58:14,480  
And they drove  
cattle and ended up

1089  
00:58:14,480 --> 00:58:18,500  
in St. Paul, where he settled,  
and married a woman who

1090  
00:58:18,500 --> 00:58:21,160  
came from Pennsylvania,  
a Jewish woman.

1091  
00:58:21,160 --> 00:58:23,630  
And they were married  
in Pennsylvania.

1092  
00:58:23,630 --> 00:58:27,140  
And they raised a family  
in the United States.

1093  
00:58:27,140 --> 00:58:33,670



They would occasionally send us a package of stuff, clothes.

1094  
00:58:33,670 --> 00:58:37,490  
I remember my first Keds shoes.

1095  
00:58:37,490 --> 00:58:40,520  
I was the only kid in the block who had anything like that.

1096  
00:58:40,520 --> 00:58:43,100  
Unknown in Germany.

1097  
00:58:43,100 --> 00:58:46,220  
And things of that sort.

1098  
00:58:46,220 --> 00:58:49,650  
And packages of food, which was unusual or whatever.

1099  
00:58:49,650 --> 00:58:55,000  
And so we had that contact on occasion.

1100  
00:58:55,000 --> 00:58:59,400  
Now, in my youth, I was a sickly child at times.

1101  
00:58:59,400 --> 00:59:02,670  
I ran through bouts of diphtheria.

1102  
00:59:02,670 --> 00:59:05,280  
So I was ill for quite a while.

1103  
00:59:05,280 --> 00:59:09,430  
Tonsillitis was one of my most favorite illnesses.

1104  
00:59:09,430 --> 00:59:12,940  
And so I often had the problem with that.

1105

00:59:12,940 --> 00:59:15,270

Whooping cough and stuff.

1106

00:59:15,270 --> 00:59:22,440

But my father was great at  
building stuff, handicrafts

1107

00:59:22,440 --> 00:59:25,140

or kits or models.

1108

00:59:25,140 --> 00:59:29,430

So early on I had also  
inherited a set of soldiers that

1109

00:59:29,430 --> 00:59:30,900

dated from the First World War.

1110

00:59:30,900 --> 00:59:35,050

I believe may have been one  
of my grandfather's toys.

1111

00:59:35,050 --> 00:59:39,930

So I was into doing toys a lot,  
making things, and designing

1112

00:59:39,930 --> 00:59:43,590

things, drawing a great deal.

1113

00:59:43,590 --> 00:59:48,060

So this is how we  
entertain ourselves.

1114

00:59:48,060 --> 00:59:50,880

I went to nursery school before  
I went through the Lessler

1115

00:59:50,880 --> 00:59:54,840

Schule that began in 1937.

1116

00:59:54,840 --> 00:59:56,790

But before that, I  
spent a couple of years

1117  
00:59:56,790 --> 01:00:00,700  
in so-called nursery day  
school, which is not far away.

1118  
01:00:00,700 --> 01:00:03,390  
And again, this was  
with Jewish kids.

1119  
01:00:03,390 --> 01:00:06,360  
And we went to  
various little parties

1120  
01:00:06,360 --> 01:00:09,930  
occasionally that were  
held in different homes

1121  
01:00:09,930 --> 01:00:12,570  
the parents would hold.

1122  
01:00:12,570 --> 01:00:16,470  
And sometimes you would  
do a lot of reading.

1123  
01:00:16,470 --> 01:00:19,040

1124  
01:00:19,040 --> 01:00:22,280  
My father worked  
pretty hard at his job.

1125  
01:00:22,280 --> 01:00:24,080  
He occasionally had to travel.

1126  
01:00:24,080 --> 01:00:29,690  
He went to fairs which were  
in Leipzig and another place

1127  
01:00:29,690 --> 01:00:39,040  
called Jena, J-E-N-A, which  
was also a center of fairs.

1128

01:00:39,040 --> 01:00:42,560

And one time I think  
during that period,

1129

01:00:42,560 --> 01:00:46,000

My mother took me back through  
her home town of Schneidemuhl

1130

01:00:46,000 --> 01:00:47,500

by train.

1131

01:00:47,500 --> 01:00:50,290

That was the only  
out of town excursion

1132

01:00:50,290 --> 01:00:54,280

that I recall other than  
my visits, my summer camps

1133

01:00:54,280 --> 01:00:59,440

to the Riesengebirge, the  
mountains in Czechoslovakia,

1134

01:00:59,440 --> 01:01:01,250

near Czechoslovakia.

1135

01:01:01,250 --> 01:01:04,070

But I was the only child.

1136

01:01:04,070 --> 01:01:07,720

So as I say, it was a lot of  
reading, occasionally listening

1137

01:01:07,720 --> 01:01:08,665

to radio, music.

1138

01:01:08,665 --> 01:01:11,770

1139

01:01:11,770 --> 01:01:14,040

That's about all I recall.

1140

01:01:14,040 --> 01:01:19,150  
I don't remember too much else.

1141  
01:01:19,150 --> 01:01:21,910  
Did you celebrate  
Shabbos and were there

1142  
01:01:21,910 --> 01:01:27,010  
any other Jewish practices  
being practiced in the home?

1143  
01:01:27,010 --> 01:01:29,730  
Keeping kosher, for example.

1144  
01:01:29,730 --> 01:01:32,710  
No, we never kept kosher.

1145  
01:01:32,710 --> 01:01:36,790  
There was the Sabbath candles,  
lighting of the candles.

1146  
01:01:36,790 --> 01:01:40,820  
Hanukkah, which was celebrated,  
of course, with gifts.

1147  
01:01:40,820 --> 01:01:44,050  
Unlike in the United  
States, other countries

1148  
01:01:44,050 --> 01:01:46,930  
you only give gifts  
the first night.

1149  
01:01:46,930 --> 01:01:52,070  
And that was a  
practice that we held.

1150  
01:01:52,070 --> 01:01:59,740  
Other holidays, Sukkot was  
a holiday we celebrated.

1151  
01:01:59,740 --> 01:02:01,540  
Purim was another one.

1152  
01:02:01,540 --> 01:02:03,130  
But that was also at school.

1153  
01:02:03,130 --> 01:02:06,820  
People would dress up and  
do that sort of thing.

1154  
01:02:06,820 --> 01:02:09,930  
So these were the  
Jewish practices.

1155  
01:02:09,930 --> 01:02:11,700  
As I say, it was not  
an Orthodox home.

1156  
01:02:11,700 --> 01:02:13,890  
There was no Hebrew,  
no great sit down

1157  
01:02:13,890 --> 01:02:16,020  
and reading or  
anything of that sort.

1158  
01:02:16,020 --> 01:02:19,560  
We know some of the songs that  
went along with the religion.

1159  
01:02:19,560 --> 01:02:24,880  
But not a kosher home.

1160  
01:02:24,880 --> 01:02:27,910  
Perhaps there weren't  
that many strictly kosher

1161  
01:02:27,910 --> 01:02:28,930  
homes in Germany.

1162  
01:02:28,930 --> 01:02:32,650  
There was obviously a large  
kosher Orthodox community,

1163

01:02:32,650 --> 01:02:37,450  
but the predominant Jewish  
community was conservative.

1164  
01:02:37,450 --> 01:02:39,910  
Do you remember getting  
together with other family

1165  
01:02:39,910 --> 01:02:44,030  
members in general  
for Jewish locations?

1166  
01:02:44,030 --> 01:02:47,950  
In particular, say,  
Passover or Shabbos?

1167  
01:02:47,950 --> 01:02:51,850  
Well, there was a yearly Seder  
at my grandfather's house,

1168  
01:02:51,850 --> 01:02:54,790  
which he presided  
and that where we had

1169  
01:02:54,790 --> 01:02:57,650  
the Seder ceremony each year.

1170  
01:02:57,650 --> 01:02:59,500  
That's one.

1171  
01:02:59,500 --> 01:03:01,870  
There was, of course,  
the fast of Yom Kippur,

1172  
01:03:01,870 --> 01:03:07,400  
which both my parents  
held up to this very day.

1173  
01:03:07,400 --> 01:03:11,230  
So that was another occasion.

1174  
01:03:11,230 --> 01:03:14,950  
There were other families who

occasionally came to visit.

1175

01:03:14,950 --> 01:03:18,040

The problem you had by then  
was people were not doing much

1176

01:03:18,040 --> 01:03:19,750

visiting with one another.

1177

01:03:19,750 --> 01:03:22,360

They stayed home  
for various reasons.

1178

01:03:22,360 --> 01:03:26,380

Both the persecution reason,  
the danger, the fear.

1179

01:03:26,380 --> 01:03:28,840

So there was not a  
great deal of that.

1180

01:03:28,840 --> 01:03:33,520

I do recall one  
night, it was 1938,

1181

01:03:33,520 --> 01:03:37,990

I believe, late '38, in  
the middle of the night

1182

01:03:37,990 --> 01:03:39,910

was a knock on the door.

1183

01:03:39,910 --> 01:03:45,210

And what appeared  
was a man who had

1184

01:03:45,210 --> 01:03:49,380

arrived on motorcycle from  
Schneidemuhl, my mother's

1185

01:03:49,380 --> 01:03:50,790

hometown.



1186

01:03:50,790 --> 01:03:55,560  
He had to flee because the Nazis  
were about to enter his house,

1187

01:03:55,560 --> 01:03:58,050  
tear it apart, and take him in.

1188

01:03:58,050 --> 01:03:59,490  
So he managed to flee.

1189

01:03:59,490 --> 01:04:01,410  
He had a friend who  
give him some gasoline

1190

01:04:01,410 --> 01:04:05,280  
for his motorcycle, and he  
rode all night by motorcycle

1191

01:04:05,280 --> 01:04:06,870  
to Berlin.

1192

01:04:06,870 --> 01:04:11,580  
And this was a relative  
of my mother's, I believe.

1193

01:04:11,580 --> 01:04:14,460  
I'm not sure of the  
exact relationship.

1194

01:04:14,460 --> 01:04:16,648  
And he was joined  
about a month later.

1195

01:04:16,648 --> 01:04:18,690  
He stayed with us and he  
was joined a month later

1196

01:04:18,690 --> 01:04:20,600  
by his wife and son.

1197

01:04:20,600 --> 01:04:24,270  
And they finally left Germany.

1198  
01:04:24,270 --> 01:04:28,440  
In fact, they took the  
similar route we did by ship.

1199  
01:04:28,440 --> 01:04:30,930  
And he actually  
died on board ship

1200  
01:04:30,930 --> 01:04:34,230  
and he was buried in a  
place called [? Aden ?]

1201  
01:04:34,230 --> 01:04:36,570  
at the end of the Suez Canal.

1202  
01:04:36,570 --> 01:04:40,500  
And his wife and son  
went on and ended up

1203  
01:04:40,500 --> 01:04:42,810  
in Singapore, which  
was on the route,

1204  
01:04:42,810 --> 01:04:45,810  
and they had relatives there,  
and they stayed in Singapore

1205  
01:04:45,810 --> 01:04:47,560  
and only later  
went to Australia,

1206  
01:04:47,560 --> 01:04:49,630  
where they then settled.

1207  
01:04:49,630 --> 01:04:53,850  
But that was an incident  
that sticks out.

1208  
01:04:53,850 --> 01:04:55,830  
Do you remember any  
of the specifics

1209

01:04:55,830 --> 01:04:59,820

about why he was going to  
be picked up by the Germans

1210

01:04:59,820 --> 01:05:01,270

or how he knew?

1211

01:05:01,270 --> 01:05:02,400

How he knew.

1212

01:05:02,400 --> 01:05:04,950

That's always a very  
interesting facet of life

1213

01:05:04,950 --> 01:05:08,130

or had been in Germany.

1214

01:05:08,130 --> 01:05:13,860

Very often the Germans would  
send a Gestapo agent or someone

1215

01:05:13,860 --> 01:05:14,595

to the house.

1216

01:05:14,595 --> 01:05:17,470

1217

01:05:17,470 --> 01:05:21,490

And then the people that were  
the subject of that interview,

1218

01:05:21,490 --> 01:05:24,450

if you will, began  
to get very nervous

1219

01:05:24,450 --> 01:05:27,660

and figured that it won't  
be long before someone would

1220

01:05:27,660 --> 01:05:30,780

come along and arrest him,  
because they knew that had

1221  
01:05:30,780 --> 01:05:32,880  
happened to other people.

1222  
01:05:32,880 --> 01:05:35,320  
Because Jews were  
already being arrested,

1223  
01:05:35,320 --> 01:05:39,975  
as probably everyone  
knows, almost 1933.

1224  
01:05:39,975 --> 01:05:43,140  
A concentration camp  
Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg,

1225  
01:05:43,140 --> 01:05:45,700  
work and later  
Dachau and Buchenwald

1226  
01:05:45,700 --> 01:05:49,060  
were already set up  
for that purpose.

1227  
01:05:49,060 --> 01:05:53,960  
So they sense that  
and so he fled.

1228  
01:05:53,960 --> 01:05:58,850  
And apparently even  
fled at a point

1229  
01:05:58,850 --> 01:06:00,710  
where they had apparently  
already entered

1230  
01:06:00,710 --> 01:06:04,340  
the house, began to go  
through all their things,

1231  
01:06:04,340 --> 01:06:06,860  
the mattresses, looking  
for money papers

1232  
01:06:06,860 --> 01:06:09,140  
and God knows what,  
and he managed

1233  
01:06:09,140 --> 01:06:12,530  
to sneak out with his  
motorbike and by on foot

1234  
01:06:12,530 --> 01:06:14,930  
and then he got it gassed  
up and off he went.

1235  
01:06:14,930 --> 01:06:20,330  
So he went just at  
a moment's notice.

1236  
01:06:20,330 --> 01:06:23,960  
So apparently these things  
happen, particularly

1237  
01:06:23,960 --> 01:06:27,510  
in the smaller towns,  
in the villages.

1238  
01:06:27,510 --> 01:06:29,630  
Not so much in Berlin.

1239  
01:06:29,630 --> 01:06:32,420  
After all, there you are  
dealing with a very large city.

1240  
01:06:32,420 --> 01:06:35,390  
Everyone's watching.

1241  
01:06:35,390 --> 01:06:39,290  
So the arrests would  
have to be done

1242  
01:06:39,290 --> 01:06:41,750  
in the middle of the night,  
which is the usual case, 4:00

1243

01:06:41,750 --> 01:06:43,460  
in the morning or so.

1244

01:06:43,460 --> 01:06:46,610  
And my father had to spend  
nights outside the house.

1245

01:06:46,610 --> 01:06:48,980  
He did that on a whole  
number of occasions.

1246

01:06:48,980 --> 01:06:52,850  
He stayed with two maiden  
aunts of his in Berlin.

1247

01:06:52,850 --> 01:06:56,153  
And the only way--  
he would come home

1248

01:06:56,153 --> 01:06:58,070  
toward the morning and  
my mother would sort of

1249

01:06:58,070 --> 01:07:00,770  
flick the kitchen light on so  
he could see it from a distance.

1250

01:07:00,770 --> 01:07:02,540  
And by flicking  
the light on, that

1251

01:07:02,540 --> 01:07:05,450  
was like a signal to tell  
him the coast was clear,

1252

01:07:05,450 --> 01:07:08,810  
that no one had been to  
the house to ask for him.

1253

01:07:08,810 --> 01:07:10,970  
So that I remember  
very distinctly.

1254

01:07:10,970 --> 01:07:15,170

That happened we're  
talking now 1938.

1255

01:07:15,170 --> 01:07:16,970

So this would have  
been the time that men

1256

01:07:16,970 --> 01:07:19,070

were starting to be picked up.

1257

01:07:19,070 --> 01:07:20,210

Oh yes, yes.

1258

01:07:20,210 --> 01:07:21,470

Yes, they were picked up.

1259

01:07:21,470 --> 01:07:23,600

Relatives, friends  
already being picked up,

1260

01:07:23,600 --> 01:07:25,640

taken to Sachsenhausen  
and Oranienburg,

1261

01:07:25,640 --> 01:07:27,500

which is right  
outside of Berlin,

1262

01:07:27,500 --> 01:07:31,400

and put into those camps.

1263

01:07:31,400 --> 01:07:37,580

Those days many were released  
after about four or five weeks

1264

01:07:37,580 --> 01:07:39,840

or whatever and went back home.

1265

01:07:39,840 --> 01:07:42,320

However, once you  
got into that rut,

1266  
01:07:42,320 --> 01:07:44,390  
you know your days  
were numbered there.

1267  
01:07:44,390 --> 01:07:49,830  
And the rush to leave  
really began to grow.

1268  
01:07:49,830 --> 01:07:53,010  
To digress a bit, you had  
mentioned the Olympics

1269  
01:07:53,010 --> 01:07:54,810  
and that the Nazis  
were able to put

1270  
01:07:54,810 --> 01:07:58,020  
on a pretty face for the  
international community.

1271  
01:07:58,020 --> 01:08:00,930  
As a child, what do you  
remember, if anything,

1272  
01:08:00,930 --> 01:08:04,950  
about the happening  
of the Olympics?

1273  
01:08:04,950 --> 01:08:06,410  
The Olympics.

1274  
01:08:06,410 --> 01:08:10,173  
That brings to mind  
another incident or two.

1275  
01:08:10,173 --> 01:08:11,590  
The Olympics were  
held, of course,

1276  
01:08:11,590 --> 01:08:14,770  
at the new stadium that  
was built for that purpose.



1277

01:08:14,770 --> 01:08:18,850

And strangely enough, my  
school, the Lessler Schule

1278

01:08:18,850 --> 01:08:22,600

and other Jewish schools  
and German schools all

1279

01:08:22,600 --> 01:08:27,130

were at a large athletic  
event at that stadium.

1280

01:08:27,130 --> 01:08:29,750

We performed at  
that time, I recall,

1281

01:08:29,750 --> 01:08:33,580

we had a medicine ball  
routine which we went through.

1282

01:08:33,580 --> 01:08:36,880

My gym teacher at  
the Lessler Schule

1283

01:08:36,880 --> 01:08:39,430

got us through those routines.

1284

01:08:39,430 --> 01:08:43,700

And we performed in our  
blue and white uniforms

1285

01:08:43,700 --> 01:08:47,870

with the Star of David,  
strangely enough,

1286

01:08:47,870 --> 01:08:50,870

among all these other  
Germans with their schools

1287

01:08:50,870 --> 01:08:51,649

at that stadium.

1288

01:08:51,649 --> 01:08:54,569

1289

01:08:54,569 --> 01:08:59,550

On top of that, one  
weekend we were near Berlin

1290

01:08:59,550 --> 01:09:05,189

in what was now a separate  
Jewish rowing or racing shell

1291

01:09:05,189 --> 01:09:06,300

club.

1292

01:09:06,300 --> 01:09:07,899

And there they had  
the racing shows.

1293

01:09:07,899 --> 01:09:10,350

So the oars had the  
Star of David on it.

1294

01:09:10,350 --> 01:09:13,170

And across there was  
the German racing club

1295

01:09:13,170 --> 01:09:15,569

with the swastika on their oars.

1296

01:09:15,569 --> 01:09:17,640

And they're both  
racing up and down

1297

01:09:17,640 --> 01:09:20,370

and I can imagine there may  
have been some words exchanged.

1298

01:09:20,370 --> 01:09:24,510

But it was still  
possible to do that.

1299

01:09:24,510 --> 01:09:28,590

Although, again, that  
didn't last for very long,

1300  
01:09:28,590 --> 01:09:33,029  
this separate, and of  
course, Jewish activity.

1301  
01:09:33,029 --> 01:09:36,660  
Because we no longer could  
belong to the German clubs

1302  
01:09:36,660 --> 01:09:38,160  
or the German schools.

1303  
01:09:38,160 --> 01:09:41,460  
But yes, that was that event.

1304  
01:09:41,460 --> 01:09:45,310  
That just preceded the Olympics.

1305  
01:09:45,310 --> 01:09:49,439  
It was probably one of those  
affairs put on or allowed

1306  
01:09:49,439 --> 01:09:55,770  
or a practice carried out to  
sort of subdue the whole notion

1307  
01:09:55,770 --> 01:09:59,260  
of persecution.

1308  
01:09:59,260 --> 01:10:00,760  
And that's what I do recall.

1309  
01:10:00,760 --> 01:10:05,930  
I do recall the Olympics,  
'36, I was five years old.

1310  
01:10:05,930 --> 01:10:08,530  
I remember something  
about a major event.

1311

01:10:08,530 --> 01:10:10,150  
Of course, we were  
told about things

1312  
01:10:10,150 --> 01:10:13,000  
at that time that  
was going to happen.

1313  
01:10:13,000 --> 01:10:16,000  
I don't recall details.

1314  
01:10:16,000 --> 01:10:19,900  
I don't remember any  
personages or anyone like that.

1315  
01:10:19,900 --> 01:10:22,510  
But that particular  
event where we

1316  
01:10:22,510 --> 01:10:26,230  
were at this huge stadium,  
the Olympic stadium,

1317  
01:10:26,230 --> 01:10:28,390  
doing our thing along  
with other Jewish schools

1318  
01:10:28,390 --> 01:10:31,540  
and loads of other  
German schools,

1319  
01:10:31,540 --> 01:10:37,880  
schoolchildren, doing their  
various athletic activities.

1320  
01:10:37,880 --> 01:10:40,280  
Were either of your  
parents involved

1321  
01:10:40,280 --> 01:10:46,730  
politically or with any sort  
of Zionist organization at all?

1322

01:10:46,730 --> 01:10:48,680  
No, they were not.

1323  
01:10:48,680 --> 01:10:51,560  
They were certainly aware of it.

1324  
01:10:51,560 --> 01:10:54,560  
We all, of course, were aware  
of the Jewish settlement

1325  
01:10:54,560 --> 01:10:57,440  
in Palestine, as it  
was known at the time.

1326  
01:10:57,440 --> 01:11:00,020  
And certainly there  
were moves afoot

1327  
01:11:00,020 --> 01:11:03,380  
to take children to Palestine.

1328  
01:11:03,380 --> 01:11:06,500  
And there were offers to  
do that by various people.

1329  
01:11:06,500 --> 01:11:11,090  
I actually was-- they were  
contemplating at one point

1330  
01:11:11,090 --> 01:11:16,250  
to do that with me or to send me  
to England on a child transport

1331  
01:11:16,250 --> 01:11:18,920  
or to be taken to  
the United States

1332  
01:11:18,920 --> 01:11:21,620  
by other relatives  
of my mother's

1333  
01:11:21,620 --> 01:11:25,070  
family's many branches

who were still

1334  
01:11:25,070 --> 01:11:26,720  
allowed to come to the US.

1335  
01:11:26,720 --> 01:11:29,225  
He was a physician,  
this man and his wife.

1336  
01:11:29,225 --> 01:11:31,160  
And these people,  
the American side

1337  
01:11:31,160 --> 01:11:33,650  
of the family out of  
St. Paul, Minnesota

1338  
01:11:33,650 --> 01:11:35,990  
had given them an  
affidavit to come,

1339  
01:11:35,990 --> 01:11:40,140  
because he had immediate job  
possibilities as a physician.

1340  
01:11:40,140 --> 01:11:43,350  
And he in turn was  
a Russian, actually,

1341  
01:11:43,350 --> 01:11:47,090  
who his wife had met when he  
was a prisoner of war, no less.

1342  
01:11:47,090 --> 01:11:49,020  
In First World War.

1343  
01:11:49,020 --> 01:11:51,920  
So there were all  
these different things

1344  
01:11:51,920 --> 01:11:54,680  
were being thought  
about and discussed.

1345  
01:11:54,680 --> 01:11:59,600  
But my mother being a very  
anxious kind of person

1346  
01:11:59,600 --> 01:12:05,900  
was not willing to sort of  
ship me off to some unknown.

1347  
01:12:05,900 --> 01:12:11,630  
And so we did wait till we were  
able to get out as a family.

1348  
01:12:11,630 --> 01:12:14,660  
I take it you were hearing  
these discussions going on

1349  
01:12:14,660 --> 01:12:15,810  
around you.

1350  
01:12:15,810 --> 01:12:19,610  
And I'm wondering how  
you felt about this sort

1351  
01:12:19,610 --> 01:12:24,050  
of free floating  
conversation about your fate.

1352  
01:12:24,050 --> 01:12:30,560  
Well, you were always a  
bit anxious about that,

1353  
01:12:30,560 --> 01:12:32,960  
obviously, not knowing  
where all this would

1354  
01:12:32,960 --> 01:12:38,840  
lead and the discontinuity  
that you felt at the time.

1355  
01:12:38,840 --> 01:12:42,960  
However, you began to  
sort of go along with it

1356  
01:12:42,960 --> 01:12:45,530  
or go with the flow,  
so to speak, because it

1357  
01:12:45,530 --> 01:12:47,210  
was happening to others.

1358  
01:12:47,210 --> 01:12:52,550  
And you could sense there was  
a coming to an end of things

1359  
01:12:52,550 --> 01:12:55,700  
in Germany for Jews.

1360  
01:12:55,700 --> 01:12:57,850  
Not quite the end--

1361  
01:12:57,850 --> 01:13:01,070  
that we could not foresee the  
end as it actually occurred.

1362  
01:13:01,070 --> 01:13:04,070  
But certainly all the  
symptoms were there,

1363  
01:13:04,070 --> 01:13:06,590  
that you were no longer  
part of that society.

1364  
01:13:06,590 --> 01:13:10,330  
You were segregated  
in that society.

1365  
01:13:10,330 --> 01:13:14,760  
And it did not seem to pass,  
as many people had hoped.

1366  
01:13:14,760 --> 01:13:21,620  
So these options began  
to emerge into reality.

1367



01:13:21,620 --> 01:13:24,230  
There was a time when you sort  
of crossed the Rubicon even

1368  
01:13:24,230 --> 01:13:27,090  
as a child and you  
knew that there

1369  
01:13:27,090 --> 01:13:30,920  
was a very mushy  
or gray future here

1370  
01:13:30,920 --> 01:13:33,440  
that needed to be resolved.

1371  
01:13:33,440 --> 01:13:39,510  
And so therefore, you absorbed  
these possibilities as real

1372  
01:13:39,510 --> 01:13:41,970  
after a while.

1373  
01:13:41,970 --> 01:13:47,250  
How did your father's loss of  
his employment sort of plug

1374  
01:13:47,250 --> 01:13:49,710  
in to the kinds of  
discussions that you

1375  
01:13:49,710 --> 01:13:52,890  
were hearing in this gray, murky  
area when you were a child?

1376  
01:13:52,890 --> 01:13:56,550  
What do you remember  
about his losing his job?

1377  
01:13:56,550 --> 01:14:01,240  
Well, he sort of was  
a very capable guy.

1378  
01:14:01,240 --> 01:14:05,640

And when he left one job,  
he almost immediately

1379  
01:14:05,640 --> 01:14:08,550  
floated into another.

1380  
01:14:08,550 --> 01:14:12,300  
As I mentioned before,  
he began as an inventor,

1381  
01:14:12,300 --> 01:14:14,340  
essentially, on his own.

1382  
01:14:14,340 --> 01:14:17,880  
That dissipated with  
the crash of '29,

1383  
01:14:17,880 --> 01:14:20,490  
I believe, the  
inflation, horrendous

1384  
01:14:20,490 --> 01:14:24,520  
economic problems in Germany  
and Europe generally.

1385  
01:14:24,520 --> 01:14:28,110  
And then he worked for  
this engineering firm

1386  
01:14:28,110 --> 01:14:30,000  
with the diesel locomotives  
and stuff, which

1387  
01:14:30,000 --> 01:14:31,770  
was very interesting for him.

1388  
01:14:31,770 --> 01:14:35,130  
He dealt with foreigners, with  
Turks and South Americans.

1389  
01:14:35,130 --> 01:14:37,590  
And he put together  
these big packages

1390  
01:14:37,590 --> 01:14:41,940  
for engines for narrow  
gauge plantations and so on.

1391  
01:14:41,940 --> 01:14:46,710  
And then that dissipated  
into a firm which handled

1392  
01:14:46,710 --> 01:14:49,820  
textiles, textile production.

1393  
01:14:49,820 --> 01:14:52,320  
And he always worked.

1394  
01:14:52,320 --> 01:14:55,800  
I mean, there was no time  
when he was out of work.

1395  
01:14:55,800 --> 01:14:58,970  
So he was always  
earning a living,

1396  
01:14:58,970 --> 01:15:02,320  
and that sort of kept us going.

1397  
01:15:02,320 --> 01:15:05,850  
So that helped.

1398  
01:15:05,850 --> 01:15:08,670  
There was never a period  
of any length, I believe,

1399  
01:15:08,670 --> 01:15:10,660  
of unemployment.

1400  
01:15:10,660 --> 01:15:12,960  
So I did not sense a problem.

1401  
01:15:12,960 --> 01:15:18,190  
Although financially we were  
not wealthy, on the other hand,

1402  
01:15:18,190 --> 01:15:20,400  
we were not poor.

1403  
01:15:20,400 --> 01:15:24,360  
So we were able to hang on as  
a sort of middle class family

1404  
01:15:24,360 --> 01:15:25,020  
throughout.

1405  
01:15:25,020 --> 01:15:27,600

1406  
01:15:27,600 --> 01:15:32,160  
So that was the  
situation at the time.

1407  
01:15:32,160 --> 01:15:35,250  
What became, of course,  
of central importance

1408  
01:15:35,250 --> 01:15:40,050  
was how, when, where,  
and why to leave.

1409  
01:15:40,050 --> 01:15:43,620  
On my mother's side, it was less  
of a problem psychologically.

1410  
01:15:43,620 --> 01:15:47,020  
Both her parents had died.

1411  
01:15:47,020 --> 01:15:51,150  
Her various other relatives,  
her younger brother and sister,

1412  
01:15:51,150 --> 01:15:54,120  
the twins, had  
gone to Italy where

1413  
01:15:54,120 --> 01:15:55,710

he continued to study medicine.

1414  
01:15:55,710 --> 01:15:58,230  
And then they immigrated  
to the United States

1415  
01:15:58,230 --> 01:16:01,280  
where he finished at the  
University of Chicago.

1416  
01:16:01,280 --> 01:16:03,030  
And they were brought  
to the United States

1417  
01:16:03,030 --> 01:16:05,845  
again by this American side  
of the family, got affidavits

1418  
01:16:05,845 --> 01:16:09,090  
to bring them over  
in the mid '30s.

1419  
01:16:09,090 --> 01:16:13,590  
So her side was in large  
measure, although not

1420  
01:16:13,590 --> 01:16:14,760  
completely, out of Germany.

1421  
01:16:14,760 --> 01:16:17,580  
There was another couple  
who came to Berlin

1422  
01:16:17,580 --> 01:16:21,180  
from a place called Dramburg,  
where they lived and they

1423  
01:16:21,180 --> 01:16:25,860  
perished in the Holocaust,  
she in Auschwitz

1424  
01:16:25,860 --> 01:16:28,110  
and he in Theresienstadt.

1425  
01:16:28,110 --> 01:16:31,300  
But my father's was  
a little bit tougher.

1426  
01:16:31,300 --> 01:16:33,920  
His mother and his brother.

1427  
01:16:33,920 --> 01:16:36,420  
His brother was younger  
and his brother was always

1428  
01:16:36,420 --> 01:16:37,670  
one of these adventures sorts.

1429  
01:16:37,670 --> 01:16:39,510  
Oh, I'll get out  
somehow, no problem.

1430  
01:16:39,510 --> 01:16:41,610  
I'll slip into France, whatever.

1431  
01:16:41,610 --> 01:16:45,760  
His mother, that was difficult.  
An older woman and it

1432  
01:16:45,760 --> 01:16:49,680  
was more difficult, of  
course, to leave her.

1433  
01:16:49,680 --> 01:16:50,820  
But he had to in the end.

1434  
01:16:50,820 --> 01:16:53,370

1435  
01:16:53,370 --> 01:16:58,080  
And my father was a person  
who was not that inclined

1436  
01:16:58,080 --> 01:17:01,740  
to make a major change.

1437  
01:17:01,740 --> 01:17:08,070  
So there was a bit  
of a duality here.

1438  
01:17:08,070 --> 01:17:10,080  
But we managed to  
get out, and I'll

1439  
01:17:10,080 --> 01:17:14,340  
cover that a little later in  
detail, through a relative

1440  
01:17:14,340 --> 01:17:18,240  
of my mother's who  
lived in the Philippines

1441  
01:17:18,240 --> 01:17:21,480  
and gave us an affidavit  
to enter the Philippines.

1442  
01:17:21,480 --> 01:17:25,110  
But I'll cover that a  
little later in more detail.

1443  
01:17:25,110 --> 01:17:30,450  
Did you get the sense that your  
father's employment was going

1444  
01:17:30,450 --> 01:17:34,850  
downhill in any way or that he  
was being discriminated against

1445  
01:17:34,850 --> 01:17:38,220  
or sort of pushed to  
the wall as time went

1446  
01:17:38,220 --> 01:17:41,940  
by in any of these positions?

1447  
01:17:41,940 --> 01:17:43,890  
I didn't get that  
sense, but it certainly

1448  
01:17:43,890 --> 01:17:47,400  
happened, because he had to--

1449  
01:17:47,400 --> 01:17:51,210  
given the Nuremberg laws,  
the limitations on employment

1450  
01:17:51,210 --> 01:17:53,100  
began to grow.

1451  
01:17:53,100 --> 01:17:55,440  
Anyone who was employed  
in any kind of skill,

1452  
01:17:55,440 --> 01:17:57,180  
bricklaying,  
[? or so, ?] plumbing,

1453  
01:17:57,180 --> 01:17:59,910  
had to go out of that business.

1454  
01:17:59,910 --> 01:18:04,920  
The Jews were essentially left  
to small retail operations

1455  
01:18:04,920 --> 01:18:10,770  
or sales operations or  
very small enterprises.

1456  
01:18:10,770 --> 01:18:12,610  
And of course, he  
saw that coming.

1457  
01:18:12,610 --> 01:18:15,453  
And that too naturally  
worked on him.

1458  
01:18:15,453 --> 01:18:16,620  
I don't know to what degree.

1459  
01:18:16,620 --> 01:18:19,350



He was not a man who went to  
great lengths to complain.

1460  
01:18:19,350 --> 01:18:21,850  
And this was not his style.

1461  
01:18:21,850 --> 01:18:24,960  
He was not-- my mother tended  
to be a complainer, he not.

1462  
01:18:24,960 --> 01:18:27,705  
And so you did  
not hear any gripe

1463  
01:18:27,705 --> 01:18:32,340  
or moan about that  
hardly at all.

1464  
01:18:32,340 --> 01:18:35,040  
What do you remember about  
your grandfather's death

1465  
01:18:35,040 --> 01:18:37,500  
the night before Kristallnacht?

1466  
01:18:37,500 --> 01:18:38,000