

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:00,870

2  
00:00:00,870 --> 00:00:03,720  
This is an interview for the  
US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

3  
00:00:03,720 --> 00:00:05,550  
We are interviewing  
William Hess.

4  
00:00:05,550 --> 00:00:07,350  
My name is Esther Finder.

5  
00:00:07,350 --> 00:00:10,960  
Today is August 15, 1997.

6  
00:00:10,960 --> 00:00:15,240  
This is tape 1, side A.  
May I ask you to please

7  
00:00:15,240 --> 00:00:17,070  
state your name for me.

8  
00:00:17,070 --> 00:00:21,390  
My name is William Werner Hess.

9  
00:00:21,390 --> 00:00:22,950  
Was this your name at birth?

10  
00:00:22,950 --> 00:00:27,770  
Werner was my name  
at birth, yes.

11  
00:00:27,770 --> 00:00:28,920  
When were you born?

12  
00:00:28,920 --> 00:00:32,810  
I was born on August 8, 1921.

13

00:00:32,810 --> 00:00:33,870  
And where were you born?

14  
00:00:33,870 --> 00:00:38,420  
I was born in  
Stuttgart in Germany.

15  
00:00:38,420 --> 00:00:39,800  
Is that where you grew up?

16  
00:00:39,800 --> 00:00:43,340  
I grew up in Stuttgart, and  
I lived there until the time

17  
00:00:43,340 --> 00:00:48,590  
that I moved into the  
United States in 1937.

18  
00:00:48,590 --> 00:00:50,600  
I'd like to ask you a  
little bit about Stuttgart

19  
00:00:50,600 --> 00:00:53,130  
and your childhood.

20  
00:00:53,130 --> 00:00:56,700  
Was there a large Jewish  
population in Stuttgart?

21  
00:00:56,700 --> 00:00:58,680  
The Jewish population  
of stood guard

22  
00:00:58,680 --> 00:01:04,230  
was approximately 4,000 people,  
which pretty much corresponded

23  
00:01:04,230 --> 00:01:08,640  
to the proportion of Jews  
within Germany-- roughly 1%

24  
00:01:08,640 --> 00:01:09,780  
of the population.

25  
00:01:09,780 --> 00:01:17,790  
Stuttgart had a population  
at the time of about 430,000.

26  
00:01:17,790 --> 00:01:23,950  
What were relationships like  
between Jews and non-Jews?

27  
00:01:23,950 --> 00:01:26,800  
In general, relationships  
were very good.

28  
00:01:26,800 --> 00:01:31,570  
And a lot of the Jews had  
many non-Jewish as well as

29  
00:01:31,570 --> 00:01:32,800  
Jewish friends.

30  
00:01:32,800 --> 00:01:35,350

31  
00:01:35,350 --> 00:01:37,760  
Did you live in a Jewish area?

32  
00:01:37,760 --> 00:01:40,780  
There really wasn't such  
a thing as a Jewish area.

33  
00:01:40,780 --> 00:01:43,390  
That is Jews, of  
course, tended to live

34  
00:01:43,390 --> 00:01:46,120  
in the better areas of the  
city, but they were pretty well

35  
00:01:46,120 --> 00:01:48,060  
spread around.

36  
00:01:48,060 --> 00:01:50,200

The street that  
we lived on, there

37  
00:01:50,200 --> 00:01:54,340  
were no other Jews in our  
particular apartment house.

38  
00:01:54,340 --> 00:01:56,410  
But on the block  
where we lived, there

39  
00:01:56,410 --> 00:01:58,135  
were a number of  
Jewish families.

40  
00:01:58,135 --> 00:02:00,970

41  
00:02:00,970 --> 00:02:03,580  
Did your family have a  
long history in Germany?

42  
00:02:03,580 --> 00:02:04,720  
Yes, they did.

43  
00:02:04,720 --> 00:02:07,630

44  
00:02:07,630 --> 00:02:12,250  
I'm very lucky I have  
genealogical information

45  
00:02:12,250 --> 00:02:14,620  
on both sides of my family--

46  
00:02:14,620 --> 00:02:17,950  
none of it done by myself.

47  
00:02:17,950 --> 00:02:22,780  
On my father's side, I have a  
family history that goes back

48

00:02:22,780 --> 00:02:25,390  
to about the year 1700.

49  
00:02:25,390 --> 00:02:32,200  
And my ancestors  
lived in a village,

50  
00:02:32,200 --> 00:02:35,140  
really, not in Stuttgart--

51  
00:02:35,140 --> 00:02:38,920  
the political unit  
of Wurttemberg.

52  
00:02:38,920 --> 00:02:44,450  
The Jews were driven out  
by 1492 by the then-ruler

53  
00:02:44,450 --> 00:02:46,330  
for all times.

54  
00:02:46,330 --> 00:02:48,940  
And subsequently, there  
were very few Jews

55  
00:02:48,940 --> 00:02:50,050  
that ever lived there.

56  
00:02:50,050 --> 00:02:56,320  
If a ruler needed certain  
things like money and so,

57  
00:02:56,320 --> 00:02:58,630  
he would have a  
Jewish counselor.

58  
00:02:58,630 --> 00:03:02,850  
And of course, the most famous  
and the most important of those

59  
00:03:02,850 --> 00:03:07,020  
was a man who became  
known as Jud Suss.

60  
00:03:07,020 --> 00:03:10,410  
His name was Joseph  
Suss Oppenheimer.

61  
00:03:10,410 --> 00:03:15,120  
And he was hired by  
the duke at the time

62  
00:03:15,120 --> 00:03:20,340  
to raise money for his  
excessive style of living, which

63  
00:03:20,340 --> 00:03:24,300  
was pretty typical for  
most rulers who all thought

64  
00:03:24,300 --> 00:03:28,170  
they wanted to imitate  
Louis XIV of France

65  
00:03:28,170 --> 00:03:31,950  
by building palaces and  
otherwise living it up.

66  
00:03:31,950 --> 00:03:38,010  
After the ruler died, Jud  
Suss was hanged publicly

67  
00:03:38,010 --> 00:03:44,730  
for taking advantage  
of the population.

68  
00:03:44,730 --> 00:03:53,730  
That happened about  
1740 or thereabouts.

69  
00:03:53,730 --> 00:03:57,330  
It wasn't until the  
early 19th century

70  
00:03:57,330 --> 00:04:01,330  
that Jews were legally

living in the state.

71

00:04:01,330 --> 00:04:06,610

And where my grandparents  
and my ancestors lived

72

00:04:06,610 --> 00:04:09,790

was one of the many  
little principalities

73

00:04:09,790 --> 00:04:12,290

that were scattered  
throughout Germany.

74

00:04:12,290 --> 00:04:14,490

And since they allowed  
Jews to live there,

75

00:04:14,490 --> 00:04:16,750

there was a rather  
large proportion

76

00:04:16,750 --> 00:04:17,815

of Jews in that village.

77

00:04:17,815 --> 00:04:20,560

78

00:04:20,560 --> 00:04:22,810

At the end of the 19th  
century, most of them

79

00:04:22,810 --> 00:04:27,250

moved away and into the city  
where the opportunities were.

80

00:04:27,250 --> 00:04:31,510

So my ancestors on my father's  
side go back that far.

81

00:04:31,510 --> 00:04:33,640

And the same is true  
on my mother's side.

82  
00:04:33,640 --> 00:04:37,090  
My mother comes from a  
small town in Treuen,

83  
00:04:37,090 --> 00:04:39,310  
which is in central Germany.

84  
00:04:39,310 --> 00:04:48,093  
And we also can go back to  
about 1700 on my mother's side.

85  
00:04:48,093 --> 00:04:49,260  
What was your father's name?

86  
00:04:49,260 --> 00:04:51,180  
And what did he do for a living?

87  
00:04:51,180 --> 00:04:54,240  
My father's name  
was Wilhelm Hess.

88  
00:04:54,240 --> 00:04:59,160  
And he was in the  
wholesale textile business.

89  
00:04:59,160 --> 00:05:04,560  
He had a wholesale business that  
was founded by my grandfather

90  
00:05:04,560 --> 00:05:09,590  
and was then taken over  
by my father and my uncle.

91  
00:05:09,590 --> 00:05:12,540  
And it was in  
existence until 1930

92  
00:05:12,540 --> 00:05:15,930  
when it was dissolved  
during the Depression.

93



00:05:15,930 --> 00:05:17,790  
About a year or so  
later, my father

94  
00:05:17,790 --> 00:05:21,210  
started up again on his  
own and started, again,

95  
00:05:21,210 --> 00:05:22,770  
a small textile business.

96  
00:05:22,770 --> 00:05:25,133

97  
00:05:25,133 --> 00:05:26,300  
What was your mother's name?

98  
00:05:26,300 --> 00:05:29,050  
And what work did she do?

99  
00:05:29,050 --> 00:05:34,240  
My mother's maiden  
name was Elsa Simpson.

100  
00:05:34,240 --> 00:05:36,730  
She did not have any job.

101  
00:05:36,730 --> 00:05:41,350  
And this was very  
rare for Jewish women

102  
00:05:41,350 --> 00:05:45,430  
to work outside the house  
unless there was an absolutely

103  
00:05:45,430 --> 00:05:48,130  
dire economic necessity.

104  
00:05:48,130 --> 00:05:51,250  
In fact, until World  
War I, it was greatly

105

00:05:51,250 --> 00:05:54,550  
looked down for a Jewish  
girl to be working.

106  
00:05:54,550 --> 00:05:57,770

107  
00:05:57,770 --> 00:05:59,560  
Do you have any siblings?

108  
00:05:59,560 --> 00:06:03,290  
No, I'm an only child.

109  
00:06:03,290 --> 00:06:07,100  
What religious traditions  
did your family observe?

110  
00:06:07,100 --> 00:06:09,470  
Actually, very few.

111  
00:06:09,470 --> 00:06:13,230  
On the high holidays, Yom  
Kippur, and Rosh Hashana,

112  
00:06:13,230 --> 00:06:16,280  
and Yom Kippur, I  
didn't go to school.

113  
00:06:16,280 --> 00:06:19,830  
We never had a  
seder in our house.

114  
00:06:19,830 --> 00:06:23,540  
In fact, I only went to a seder  
once that an aunt of mine held,

115  
00:06:23,540 --> 00:06:27,110  
and I was very impressed by it.

116  
00:06:27,110 --> 00:06:29,030  
Hanukkah-- well,  
once in a while,

117

00:06:29,030 --> 00:06:34,190

we might have a  
Hanukkah celebration.

118

00:06:34,190 --> 00:06:35,960

Well Saturday, of  
course, chametz--

119

00:06:35,960 --> 00:06:38,960

my father, there was still  
some of the tradition.

120

00:06:38,960 --> 00:06:42,500

My father, who occasionally,  
or rather frequently,

121

00:06:42,500 --> 00:06:46,250

traveled on behalf of his own  
business from Monday to Friday,

122

00:06:46,250 --> 00:06:47,850

he would come home Friday night.

123

00:06:47,850 --> 00:06:54,230

And my mother would have a  
chametz dinner ready for us.

124

00:06:54,230 --> 00:06:58,150

125

00:06:58,150 --> 00:07:00,980

Jewish cookery, of course,  
was very important.

126

00:07:00,980 --> 00:07:08,040

And we did have religious  
training, religious education.

127

00:07:08,040 --> 00:07:11,430

And I was bar mitzvahed.

128

00:07:11,430 --> 00:07:13,710

That just about sums it up.

129  
00:07:13,710 --> 00:07:17,010  
Tell me about your  
religious education.

130  
00:07:17,010 --> 00:07:19,800  
Well, religious  
education in Germany

131  
00:07:19,800 --> 00:07:24,450  
was at the time part of  
the school curriculum.

132  
00:07:24,450 --> 00:07:29,460  
In fact, twice a week in  
the elementary school,

133  
00:07:29,460 --> 00:07:32,970  
the teacher would talk  
about a Bible story--

134  
00:07:32,970 --> 00:07:35,550  
either Old or New Testament--

135  
00:07:35,550 --> 00:07:38,670  
and when I entered  
the second grade,

136  
00:07:38,670 --> 00:07:41,880  
we were informed  
that, henceforth, we

137  
00:07:41,880 --> 00:07:45,540  
would be excused  
from going through

138  
00:07:45,540 --> 00:07:47,490  
the religious  
instruction in school--

139  
00:07:47,490 --> 00:07:49,840  
we could take that hour off.

140  
00:07:49,840 --> 00:07:52,800  
But every Wednesday afternoon,  
which was traditionally

141  
00:07:52,800 --> 00:07:55,140  
a school-free  
afternoon, we would

142  
00:07:55,140 --> 00:07:57,660  
have to go to  
religious education

143  
00:07:57,660 --> 00:08:00,330  
in the Jewish  
community-building, which was

144  
00:08:00,330 --> 00:08:02,820  
adjacent to the main synagogue.

145  
00:08:02,820 --> 00:08:07,830  
And there, we would have an  
hour of Bible or Jewish history

146  
00:08:07,830 --> 00:08:10,260  
and an hour of Hebrew.

147  
00:08:10,260 --> 00:08:13,980  
And unless you  
opted out of that,

148  
00:08:13,980 --> 00:08:16,110  
you were expected to attend.

149  
00:08:16,110 --> 00:08:18,750  
And the report cards  
that were given to you

150  
00:08:18,750 --> 00:08:24,330  
there were incorporated into  
your public school report

151

00:08:24,330 --> 00:08:25,350  
cards.

152  
00:08:25,350 --> 00:08:27,210  
Now, if you flunked  
religion, that

153  
00:08:27,210 --> 00:08:29,580  
wasn't grounds for  
keeping you back.

154  
00:08:29,580 --> 00:08:32,039  
It didn't count,  
but it was shown.

155  
00:08:32,039 --> 00:08:33,630  
And you got grades,  
and they were

156  
00:08:33,630 --> 00:08:35,870  
reflected in your report card.

157  
00:08:35,870 --> 00:08:39,703

158  
00:08:39,703 --> 00:08:41,870  
Can you tell me a little  
bit about your bar mitzvah?

159  
00:08:41,870 --> 00:08:45,030

160  
00:08:45,030 --> 00:08:47,670  
Well, I was interviewed by--

161  
00:08:47,670 --> 00:08:50,550  
we had two rabbis.

162  
00:08:50,550 --> 00:08:53,820  
Where I lived, we had  
one big, main synagogue.

163

00:08:53,820 --> 00:08:55,770

There was a small  
synagogue which

164

00:08:55,770 --> 00:08:58,230

was used by the orthodox--  
mainly people who

165

00:08:58,230 --> 00:09:00,990

had moved into Stuttgart  
after World War I

166

00:09:00,990 --> 00:09:03,940

and had come from  
Eastern Europe.

167

00:09:03,940 --> 00:09:10,500

But the main synagogue had two  
rabbis and a number of canters.

168

00:09:10,500 --> 00:09:15,060

And they were the people who  
gave religious instructions

169

00:09:15,060 --> 00:09:17,250

to Jewish children.

170

00:09:17,250 --> 00:09:19,350

And one of them  
then would also be

171

00:09:19,350 --> 00:09:22,500

responsible for guiding you  
through the bar mitzvah,

172

00:09:22,500 --> 00:09:24,330

giving you instructions.

173

00:09:24,330 --> 00:09:28,800

For that, we had to come in on  
Saturday afternoon for a bar

174

00:09:28,800 --> 00:09:30,240

mitzvah instruction.

175  
00:09:30,240 --> 00:09:33,180  
And then there was  
a youth service

176  
00:09:33,180 --> 00:09:36,720  
at the synagogue about an hour  
in length particularly geared

177  
00:09:36,720 --> 00:09:40,320  
toward young people--

178  
00:09:40,320 --> 00:09:43,740  
I wouldn't say small  
children, but maybe

179  
00:09:43,740 --> 00:09:45,390  
sixth or seventh grade--

180  
00:09:45,390 --> 00:09:48,360  
fifth, sixth,  
seventh grade and up.

181  
00:09:48,360 --> 00:09:52,600  
And I was given the choice--

182  
00:09:52,600 --> 00:09:56,260  
did I want to just say  
the berakha over the Torah

183  
00:09:56,260 --> 00:09:58,180  
or say a parsha.

184  
00:09:58,180 --> 00:10:01,300  
And of course, being  
lazy, I chose the berakha.

185  
00:10:01,300 --> 00:10:04,930  
The rabbi later told me  
he's sorry he ever gave me

186



00:10:04,930 --> 00:10:05,650  
that option.

187  
00:10:05,650 --> 00:10:08,560  
I should have taken  
the time to chant

188  
00:10:08,560 --> 00:10:14,770  
the parsha for the bar mitzvah.

189  
00:10:14,770 --> 00:10:17,720  
And it was a fairly big deal.

190  
00:10:17,720 --> 00:10:23,530  
You invited all your  
family, and sometimes even

191  
00:10:23,530 --> 00:10:25,120  
non-Jewish friends too.

192  
00:10:25,120 --> 00:10:28,210  
And we had big family dinners.

193  
00:10:28,210 --> 00:10:31,315  
And of course, you expected  
and received many gifts.

194  
00:10:31,315 --> 00:10:34,070

195  
00:10:34,070 --> 00:10:36,965  
Did you have a favorite holiday,  
either religious or secular?

196  
00:10:36,965 --> 00:10:40,330

197  
00:10:40,330 --> 00:10:43,120  
I really don't know.

198  
00:10:43,120 --> 00:10:47,560  
Undoubtedly, if

we had kept seder,

199

00:10:47,560 --> 00:10:51,250  
that would have been my favorite  
holiday, because it is now.

200

00:10:51,250 --> 00:10:55,270  
I think it's a wonderful family  
and religious institution.

201

00:10:55,270 --> 00:10:59,430

202

00:10:59,430 --> 00:11:05,720  
Tell me about your  
non-religious education.

203

00:11:05,720 --> 00:11:09,480  
well it was a traditional  
middle class education--

204

00:11:09,480 --> 00:11:12,380  
four years of elementary school.

205

00:11:12,380 --> 00:11:15,230  
At the end of four  
years, you had

206

00:11:15,230 --> 00:11:17,720  
to take a test, which  
was no harder than what

207

00:11:17,720 --> 00:11:21,290  
you would normally receive  
in the course of education.

208

00:11:21,290 --> 00:11:25,670  
And if you passed  
it, then you could

209

00:11:25,670 --> 00:11:32,540  
go to a higher school, which  
is now pretty uniformly known

210  
00:11:32,540 --> 00:11:34,460  
as gymnasium.

211  
00:11:34,460 --> 00:11:39,440  
In my day, the gymnasium  
was a humanistic education

212  
00:11:39,440 --> 00:11:42,020  
that you received if you  
would become a doctor,

213  
00:11:42,020 --> 00:11:46,170  
or a philosopher, or  
something like that.

214  
00:11:46,170 --> 00:11:48,410  
So from the fifth  
year, which was

215  
00:11:48,410 --> 00:11:55,370  
the first year of high  
school, I went to equivalent

216  
00:11:55,370 --> 00:11:59,990  
to a gymnasium.

217  
00:11:59,990 --> 00:12:06,670  
And after four years, I was sent  
to a higher school of commerce,

218  
00:12:06,670 --> 00:12:09,220  
because the idea  
was, my father said,

219  
00:12:09,220 --> 00:12:13,810  
that, undoubtedly, like most  
of other members of my family,

220  
00:12:13,810 --> 00:12:15,340  
I would enter business.

221

00:12:15,340 --> 00:12:18,700  
And this would be a specialized  
training where you would be

222

00:12:18,700 --> 00:12:24,100  
taught specifically things that  
you would need in business--

223

00:12:24,100 --> 00:12:28,180  
that included languages, of  
course, English and French--

224

00:12:28,180 --> 00:12:30,910  
and in French specifically,  
writing a business letter

225

00:12:30,910 --> 00:12:36,760  
in French, accounting,  
chemistry, and history,

226

00:12:36,760 --> 00:12:44,040  
and all the other  
academic subjects as well.

227

00:12:44,040 --> 00:12:47,930  
After one year in  
that school, I was 16.

228

00:12:47,930 --> 00:12:51,140  
And of course, that was the  
time when it was decided for me

229

00:12:51,140 --> 00:12:53,750  
it was time to leave Germany.

230

00:12:53,750 --> 00:12:56,000  
When you were growing up,  
what were some of the things

231

00:12:56,000 --> 00:12:56,990  
that you did for fun?

232

00:12:56,990 --> 00:13:00,230

233

00:13:00,230 --> 00:13:02,390

Well, I had friends.

234

00:13:02,390 --> 00:13:04,670

Usually I had one  
or two friends.

235

00:13:04,670 --> 00:13:06,740

I didn't usually have  
hordes of friends.

236

00:13:06,740 --> 00:13:09,380

And we got together.

237

00:13:09,380 --> 00:13:13,250

And where I was living there  
were a lot of children--

238

00:13:13,250 --> 00:13:14,550

most of them not Jewish.

239

00:13:14,550 --> 00:13:17,420

And we would play when I was  
small-- the usual games--

240

00:13:17,420 --> 00:13:21,260

catch and hide and go seek.

241

00:13:21,260 --> 00:13:24,380

We also had scooters  
which we used.

242

00:13:24,380 --> 00:13:27,710

And we go around the  
block or even downtown,

243

00:13:27,710 --> 00:13:31,510

downhill, and then push  
the scooter back up again.

244

00:13:31,510 --> 00:13:34,180

245

00:13:34,180 --> 00:13:39,430

My bar mitzvah present was a  
bicycle which I dearly wanted,

246

00:13:39,430 --> 00:13:41,260

and which my parents  
didn't want me

247

00:13:41,260 --> 00:13:45,100

to have because Stuttgart is  
a little like Washington--

248

00:13:45,100 --> 00:13:46,180

it's full of hills.

249

00:13:46,180 --> 00:13:48,590

And my mother thought  
it was bad for my heart

250

00:13:48,590 --> 00:13:52,240

to have to pump up  
these steep streets.

251

00:13:52,240 --> 00:13:56,470

In actuality, it helped  
me a lot even now,

252

00:13:56,470 --> 00:14:00,250

because I developed a tremendous  
amount of lung power and also

253

00:14:00,250 --> 00:14:03,150

leg muscles.

254

00:14:03,150 --> 00:14:08,130

I would go with friends on  
bike excursions for the day

255

00:14:08,130 --> 00:14:10,350

or for the afternoon.

256  
00:14:10,350 --> 00:14:16,660  
And we had a lake there--  
an artificial man-made lake

257  
00:14:16,660 --> 00:14:18,340  
on the river.

258  
00:14:18,340 --> 00:14:21,250  
And I'd go with a  
friend, and we'd

259  
00:14:21,250 --> 00:14:26,530  
take out a canoe or a kayak  
with what you'd call it here.

260  
00:14:26,530 --> 00:14:32,850  
And we'd paddle around in  
the kayak for an afternoon.

261  
00:14:32,850 --> 00:14:36,660  
Also after the Nazis  
came into power,

262  
00:14:36,660 --> 00:14:42,630  
the Jewish Veterans Organization  
organized a sports group.

263  
00:14:42,630 --> 00:14:45,660  
And I belonged to that,  
where I had the opportunity

264  
00:14:45,660 --> 00:14:51,713  
to swim, play ball games,  
and just do field sports.

265  
00:14:51,713 --> 00:14:53,130  
Did that sports  
group have a name?

266  
00:14:53,130 --> 00:14:55,750

267

00:14:55,750 --> 00:14:59,010

It was called after  
the organization.

268

00:14:59,010 --> 00:15:02,430

They let the initials are  
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] RJF,

269

00:15:02,430 --> 00:15:06,695

which is the German  
Federation of Veterans.

270

00:15:06,695 --> 00:15:09,830

271

00:15:09,830 --> 00:15:12,830

Did you ever experience or  
witness any anti-Semitism

272

00:15:12,830 --> 00:15:15,870

as a child?

273

00:15:15,870 --> 00:15:16,370

Yeah.

274

00:15:16,370 --> 00:15:19,760

Well, as I remember,  
there wasn't anything more

275

00:15:19,760 --> 00:15:22,610

than being called Dirty  
Jew, or why don't you

276

00:15:22,610 --> 00:15:25,030

go to Palestine, or  
something like that.

277

00:15:25,030 --> 00:15:29,120

There actually wasn't  
a whole lot of this

278

00:15:29,120 --> 00:15:31,700



that I personally experienced.

279

00:15:31,700 --> 00:15:34,610

But that was about  
the extent of it.

280

00:15:34,610 --> 00:15:38,040

281

00:15:38,040 --> 00:15:41,430

When you think back on your  
childhood in Stuttgart,

282

00:15:41,430 --> 00:15:46,650

do you primarily remember  
Germany with Hitler in power,

283

00:15:46,650 --> 00:15:51,420

or do you have much recollection  
of Germany before Hitler came?

284

00:15:51,420 --> 00:15:54,540

Well, I was 12 when  
Hitler came into power.

285

00:15:54,540 --> 00:15:59,400

And I remember, of course,  
life as it was then.

286

00:15:59,400 --> 00:16:03,430

Actually, for me, it didn't  
change an awful lot at all.

287

00:16:03,430 --> 00:16:07,180

I continued to go to school,  
and I had non-Jewish friends.

288

00:16:07,180 --> 00:16:10,230

In fact, one of them  
came to a little dinner

289

00:16:10,230 --> 00:16:14,140

my mother gave the week

before I emigrated.

290

00:16:14,140 --> 00:16:21,090

So actually, I had a very pleasant life on the whole.

291

00:16:21,090 --> 00:16:24,552

292

00:16:24,552 --> 00:16:26,760

Can you tell me what you remember about Hitler's rise

293

00:16:26,760 --> 00:16:29,430

to power?

294

00:16:29,430 --> 00:16:31,290

Yes.

295

00:16:31,290 --> 00:16:34,440

The very first thing I remember in school--

296

00:16:34,440 --> 00:16:39,770

that must have been about when I was in second or third grade--

297

00:16:39,770 --> 00:16:42,360

so that would be about 1930--

298

00:16:42,360 --> 00:16:45,060

and the teacher was giving some instructions

299

00:16:45,060 --> 00:16:46,620

on how to draw a face.

300

00:16:46,620 --> 00:16:49,980

And he showed a simple face on the blackboard--

301

00:16:49,980 --> 00:16:52,770

the hair, the nose, and  
the eyes, and so on.

302  
00:16:52,770 --> 00:16:56,220  
And I remember one of  
the kids commented on it,

303  
00:16:56,220 --> 00:17:02,250  
he says, this what you drew  
there looks like Hitler.

304  
00:17:02,250 --> 00:17:05,420  
And the teacher said,  
well, Hitler-- well,

305  
00:17:05,420 --> 00:17:09,170  
I don't really think so--

306  
00:17:09,170 --> 00:17:10,450  
never heard of Hitler.

307  
00:17:10,450 --> 00:17:15,050  
So I think I asked at  
home-- who is this Hitler?

308  
00:17:15,050 --> 00:17:22,220  
Well, he's a politician now, and  
he's doing a lot of activity--

309  
00:17:22,220 --> 00:17:24,040  
anti-Semitic and all that.

310  
00:17:24,040 --> 00:17:26,300  
And that's the first  
I ever heard of him.

311  
00:17:26,300 --> 00:17:30,810

312  
00:17:30,810 --> 00:17:36,510  
This was, of course, a time when  
the worldwide depression hit--

313  
00:17:36,510 --> 00:17:38,880  
1929.

314  
00:17:38,880 --> 00:17:44,520  
And you heard a lot  
about the problems

315  
00:17:44,520 --> 00:17:47,900  
that the government  
in Germany had--

316  
00:17:47,900 --> 00:17:50,100  
the emergency decrees.

317  
00:17:50,100 --> 00:17:51,450  
A lot of fund was made--

318  
00:17:51,450 --> 00:17:53,370  
the emergency  
decree was something

319  
00:17:53,370 --> 00:17:57,330  
that the constitution  
that was in effect then,

320  
00:17:57,330 --> 00:18:02,260  
the Weimer Constitution that was  
put in effect after World War

321  
00:18:02,260 --> 00:18:07,170  
I, and it gave the  
president the power

322  
00:18:07,170 --> 00:18:09,630  
to rule by decree,  
which he would bestow

323  
00:18:09,630 --> 00:18:14,490  
on his chancellor who was  
the chief of government

324  
00:18:14,490 --> 00:18:16,180

at the time.

325

00:18:16,180 --> 00:18:23,910

And so very frequently, the  
parliament, the Reichstag,

326

00:18:23,910 --> 00:18:27,150

would vote no confidence,  
and then new elections

327

00:18:27,150 --> 00:18:29,160

would have to be held.

328

00:18:29,160 --> 00:18:32,310

And so in a little  
bit like here,

329

00:18:32,310 --> 00:18:35,670

there would be flags flying,  
and rallies, and so on.

330

00:18:35,670 --> 00:18:38,580

And you hear about parties.

331

00:18:38,580 --> 00:18:40,110

And Germany had,  
I think, something

332

00:18:40,110 --> 00:18:44,790

like 35 parties, of which only  
about a half a dozen counted

333

00:18:44,790 --> 00:18:46,620

for anything.

334

00:18:46,620 --> 00:18:50,760

And you voted not by  
individual, but by list.

335

00:18:50,760 --> 00:18:53,760

And the lists were  
determined on the basis

336

00:18:53,760 --> 00:18:58,740  
of the strength of a party  
how many delegates they had.

337

00:18:58,740 --> 00:19:00,120  
And so you could watch.

338

00:19:00,120 --> 00:19:02,940  
And the first thing I  
remember about parties,

339

00:19:02,940 --> 00:19:05,873  
there were these  
national socialists,

340

00:19:05,873 --> 00:19:06,915  
and they were number two.

341

00:19:06,915 --> 00:19:10,220

342

00:19:10,220 --> 00:19:11,870  
I learned much  
later that they had

343

00:19:11,870 --> 00:19:16,070  
come up very rapidly from  
a very much lower position.

344

00:19:16,070 --> 00:19:22,070  
And so in 1930, I think there  
were two or three elections--

345

00:19:22,070 --> 00:19:24,350  
the parliament  
would be turned out.

346

00:19:24,350 --> 00:19:27,080  
And so you'd hear a lot  
of election propaganda.

347

00:19:27,080 --> 00:19:33,270

And of course, at that  
time, you heard the speeches

348  
00:19:33,270 --> 00:19:35,760  
and you read the articles  
in the newspaper.

349  
00:19:35,760 --> 00:19:38,640  
And it was at that time  
that I really became aware

350  
00:19:38,640 --> 00:19:44,430  
that there was a Nazi movement  
and that there was a danger.

351  
00:19:44,430 --> 00:19:48,590  
Now, one of the things happened  
that the parties, the Nazis--

352  
00:19:48,590 --> 00:19:50,930  
but the communists,  
who were number three,

353  
00:19:50,930 --> 00:19:53,930  
and the social democrats who  
were number one in position

354  
00:19:53,930 --> 00:19:55,760  
in 1930--

355  
00:19:55,760 --> 00:19:58,402  
they had militias--  
uniformed militias.

356  
00:19:58,402 --> 00:20:00,110  
And they would march  
through the streets.

357  
00:20:00,110 --> 00:20:02,920

358  
00:20:02,920 --> 00:20:07,300  
And I remember one

time my father took us

359  
00:20:07,300 --> 00:20:09,610  
for a ride in the  
evening on a weekday,

360  
00:20:09,610 --> 00:20:12,760  
and we passed  
through one street.

361  
00:20:12,760 --> 00:20:15,460  
And we saw the social  
democrats marching.

362  
00:20:15,460 --> 00:20:18,820  
We turned the corner, and  
we saw the Nazis marching.

363  
00:20:18,820 --> 00:20:21,160  
And my father said,  
let's get out of here.

364  
00:20:21,160 --> 00:20:22,960  
Because when those  
two met up, there'd

365  
00:20:22,960 --> 00:20:24,460  
be some sort of a battle.

366  
00:20:24,460 --> 00:20:26,620  
They would draw  
knives, and there might

367  
00:20:26,620 --> 00:20:29,440  
be people injured and so on.

368  
00:20:29,440 --> 00:20:31,580  
And of course, the  
election campaigns,

369  
00:20:31,580 --> 00:20:34,450  
there would be  
disorders to with people



370  
00:20:34,450 --> 00:20:36,590  
trying to break in and so on.

371  
00:20:36,590 --> 00:20:39,760  
So at that time, of  
course, I became aware

372  
00:20:39,760 --> 00:20:42,730  
of the political struggle.

373  
00:20:42,730 --> 00:20:46,630  
And then the following  
year, either '31 or '32,

374  
00:20:46,630 --> 00:20:49,120  
the Nazis moved into the  
number one position--

375  
00:20:49,120 --> 00:20:52,240  
reversed positions with  
the social democrats who

376  
00:20:52,240 --> 00:20:55,460  
became number two.

377  
00:20:55,460 --> 00:20:59,270  
And so at that point, of  
course, I paid attention

378  
00:20:59,270 --> 00:21:03,500  
to the elections and  
who the candidates were.

379  
00:21:03,500 --> 00:21:08,750  
When the election, the results  
would come in the evening.

380  
00:21:08,750 --> 00:21:10,400  
And they would  
come in, since you

381

00:21:10,400 --> 00:21:13,850  
ran on the list not as  
an individual candidates,

382  
00:21:13,850 --> 00:21:19,550  
the election would be determined  
by strength throughout.

383  
00:21:19,550 --> 00:21:22,370  
And then they would give  
you the figures at 8 o'clock

384  
00:21:22,370 --> 00:21:23,210  
in the evening.

385  
00:21:23,210 --> 00:21:25,850  
The Nazis would have  
so many votes and so

386  
00:21:25,850 --> 00:21:30,110  
many delegates in the Reichstag.

387  
00:21:30,110 --> 00:21:32,300  
And my father would  
get very upset

388  
00:21:32,300 --> 00:21:36,290  
when he saw that it was  
shifting and that the Nazis were

389  
00:21:36,290 --> 00:21:40,400  
taking over as the major party.

390  
00:21:40,400 --> 00:21:41,810  
It was worrisome.

391  
00:21:41,810 --> 00:21:43,300  
And of course, in  
addition to it,

392  
00:21:43,300 --> 00:21:46,190  
you had the economic situation.

393

00:21:46,190 --> 00:21:50,060

The unemployment  
was proportional

394

00:21:50,060 --> 00:21:51,560

to that in the United States.

395

00:21:51,560 --> 00:21:54,110

396

00:21:54,110 --> 00:21:57,170

Germany had half the  
population of the US

397

00:21:57,170 --> 00:21:59,510

and half the number of  
unemployed people, which

398

00:21:59,510 --> 00:22:03,770

was something like 6 million  
out of a population of 66

399

00:22:03,770 --> 00:22:06,110

million people at the time.

400

00:22:06,110 --> 00:22:07,900

And people were nasty.

401

00:22:07,900 --> 00:22:10,610

402

00:22:10,610 --> 00:22:12,530

They wanted jobs.

403

00:22:12,530 --> 00:22:17,420

And of course, the Nazis  
were very adept at promising.

404

00:22:17,420 --> 00:22:19,520

They were going to close  
the Jewish department

405

00:22:19,520 --> 00:22:23,270

stores so that people would go  
again to the specialist stores.

406

00:22:23,270 --> 00:22:26,360

They would do away with  
the socialist unions

407

00:22:26,360 --> 00:22:29,570

and honor German workers again.

408

00:22:29,570 --> 00:22:33,740

And of course, people who  
were out of work and who

409

00:22:33,740 --> 00:22:37,760

had gone, most of them at  
the time through World War I,

410

00:22:37,760 --> 00:22:42,030

and felt that Germany  
was badly treated--

411

00:22:42,030 --> 00:22:45,350

which it was, that  
they had suffered

412

00:22:45,350 --> 00:22:48,050

through the war and the  
subsequent inflation.

413

00:22:48,050 --> 00:22:50,870

And now when it started  
it looked like things were

414

00:22:50,870 --> 00:22:52,880

going to go better  
comes this depression,

415

00:22:52,880 --> 00:22:54,720

and you're out of work.

416

00:22:54,720 --> 00:22:56,600

And is there no  
end to this thing?

417

00:22:56,600 --> 00:22:59,390

And Hitler, of course,  
took advantage of this

418

00:22:59,390 --> 00:23:00,830

with his message.

419

00:23:00,830 --> 00:23:04,240

420

00:23:04,240 --> 00:23:08,830

Were you or your parents  
alarmed by these events?

421

00:23:08,830 --> 00:23:13,890

Were you all alarmed, or  
intimidated, or frightened?

422

00:23:13,890 --> 00:23:16,440

Of course, you were  
somewhat alarmed.

423

00:23:16,440 --> 00:23:22,560

But there was no precedent  
to look to say, well,

424

00:23:22,560 --> 00:23:26,310

this has all happened before,  
because it has hadn't.

425

00:23:26,310 --> 00:23:29,220

And you figure it's  
going to be too bad--

426

00:23:29,220 --> 00:23:30,930

if he comes into  
power, there'll be

427

00:23:30,930 --> 00:23:34,290

increased anti-Semitism  
and god knows what else.

428  
00:23:34,290 --> 00:23:38,100  
But nobody dreamt that  
he would go to the extent

429  
00:23:38,100 --> 00:23:42,990  
that he initially and, of  
course, eventually did.

430  
00:23:42,990 --> 00:23:45,720

431  
00:23:45,720 --> 00:23:49,350  
I'd like to go through  
some of the changes step

432  
00:23:49,350 --> 00:23:52,140  
by step, one at a time.

433  
00:23:52,140 --> 00:23:53,940  
You mentioned some  
of the propaganda.

434  
00:23:53,940 --> 00:23:56,550  
Can you give me some specific  
examples of the propaganda

435  
00:23:56,550 --> 00:23:57,300  
that you remember?

436  
00:23:57,300 --> 00:24:01,650

437  
00:24:01,650 --> 00:24:06,150  
At that particular  
time, I don't think

438  
00:24:06,150 --> 00:24:07,890  
I remember anything specific.

439

00:24:07,890 --> 00:24:10,980  
I know that it was being made.

440  
00:24:10,980 --> 00:24:15,420  
Later on, of course, I  
became more aware of it.

441  
00:24:15,420 --> 00:24:18,750  
I'm sure that the  
anti-Semitic paper

442  
00:24:18,750 --> 00:24:22,890  
that Hitler's party  
leader, Gauleiter Streicher

443  
00:24:22,890 --> 00:24:27,900  
in Nuremberg, put out in  
his really filth paper,

444  
00:24:27,900 --> 00:24:35,490  
The Sturmer, which was devoted  
to insulting and denigrating

445  
00:24:35,490 --> 00:24:36,060  
Jews.

446  
00:24:36,060 --> 00:24:42,870  
And every issue had on its  
main masthead the caption,

447  
00:24:42,870 --> 00:24:47,310  
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] The  
Jews are our misfortune.

448  
00:24:47,310 --> 00:24:53,340  
This was spiced up with  
caricatures of Jewish faces

449  
00:24:53,340 --> 00:24:54,660  
with big noses--

450  
00:24:54,660 --> 00:25:00,480  
fat, very hairy, very

unpleasant, unsavory looking.

451

00:25:00,480 --> 00:25:04,560  
But I don't know whether I was  
aware of that particular aspect

452

00:25:04,560 --> 00:25:06,910  
at the time.

453

00:25:06,910 --> 00:25:08,315  
What about the speeches?

454

00:25:08,315 --> 00:25:09,940  
What can you recall  
about the speeches?

455

00:25:09,940 --> 00:25:12,560

456

00:25:12,560 --> 00:25:15,920  
I really didn't listen  
to speeches at the time.

457

00:25:15,920 --> 00:25:17,210  
I know they took place.

458

00:25:17,210 --> 00:25:19,460  
They were pretty  
raucous affairs.

459

00:25:19,460 --> 00:25:23,480  
They were in big meeting  
halls-- beer halls and so on.

460

00:25:23,480 --> 00:25:25,880  
They were filled with Nazis.

461

00:25:25,880 --> 00:25:31,340  
And when Hitler spoke,  
there was always

462

00:25:31,340 --> 00:25:34,550



either spontaneous  
or stoked applause.

463  
00:25:34,550 --> 00:25:36,470  
There were people  
seated throughout who

464  
00:25:36,470 --> 00:25:38,450  
would jump up in applause.

465  
00:25:38,450 --> 00:25:43,550  
And we knew that these people  
were not gentle politicians,

466  
00:25:43,550 --> 00:25:47,060  
but they were  
mass-oriented and geared

467  
00:25:47,060 --> 00:25:51,690  
to the lower class  
of the population,

468  
00:25:51,690 --> 00:25:55,310  
particularly the unemployed  
and, of course, many others too.

469  
00:25:55,310 --> 00:25:59,820

470  
00:25:59,820 --> 00:26:03,090  
Were you aware of things  
like book burnings?

471  
00:26:03,090 --> 00:26:03,590  
Yes.

472  
00:26:03,590 --> 00:26:07,280  
Of course, we heard that  
announced, because that

473  
00:26:07,280 --> 00:26:09,530  
was always presented.

474

00:26:09,530 --> 00:26:11,870

At the time, of course,  
there was no television,

475

00:26:11,870 --> 00:26:15,590

and a lot of people  
didn't even have radios.

476

00:26:15,590 --> 00:26:18,280

We didn't get our  
radio until 1932.

477

00:26:18,280 --> 00:26:22,310

That is the year before  
Hitler came to power.

478

00:26:22,310 --> 00:26:25,640

And one of the  
things he installed

479

00:26:25,640 --> 00:26:29,180

was a very efficient  
propaganda apparatus.

480

00:26:29,180 --> 00:26:32,330

And so when there  
was book burnings,

481

00:26:32,330 --> 00:26:34,010

that would be on the news.

482

00:26:34,010 --> 00:26:36,320

And of course, it would  
be in the newspapers too.

483

00:26:36,320 --> 00:26:40,040

Because once he came  
in, while the press was

484

00:26:40,040 --> 00:26:44,690

still locally or  
independently owned,

485

00:26:44,690 --> 00:26:47,850

they had to carry  
certain news items.

486

00:26:47,850 --> 00:26:50,660

And they were checked  
for their attitude.

487

00:26:50,660 --> 00:26:55,130

And some of the less  
Nazi-oriented papers

488

00:26:55,130 --> 00:26:57,650

would try to go as  
far as they could.

489

00:26:57,650 --> 00:27:00,170

But they would have to  
carry certain articles.

490

00:27:00,170 --> 00:27:02,960

And of course, when the  
speeches were printed,

491

00:27:02,960 --> 00:27:06,410

you would see that the  
book burning took place.

492

00:27:06,410 --> 00:27:08,390

And of course, the  
speech that went with it

493

00:27:08,390 --> 00:27:10,050

is that the people demanded it.

494

00:27:10,050 --> 00:27:13,380

This was filthy literature which  
poisoned the German spirit,

495

00:27:13,380 --> 00:27:18,230

and we wanted to purge  
Germany from this.

496

00:27:18,230 --> 00:27:20,340

And that's why it  
was being done.

497

00:27:20,340 --> 00:27:23,624

So yes, you knew about that.

498

00:27:23,624 --> 00:27:26,430

How about the Nuremberg laws?

499

00:27:26,430 --> 00:27:28,890

Well, that was in  
1935, of course.

500

00:27:28,890 --> 00:27:30,840

At that time, I was 13.

501

00:27:30,840 --> 00:27:35,280

And we were immediately  
affected by it,

502

00:27:35,280 --> 00:27:42,510

because one of the clauses  
was that no Jewish female

503

00:27:42,510 --> 00:27:46,380

under the age of,  
I believe, 42 or 45

504

00:27:46,380 --> 00:27:51,900

was allowed to work in a  
Jewish household in which there

505

00:27:51,900 --> 00:27:56,700

was a male present.

506

00:27:56,700 --> 00:28:03,120

So we had a maid at the time  
who my father had hired--

507

00:28:03,120 --> 00:28:05,520

after times got a little better.

508  
00:28:05,520 --> 00:28:07,410  
We had a maid before  
the Depression,

509  
00:28:07,410 --> 00:28:11,010  
but we let her go  
because of the times.

510  
00:28:11,010 --> 00:28:15,390  
And my father thought it  
would be nice for my mother

511  
00:28:15,390 --> 00:28:16,140  
to have a maid.

512  
00:28:16,140 --> 00:28:20,250  
And usually maids  
came from small towns

513  
00:28:20,250 --> 00:28:24,330  
and served in the city,  
because that was how they

514  
00:28:24,330 --> 00:28:25,860  
learned how to run a household.

515  
00:28:25,860 --> 00:28:28,350  
They were frequently  
peasant girls

516  
00:28:28,350 --> 00:28:35,520  
or from other blue collar  
occupations in small towns.

517  
00:28:35,520 --> 00:28:37,800  
And to learn how  
to run a household,

518  
00:28:37,800 --> 00:28:39,090  
they would go into the city.

519

00:28:39,090 --> 00:28:41,250  
And they liked working  
for Jewish households.

520  
00:28:41,250 --> 00:28:44,820  
They were well-run, and they  
had a chance to learn something.

521  
00:28:44,820 --> 00:28:52,050  
And one maid told my mother  
once that she came into the city

522  
00:28:52,050 --> 00:28:53,820  
to be a maid  
because she was told

523  
00:28:53,820 --> 00:28:56,880  
she couldn't get a husband if  
she hadn't worked in the city

524  
00:28:56,880 --> 00:28:58,710  
even if it was for  
only two weeks.

525  
00:28:58,710 --> 00:29:00,630  
And that's exactly what she did.

526  
00:29:00,630 --> 00:29:04,890  
But to get back on track, my  
father hired this young woman--

527  
00:29:04,890 --> 00:29:08,140  
I guess she was orphaned,  
and a customer of his

528  
00:29:08,140 --> 00:29:11,040  
asked if my father  
didn't know of a place

529  
00:29:11,040 --> 00:29:12,300  
where she could work.

530  
00:29:12,300 --> 00:29:15,420

My father says, well,  
maybe we can employ her.

531  
00:29:15,420 --> 00:29:16,350  
And she came to work.

532  
00:29:16,350 --> 00:29:17,460  
She was very happy.

533  
00:29:17,460 --> 00:29:18,540  
She worked hard.

534  
00:29:18,540 --> 00:29:19,970  
Of course, she had  
it pretty good.

535  
00:29:19,970 --> 00:29:22,590  
It wasn't unpleasant work.

536  
00:29:22,590 --> 00:29:27,240  
She got plenty of time off,  
and she was pretty well-paid.

537  
00:29:27,240 --> 00:29:31,050  
And when the Nuremberg  
laws were passed,

538  
00:29:31,050 --> 00:29:33,240  
we had to tell her that  
she couldn't work anymore,

539  
00:29:33,240 --> 00:29:34,680  
and she cried.

540  
00:29:34,680 --> 00:29:37,830  
But there was no choice.

541  
00:29:37,830 --> 00:29:46,740  
It also, of course, reduced  
our status as German citizens.

542  
00:29:46,740 --> 00:29:49,950

Full citizens rights  
were now officially

543  
00:29:49,950 --> 00:29:51,730  
abrogated considerably.

544  
00:29:51,730 --> 00:29:54,750

545  
00:29:54,750 --> 00:29:56,500  
For you personally,  
were there any changes

546  
00:29:56,500 --> 00:29:58,400  
in your situation at school?

547  
00:29:58,400 --> 00:29:59,830  
No.

548  
00:29:59,830 --> 00:30:03,130  
The Nazis wanted to throw the  
Jews out of public schools

549  
00:30:03,130 --> 00:30:03,820  
initially.

550  
00:30:03,820 --> 00:30:12,310  
And I understand that a Jew who  
was a soldier in World War I

551  
00:30:12,310 --> 00:30:17,410  
went to the then-President  
Hindenburg who died in 1934

552  
00:30:17,410 --> 00:30:18,880  
and complained.

553  
00:30:18,880 --> 00:30:21,100  
He served his fatherland,  
and now his children

554  
00:30:21,100 --> 00:30:22,240



can't go to school.

555

00:30:22,240 --> 00:30:26,920

And reportedly, Hindenburg  
said that no child of a veteran

556

00:30:26,920 --> 00:30:29,890

will lose his  
rights to education.

557

00:30:29,890 --> 00:30:34,600

And that was being honored until  
the Nuremberg laws, I guess.

558

00:30:34,600 --> 00:30:38,080

Anyway, since my  
father was a veteran,

559

00:30:38,080 --> 00:30:42,730

I was in the public school  
until I emigrated in 1937.

560

00:30:42,730 --> 00:30:48,970

I believe in 1938, if not even  
earlier, that was terminated.

561

00:30:48,970 --> 00:30:57,270

562

00:30:57,270 --> 00:31:00,660

What kind of military  
service had your father seen?

563

00:31:00,660 --> 00:31:05,010

Well, all Germans,  
including Jews, of course,

564

00:31:05,010 --> 00:31:09,480

were required to  
serve for one or two

565

00:31:09,480 --> 00:31:12,120

years in the army for training.

566  
00:31:12,120 --> 00:31:15,150  
Now, if you had a certain  
educational level,

567  
00:31:15,150 --> 00:31:17,940  
you could then  
volunteer for what

568  
00:31:17,940 --> 00:31:19,560  
was called a one-year service.

569  
00:31:19,560 --> 00:31:21,040  
And my father did.

570  
00:31:21,040 --> 00:31:27,720  
He was militarily trained in the  
cavalry in the nearby garrison

571  
00:31:27,720 --> 00:31:28,830  
of Ludwigsburg.

572  
00:31:28,830 --> 00:31:30,930  
And he served his here.

573  
00:31:30,930 --> 00:31:36,540  
And then, of course, he was  
available in case of war.

574  
00:31:36,540 --> 00:31:42,340  
In 1914 when World  
War I broke out,

575  
00:31:42,340 --> 00:31:46,140  
my father immediately received  
his mobilization order

576  
00:31:46,140 --> 00:31:49,950  
on August the 2nd, which  
was mobilization day.

577  
00:31:49,950 --> 00:31:55,390

And he was called in and he served until November 1918,

578  
00:31:55,390 --> 00:31:59,560  
the end of World War I.

579  
00:31:59,560 --> 00:32:02,530  
Was his service recognized in any way?

580  
00:32:02,530 --> 00:32:07,780  
Yes, he did get a medal for bravery and loyalty

581  
00:32:07,780 --> 00:32:10,040  
by the king.

582  
00:32:10,040 --> 00:32:15,940  
The various German States had their own military decorations

583  
00:32:15,940 --> 00:32:21,100  
from the days when the sovereign was completely sovereign.

584  
00:32:21,100 --> 00:32:22,600  
He has this medal.

585  
00:32:22,600 --> 00:32:25,120  
I have it upstairs here.

586  
00:32:25,120 --> 00:32:28,330  
And I don't know whether he earned an Iron Cross.

587  
00:32:28,330 --> 00:32:29,530  
I don't believe he did.

588  
00:32:29,530 --> 00:32:33,370  
I have his military passport in my possession,

589

00:32:33,370 --> 00:32:35,440  
and I have just  
recently reviewed it,

590  
00:32:35,440 --> 00:32:37,210  
and the only thing  
is this medal that I

591  
00:32:37,210 --> 00:32:39,850  
mentioned that he received.

592  
00:32:39,850 --> 00:32:43,090  
He did serve in  
what you would call

593  
00:32:43,090 --> 00:32:48,640  
the logistic service  
on the Eastern Front

594  
00:32:48,640 --> 00:32:51,370  
in Russia, Lithuania, Poland.

595  
00:32:51,370 --> 00:32:54,580  
And after the collapse of that  
front at the end of the war,

596  
00:32:54,580 --> 00:32:57,085  
he served in France.

597  
00:32:57,085 --> 00:33:02,000

598  
00:33:02,000 --> 00:33:04,340  
What about the boycotts  
of Jewish businesses?

599  
00:33:04,340 --> 00:33:06,530  
Did that impact your family?

600  
00:33:06,530 --> 00:33:07,760  
It didn't.

601

00:33:07,760 --> 00:33:09,590  
It was a strange situation.

602  
00:33:09,590 --> 00:33:12,590  
The boycott was  
on April 1, 1933.

603  
00:33:12,590 --> 00:33:16,520  
And I'm not sure, but it  
seems to me it was a Saturday.

604  
00:33:16,520 --> 00:33:19,160  
My father's business  
was on the fourth floor

605  
00:33:19,160 --> 00:33:20,390  
of an office building.

606  
00:33:20,390 --> 00:33:26,180  
He had a small store  
room in his office.

607  
00:33:26,180 --> 00:33:29,990  
And in the morning, he went  
to work on the elevator,

608  
00:33:29,990 --> 00:33:30,800  
and he got out.

609  
00:33:30,800 --> 00:33:32,870  
There was nobody  
standing at his door.

610  
00:33:32,870 --> 00:33:35,840  
He went to work, and he  
came home in the evening.

611  
00:33:35,840 --> 00:33:38,300  
And of course, he  
told us he saw stores

612  
00:33:38,300 --> 00:33:40,340  
that he passed being boycotted.

613  
00:33:40,340 --> 00:33:44,720  
But he wasn't, by some  
strange perk, however,

614  
00:33:44,720 --> 00:33:47,720  
two floors below  
there was a lawyer

615  
00:33:47,720 --> 00:33:51,950  
by the name of Kaufman, which  
could be Jewish or not Jewish.

616  
00:33:51,950 --> 00:33:53,610  
They thought he was Jewish.

617  
00:33:53,610 --> 00:33:58,250  
So they put a couple of SS or  
SR men in front of his store

618  
00:33:58,250 --> 00:34:00,380  
and told people not to go in.

619  
00:34:00,380 --> 00:34:03,110  
The man was a reserve  
officer in the German army.

620  
00:34:03,110 --> 00:34:04,430  
He was furious.

621  
00:34:04,430 --> 00:34:06,890  
He went home, and  
put on his uniform,

622  
00:34:06,890 --> 00:34:09,260  
and read those  
guys the riot act.

623  
00:34:09,260 --> 00:34:12,440  
And of course, they apologized.

624  
00:34:12,440 --> 00:34:14,810

He wasn't boycotted at the time.

625

00:34:14,810 --> 00:34:20,440

626

00:34:20,440 --> 00:34:23,710

Can you remember a  
change in the atmosphere

627

00:34:23,710 --> 00:34:28,760

during the 1936 Olympics?

628

00:34:28,760 --> 00:34:29,260

No.

629

00:34:29,260 --> 00:34:35,440

Again, of course, we listened  
on the radio to the Olympics.

630

00:34:35,440 --> 00:34:40,300

And we knew what was going on.

631

00:34:40,300 --> 00:34:43,600

In Stuttgart, we were  
particularly interested

632

00:34:43,600 --> 00:34:48,280

because there was a young  
athlete who lived nearby who

633

00:34:48,280 --> 00:34:50,800

recently has been in the news.

634

00:34:50,800 --> 00:34:52,690

Her name's now Margaret Lambert.

635

00:34:52,690 --> 00:34:55,330

She was known as  
Gretel Bergmann--

636

00:34:55,330 --> 00:34:58,420

who was a champion high jumper.

637  
00:34:58,420 --> 00:35:01,780  
And she was of Olympic  
quality, and she

638  
00:35:01,780 --> 00:35:04,210  
had trained for the Olympics.

639  
00:35:04,210 --> 00:35:10,620  
And at the last minute,  
they disqualified her

640  
00:35:10,620 --> 00:35:13,890  
from participating.

641  
00:35:13,890 --> 00:35:16,110  
At the Holocaust  
Museum, we did have

642  
00:35:16,110 --> 00:35:17,760  
an exhibit on the Olympics.

643  
00:35:17,760 --> 00:35:22,260  
And the letter she received  
was exhibited at the museum.

644  
00:35:22,260 --> 00:35:25,440  
The letter stated that she  
wasn't Olympic quality anyway,

645  
00:35:25,440 --> 00:35:30,690  
so she wouldn't be  
acceptable to them.

646  
00:35:30,690 --> 00:35:38,700  
Here, again, ironically,  
the person who won a gold

647  
00:35:38,700 --> 00:35:41,220  
medal at the Olympics--

648  
00:35:41,220 --> 00:35:43,210



I believe she was Hungarian.

649

00:35:43,210 --> 00:35:46,500

She was half-Jewish, but since she was from a foreign country,

650

00:35:46,500 --> 00:35:48,420

they couldn't keep her out.

651

00:35:48,420 --> 00:35:51,030

And I think she jumped exactly the same height

652

00:35:51,030 --> 00:35:53,100

as this woman would have jumped and got

653

00:35:53,100 --> 00:35:56,370

the gold medal, which went to Hungary

654

00:35:56,370 --> 00:35:58,770

or whatever country she represented.

655

00:35:58,770 --> 00:36:02,220

Whereas if Gretel Bergmann had competed,

656

00:36:02,220 --> 00:36:05,880

she would have won it for Germany.

657

00:36:05,880 --> 00:36:09,270

Of course, we were very much aware of that,

658

00:36:09,270 --> 00:36:12,620

because she lived not far from where we did.

659

00:36:12,620 --> 00:36:16,630

And we were all hoping that

she would qualify and show

660  
00:36:16,630 --> 00:36:19,980  
the Nazis that the Jews  
are not a bunch of wimps.

661  
00:36:19,980 --> 00:36:23,020

662  
00:36:23,020 --> 00:36:25,590  
We're going to pause  
so I can flip the tape.

663  
00:36:25,590 --> 00:36:33,360

664  
00:36:33,360 --> 00:36:37,860  
This is tape 1, side B. We  
are interviewing William Hess,

665  
00:36:37,860 --> 00:36:42,080  
and we were talking about  
the 1930s in Germany

666  
00:36:42,080 --> 00:36:49,770  
and your experiences as a child  
and into your teenage years.

667  
00:36:49,770 --> 00:36:53,460  
And you were telling me  
about the Olympics in '36,

668  
00:36:53,460 --> 00:36:56,370  
and I had asked if you'd noticed  
a change in the atmosphere.

669  
00:36:56,370 --> 00:37:00,330  
Was there any change  
in the propaganda

670  
00:37:00,330 --> 00:37:04,930  
that was coming out at that  
time or social policies that

671  
00:37:04,930 --> 00:37:05,530  
were enacted?

672  
00:37:05,530 --> 00:37:07,690  
Anything like that?

673  
00:37:07,690 --> 00:37:09,280  
Well, I wasn't aware of it.

674  
00:37:09,280 --> 00:37:11,890  
Of course, the Nuremberg  
laws were the great change,

675  
00:37:11,890 --> 00:37:16,960  
because it officially abrogated  
the citizen rights of Jews.

676  
00:37:16,960 --> 00:37:23,440  
And we were also, of  
course, aware of the fact

677  
00:37:23,440 --> 00:37:27,310  
that right from the  
beginning, from 1933,

678  
00:37:27,310 --> 00:37:31,600  
the Jews were being displaced  
wherever they could be--

679  
00:37:31,600 --> 00:37:34,690  
first of all, from  
official positions.

680  
00:37:34,690 --> 00:37:38,950  
If you were a judge or  
any public employee,

681  
00:37:38,950 --> 00:37:40,720  
you were immediately fired.

682  
00:37:40,720 --> 00:37:44,320

If you were an artist  
employed by the city

683  
00:37:44,320 --> 00:37:49,570  
in the municipal opera or  
something, you were fired.

684  
00:37:49,570 --> 00:37:52,630  
Jewish music, that is  
music by Mendelssohn who

685  
00:37:52,630 --> 00:38:00,460  
was baptized, Meyer, Behr,  
Gustav Mahler, and so on

686  
00:38:00,460 --> 00:38:02,860  
was not played anymore.

687  
00:38:02,860 --> 00:38:05,440  
And there were a lot  
of Jewish playwrights

688  
00:38:05,440 --> 00:38:09,250  
and operatic composers--

689  
00:38:09,250 --> 00:38:11,080  
Romberg and others.

690  
00:38:11,080 --> 00:38:17,650  
All these were removed  
from the public domain.

691  
00:38:17,650 --> 00:38:22,060  
And large businesses  
were synchronized,

692  
00:38:22,060 --> 00:38:23,650  
as it's translated.

693  
00:38:23,650 --> 00:38:27,920  
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] meaning  
that if you had a large

694

00:38:27,920 --> 00:38:31,150

enterprise that were less  
important or maybe not even

695

00:38:31,150 --> 00:38:37,720

important, a Aryan business  
manager would be put in.

696

00:38:37,720 --> 00:38:42,560

The Jews would or would  
not be allowed to remain.

697

00:38:42,560 --> 00:38:50,470

But the say-so would entirely  
devolve on the Aryan business

698

00:38:50,470 --> 00:38:51,730

operative.

699

00:38:51,730 --> 00:38:54,820

So, yes, that we were  
aware of right along.

700

00:38:54,820 --> 00:38:58,080

I had an uncle who worked  
in a municipal savings bank,

701

00:38:58,080 --> 00:39:01,690

he was immediately furloughed  
and eventually fired, and never

702

00:39:01,690 --> 00:39:03,130

found employment again.

703

00:39:03,130 --> 00:39:06,550

Because in that field,  
it was impossible.

704

00:39:06,550 --> 00:39:10,510

So that was pervasive  
from the beginning.

705

00:39:10,510 --> 00:39:15,340  
And at first, Jewish  
personnel was retained.

706  
00:39:15,340 --> 00:39:20,470  
Eventually, it was, especially  
the managerial positions,

707  
00:39:20,470 --> 00:39:21,640  
removed.

708  
00:39:21,640 --> 00:39:29,110  
And eventually, they were  
completely eliminated.

709  
00:39:29,110 --> 00:39:32,140  
I had an uncle who  
was a doctor, and one

710  
00:39:32,140 --> 00:39:35,230  
of the things that doctors  
very much depended on

711  
00:39:35,230 --> 00:39:43,690  
was the health insurance,  
which was state-operated

712  
00:39:43,690 --> 00:39:47,770  
for employees who had  
to pay a certain amount,

713  
00:39:47,770 --> 00:39:50,230  
like here in social  
security for which they

714  
00:39:50,230 --> 00:39:52,750  
had medical insurance.

715  
00:39:52,750 --> 00:39:56,950  
And doctors made a good bit  
of their living handling

716  
00:39:56,950 --> 00:39:59,890

these patients.

717

00:39:59,890 --> 00:40:04,510

Fairly early on in  
'33 or '34, they

718

00:40:04,510 --> 00:40:09,370

would not allow Jewish doctors  
to participate in that except,

719

00:40:09,370 --> 00:40:11,050

again, if you were a veteran.

720

00:40:11,050 --> 00:40:13,380

Now, my uncle was  
in World War I--

721

00:40:13,380 --> 00:40:17,740

was a military physician,  
served on the front,

722

00:40:17,740 --> 00:40:24,190

and he wasn't injured but  
his health suffered greatly

723

00:40:24,190 --> 00:40:28,780

under stress because  
with a lack of doctors

724

00:40:28,780 --> 00:40:30,970

and many, many  
injured people, he was

725

00:40:30,970 --> 00:40:34,000

kept on duty for days on end.

726

00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:36,940

And he was allowed  
to keep that--

727

00:40:36,940 --> 00:40:38,650

I don't know how long.

728

00:40:38,650 --> 00:40:43,510

But these things came in  
right at the beginning.

729

00:40:43,510 --> 00:40:46,030

And then, of course, there  
were individual policies

730

00:40:46,030 --> 00:40:50,860

where customers of my dad would  
say to him, well, I'm sorry,

731

00:40:50,860 --> 00:40:55,660

we can't buy from you anymore  
because the Nazis now we're

732

00:40:55,660 --> 00:40:58,420

doing business with a Jew,  
and they've threatened me,

733

00:40:58,420 --> 00:41:01,030

or they've threatened  
my business.

734

00:41:01,030 --> 00:41:05,620

It actually didn't happen  
too much to my father.

735

00:41:05,620 --> 00:41:07,000

He did lose customers.

736

00:41:07,000 --> 00:41:08,800

I guess everybody did.

737

00:41:08,800 --> 00:41:12,490

But he was able to maintain  
his business until he sold it

738

00:41:12,490 --> 00:41:19,890

in May of 1938.

739

00:41:19,890 --> 00:41:22,260



Other things that happened-- well,

740  
00:41:22,260 --> 00:41:27,100  
municipalities or local governments acted on their own.

741  
00:41:27,100 --> 00:41:31,050  
They would deny use of a swimming pool to Jews.

742  
00:41:31,050 --> 00:41:34,140  
As I remember it, I could go to one swimming pool

743  
00:41:34,140 --> 00:41:37,050  
in Stuttgart-- one that was a little out of the way--

744  
00:41:37,050 --> 00:41:40,470  
just until before I left in '37.

745  
00:41:40,470 --> 00:41:43,470  
But I think at that time, I could not

746  
00:41:43,470 --> 00:41:49,230  
go to the municipal main swimming pools anymore.

747  
00:41:49,230 --> 00:41:50,970  
We could also go to the movies.

748  
00:41:50,970 --> 00:41:56,100  
But again, in some towns, they would not admit Jews.

749  
00:41:56,100 --> 00:42:01,230  
And many restaurants would put signs in their window--

750  
00:42:01,230 --> 00:42:03,050  
Jews will not be served.

751  
00:42:03,050 --> 00:42:05,650  
Or sometimes they were  
a little more subtle.

752  
00:42:05,650 --> 00:42:08,340  
They didn't put any sign in  
the window, but you went in,

753  
00:42:08,340 --> 00:42:11,250  
and when you sat down,  
and you ordered coffee,

754  
00:42:11,250 --> 00:42:13,530  
they would serve  
you a cup in a can.

755  
00:42:13,530 --> 00:42:17,460  
And the cup with  
have a note inside--

756  
00:42:17,460 --> 00:42:19,590  
we cannot serve you here.

757  
00:42:19,590 --> 00:42:23,265  
So that depended  
on where you lived.

758  
00:42:23,265 --> 00:42:26,220

759  
00:42:26,220 --> 00:42:29,670  
And as I've stated,  
Stuttgart, you had it too.

760  
00:42:29,670 --> 00:42:33,300  
You had it everywhere--  
but a little bit less

761  
00:42:33,300 --> 00:42:34,950  
so in Stuttgart.

762

00:42:34,950 --> 00:42:38,040  
So that, I would say,  
accounted for the fact

763  
00:42:38,040 --> 00:42:42,930  
that I was not myself  
immediately affected so much

764  
00:42:42,930 --> 00:42:45,070  
by what went on.

765  
00:42:45,070 --> 00:42:49,680  
I didn't go to the opera,  
a lot of things I didn't

766  
00:42:49,680 --> 00:42:53,310  
do so I wasn't turned away.

767  
00:42:53,310 --> 00:42:58,030  
I had one or more Jewish  
friends at the time.

768  
00:42:58,030 --> 00:43:04,000  
And that's why I'm  
saying that I personally

769  
00:43:04,000 --> 00:43:07,330  
did not suffer greatly.

770  
00:43:07,330 --> 00:43:11,080  
If you lived in other towns,  
especially small towns,

771  
00:43:11,080 --> 00:43:12,520  
it was a different story.

772  
00:43:12,520 --> 00:43:18,190  
As early as 1934, my  
father talked once

773  
00:43:18,190 --> 00:43:20,260  
to a neighbor who had  
moved into the house

774  
00:43:20,260 --> 00:43:24,700  
across the street who lived  
in a small town in Hesse who

775  
00:43:24,700 --> 00:43:27,310  
told us terrible stories  
of what happened.

776  
00:43:27,310 --> 00:43:31,540  
The man was in business, and he  
had sold some goods to someone,

777  
00:43:31,540 --> 00:43:33,430  
and the man refused to pay.

778  
00:43:33,430 --> 00:43:39,700  
And the neighbor then tried  
to pressure him to pay.

779  
00:43:39,700 --> 00:43:45,160  
And the man finally said,  
well, OK, I'll pay you.

780  
00:43:45,160 --> 00:43:51,470  
Just sign my release, and  
I'll give you the money.

781  
00:43:51,470 --> 00:43:54,910  
So the man signed, and the guy  
took it, and took his money,

782  
00:43:54,910 --> 00:43:59,860  
and said, so, you dirty Jew, now  
I don't owe you a cent anymore.

783  
00:43:59,860 --> 00:44:02,530  
And when the man protested,  
they beat him up--

784  
00:44:02,530 --> 00:44:06,040

785

00:44:06,040 --> 00:44:08,930  
beat him up quite severely.

786

00:44:08,930 --> 00:44:11,620  
And they finally had  
to call a doctor.

787

00:44:11,620 --> 00:44:16,180  
And the doctor  
came into the room

788

00:44:16,180 --> 00:44:20,380  
and says, where's the man  
who fell down the steps?

789

00:44:20,380 --> 00:44:22,870  
This man said, well, I  
didn't fall down the steps.

790

00:44:22,870 --> 00:44:25,570  
And the Nazi in the  
room said, if you

791

00:44:25,570 --> 00:44:28,940  
know what's good for you,  
you fell down the steps.

792

00:44:28,940 --> 00:44:32,980  
So this is the sort of  
thing that did happen.

793

00:44:32,980 --> 00:44:35,365  
My aunt lived in a  
small town in Hesse,

794

00:44:35,365 --> 00:44:38,560  
and these small towns in  
Hesse were particularly bad,

795

00:44:38,560 --> 00:44:40,570  
as were towns in  
Franconia, and even

796

00:44:40,570 --> 00:44:43,030  
my own state of Wurttemberg.

797

00:44:43,030 --> 00:44:46,400  
This would happen, but my aunt,  
she had to go to the grocer.

798

00:44:46,400 --> 00:44:48,460  
She had to take a  
detour because there

799

00:44:48,460 --> 00:44:51,320  
were kids in the street  
who were on after her

800

00:44:51,320 --> 00:44:53,830  
and yelled, dirty  
Jew, dirty Jew--

801

00:44:53,830 --> 00:44:57,350  
and maybe even tried to  
trip her or something.

802

00:44:57,350 --> 00:45:01,810  
So I'm not trying to gloss over  
and say everything was rosy

803

00:45:01,810 --> 00:45:03,410  
and it wasn't so bad.

804

00:45:03,410 --> 00:45:05,330  
It depended a lot  
on where you lived.

805

00:45:05,330 --> 00:45:12,520  
And I consider myself fortunate,  
because there were incidents

806

00:45:12,520 --> 00:45:15,160  
that people were  
severely beaten up.

807

00:45:15,160 --> 00:45:17,290

I understand that  
in Berlin as early

808

00:45:17,290 --> 00:45:24,670

as 1933, the new chief of  
police there on Rosh Hashana had

809

00:45:24,670 --> 00:45:28,340

his rowdies stand in  
front of the synagogue

810

00:45:28,340 --> 00:45:32,740

and when Jews came out  
dressed for the holidays,

811

00:45:32,740 --> 00:45:33,850

had them beat up.

812

00:45:33,850 --> 00:45:34,800

So it happened.

813

00:45:34,800 --> 00:45:36,460

It happened early on.

814

00:45:36,460 --> 00:45:39,470

And it happened many places.

815

00:45:39,470 --> 00:45:47,070

I'm aware of one incident  
in my high school,

816

00:45:47,070 --> 00:45:49,920

the year after I left--

817

00:45:49,920 --> 00:45:52,230

I wasn't in this school  
anymore, but there were still

818

00:45:52,230 --> 00:45:55,980

three or four Jewish  
kids in the school.

819

00:45:55,980 --> 00:46:00,210  
It was customary that every year  
in the summer, in June or so,

820

00:46:00,210 --> 00:46:02,240  
there'd be a class excursion.

821

00:46:02,240 --> 00:46:06,480  
You either hire a bus or take  
the train someplace and then

822

00:46:06,480 --> 00:46:07,020  
hike.

823

00:46:07,020 --> 00:46:09,120  
And you took a  
picnic lunch along,

824

00:46:09,120 --> 00:46:11,340  
and maybe there were some  
sightseeing point you would

825

00:46:11,340 --> 00:46:14,370  
visit, and then you came back.

826

00:46:14,370 --> 00:46:21,180  
That year at the excursion,  
some of the Hitler Youth

827

00:46:21,180 --> 00:46:25,620  
leading personalities,  
who I had in my class,

828

00:46:25,620 --> 00:46:27,930  
ganged up on these Jewish kids.

829

00:46:27,930 --> 00:46:31,530  
They found some abandoned  
shack, pushed the Jewish kids

830

00:46:31,530 --> 00:46:36,240  
in there, and piled



straw, grass, or paper

831  
00:46:36,240 --> 00:46:38,530  
around the openings,  
and set it on fire

832  
00:46:38,530 --> 00:46:41,940  
so these kids were  
inside choking.

833  
00:46:41,940 --> 00:46:44,970  
I don't think they tried  
to burn them at the time,

834  
00:46:44,970 --> 00:46:50,160  
but I think they try to make  
them sweat and hurt them.

835  
00:46:50,160 --> 00:46:55,420  
And that was told to me  
by a friend of mine who

836  
00:46:55,420 --> 00:46:57,630  
was still going to class there.

837  
00:46:57,630 --> 00:47:03,510  
So it did happen in my  
own surroundings too.

838  
00:47:03,510 --> 00:47:08,130  
That was about the most serious  
thing that I came close to

839  
00:47:08,130 --> 00:47:09,300  
at the time--

840  
00:47:09,300 --> 00:47:12,100  
at least that I can remember.

841  
00:47:12,100 --> 00:47:15,030  
Did you speak with your parents  
about some of these things that

842

00:47:15,030 --> 00:47:21,500  
were happening around  
you and try and make

843

00:47:21,500 --> 00:47:24,860  
some kind of sense  
or some kind of--

844

00:47:24,860 --> 00:47:28,390  
No, I don't believe--

845

00:47:28,390 --> 00:47:29,900  
not that I can recall.

846

00:47:29,900 --> 00:47:35,560  
Of course, my father was  
very much politically alert.

847

00:47:35,560 --> 00:47:38,740  
Oh, you asked me how we know  
about a lot of these things--

848

00:47:38,740 --> 00:47:40,810  
we did have a radio.

849

00:47:40,810 --> 00:47:44,440  
And we did listen to foreign  
broadcasts in German.

850

00:47:44,440 --> 00:47:48,010  
There were radio  
stations in France,

851

00:47:48,010 --> 00:47:53,680  
in Strasbourg, in  
Luxembourg, and Moscow

852

00:47:53,680 --> 00:47:58,510  
had a very strong transmitter  
that we could pick up.

853

00:47:58,510 --> 00:48:03,680

Now, you weren't supposed  
to listen to it, but we did.

854  
00:48:03,680 --> 00:48:06,700  
That's how we found  
out what was going on

855  
00:48:06,700 --> 00:48:09,110  
that they wouldn't tell you.

856  
00:48:09,110 --> 00:48:12,805  
I was a little  
incautious at the time.

857  
00:48:12,805 --> 00:48:15,370

858  
00:48:15,370 --> 00:48:17,140  
One evening, my  
parents weren't home,

859  
00:48:17,140 --> 00:48:19,990  
and I tuned in the  
Moscow transmitter.

860  
00:48:19,990 --> 00:48:23,500  
And at the beginning, they  
always play the music.

861  
00:48:23,500 --> 00:48:27,280  
And it was on, and I  
had it on fairly loud.

862  
00:48:27,280 --> 00:48:30,640  
I found out later on there  
was the Internationale,

863  
00:48:30,640 --> 00:48:33,670  
the communist anthem,  
that they played.

864  
00:48:33,670 --> 00:48:35,500  
And you could hear it outside.

865  
00:48:35,500 --> 00:48:37,420  
I thought, my god,  
if anybody hears

866  
00:48:37,420 --> 00:48:41,240  
we're listening to a  
communist broadcast,

867  
00:48:41,240 --> 00:48:42,460  
we'll be in real trouble.

868  
00:48:42,460 --> 00:48:44,770  
But again, we were  
lucky-- nobody apparently

869  
00:48:44,770 --> 00:48:46,990  
did or knew what it was.

870  
00:48:46,990 --> 00:48:48,790  
But this is one  
way in which people

871  
00:48:48,790 --> 00:48:53,800  
are kept informed as to what  
was going on at the time.

872  
00:48:53,800 --> 00:48:57,250  
And my father was usually  
pretty pessimistic.

873  
00:48:57,250 --> 00:48:59,080  
And he would say,  
I don't know what's

874  
00:48:59,080 --> 00:49:01,990  
going on-- what's going to be.

875  
00:49:01,990 --> 00:49:04,690  
Business, as I had  
said, was very good,

876

00:49:04,690 --> 00:49:06,490  
because people were working--

877  
00:49:06,490 --> 00:49:11,020  
mostly defense-related  
or defense

878  
00:49:11,020 --> 00:49:17,110  
triggered the building of  
the highways, the drafting

879  
00:49:17,110 --> 00:49:20,200  
of people in the labor service,  
which did the kind of work

880  
00:49:20,200 --> 00:49:23,500  
that the Civil Conservation  
Corps, the CCC,

881  
00:49:23,500 --> 00:49:25,930  
did in this country.

882  
00:49:25,930 --> 00:49:28,960  
This brought money  
into circulation.

883  
00:49:28,960 --> 00:49:33,070  
And so people had a little  
more money to spend.

884  
00:49:33,070 --> 00:49:35,500  
The problem, then,  
was the shortages,

885  
00:49:35,500 --> 00:49:43,030  
because the rearmament cost  
either foreign currency

886  
00:49:43,030 --> 00:49:43,900  
or gold.

887  
00:49:43,900 --> 00:49:50,890  
And Germany had very little gold

reserve and foreign currency.

888  
00:49:50,890 --> 00:49:55,810  
The mark was soft,  
and Goering made

889  
00:49:55,810 --> 00:49:58,260  
that famous pronouncement--

890  
00:49:58,260 --> 00:50:01,630  
cannon are more  
important than butter.

891  
00:50:01,630 --> 00:50:03,110  
So there were shortages.

892  
00:50:03,110 --> 00:50:07,400  
And since my father had an  
old established business,

893  
00:50:07,400 --> 00:50:11,510  
he did have some very  
good connections.

894  
00:50:11,510 --> 00:50:16,770  
In fact, one of  
his main vendors,

895  
00:50:16,770 --> 00:50:22,630  
a cotton manufacture  
in the Nuremberg area,

896  
00:50:22,630 --> 00:50:27,220  
the local representative  
during that very period

897  
00:50:27,220 --> 00:50:29,650  
turned from being  
just a business friend

898  
00:50:29,650 --> 00:50:32,740  
to a very good and  
loyal personal friend

899

00:50:32,740 --> 00:50:38,430

who stuck by my parents  
until the very day they left.

900

00:50:38,430 --> 00:50:40,680

They were welcome in his house.

901

00:50:40,680 --> 00:50:45,330

He even helped them get some of  
their treasured gold jewelries

902

00:50:45,330 --> 00:50:48,120

like rings and watches  
out of the country

903

00:50:48,120 --> 00:50:51,150

by suggesting that relatives  
from Switzerland who

904

00:50:51,150 --> 00:50:54,330

came and visited would  
come to this friend's house

905

00:50:54,330 --> 00:50:59,550

where they would pick up my  
father's watch, and my mother's

906

00:50:59,550 --> 00:51:01,110

gold rings, and so on.

907

00:51:01,110 --> 00:51:04,560

My parents did, and so they were  
able to save some of their most

908

00:51:04,560 --> 00:51:09,180

precious little jewelry items.

909

00:51:09,180 --> 00:51:13,050

And after the war,  
we helped them--

910

00:51:13,050 --> 00:51:15,030  
we, my parents and I too--

911  
00:51:15,030 --> 00:51:18,030  
Shirley and I-- by  
sending them packages

912  
00:51:18,030 --> 00:51:24,000  
for already a year or so to  
tide them over the shortages.

913  
00:51:24,000 --> 00:51:25,890  
I'm going to try  
and go back to what

914  
00:51:25,890 --> 00:51:27,480  
I was trying to ask  
you before that I

915  
00:51:27,480 --> 00:51:28,980  
don't think I phrased well.

916  
00:51:28,980 --> 00:51:31,530  
What kind of guidance  
could your parents

917  
00:51:31,530 --> 00:51:35,040  
give you, given the  
times were very trying,

918  
00:51:35,040 --> 00:51:37,710  
and there was no precedence,  
as you mentioned before.

919  
00:51:37,710 --> 00:51:39,687  
What kind of guidance  
to handle these things

920  
00:51:39,687 --> 00:51:40,770  
did your parents give you?

921  
00:51:40,770 --> 00:51:41,280  
Oh, yeah.



922  
00:51:41,280 --> 00:51:44,130  
Well that, of  
course, that's true.

923  
00:51:44,130 --> 00:51:47,940  
Keep your mouth shut,  
watch what you say,

924  
00:51:47,940 --> 00:51:50,500  
and watch what you do--

925  
00:51:50,500 --> 00:51:53,040  
everything is being watched.

926  
00:51:53,040 --> 00:51:55,980  
The Nazis to have their  
stool pigeons out.

927  
00:51:55,980 --> 00:52:00,000  
They'll try to involve you into  
a conversation to draw you out,

928  
00:52:00,000 --> 00:52:04,280  
and then you get arrested  
or I get arrested.

929  
00:52:04,280 --> 00:52:07,260  
So that, I was very much aware.

930  
00:52:07,260 --> 00:52:08,235  
Walls have ears.

931  
00:52:08,235 --> 00:52:10,890

932  
00:52:10,890 --> 00:52:13,205  
And you were careful.

933  
00:52:13,205 --> 00:52:14,205  
You either didn't talk--

934  
00:52:14,205 --> 00:52:18,270

935  
00:52:18,270 --> 00:52:21,100  
I had a couple of friends,  
and maybe I was careless,

936  
00:52:21,100 --> 00:52:22,990  
but I talked to them.

937  
00:52:22,990 --> 00:52:27,030  
And eventually they all had  
to join the Hitler Youth,

938  
00:52:27,030 --> 00:52:29,690  
but the very fact  
that they continue ed

939  
00:52:29,690 --> 00:52:34,050  
to associate with me,  
and themselves would

940  
00:52:34,050 --> 00:52:37,050  
complain about the situation--

941  
00:52:37,050 --> 00:52:40,620  
but you had to be careful,  
of course, what you said

942  
00:52:40,620 --> 00:52:43,530  
and to whom you said it.

943  
00:52:43,530 --> 00:52:45,342  
You mentioned  
arrests-- what did you

944  
00:52:45,342 --> 00:52:47,550  
know about the fate of those  
people who were arrested

945  
00:52:47,550 --> 00:52:50,450  
for being incautious?

946  
00:52:50,450 --> 00:52:53,450  
Well, at the time,  
usually you would be

947  
00:52:53,450 --> 00:52:56,180  
sent to a concentration camp.

948  
00:52:56,180 --> 00:52:58,280  
At that time, they  
were in death camps.

949  
00:52:58,280 --> 00:53:00,880  
Dachau was, of course,  
one of the first ones

950  
00:53:00,880 --> 00:53:02,840  
that was organized.

951  
00:53:02,840 --> 00:53:05,420  
In addition, there were  
other smaller camps

952  
00:53:05,420 --> 00:53:06,900  
that were established.

953  
00:53:06,900 --> 00:53:10,370

954  
00:53:10,370 --> 00:53:15,110  
Occasionally, if you were  
prominent, you might be killed.

955  
00:53:15,110 --> 00:53:19,400  
There were times-- not so much  
early on, but let's say after

956  
00:53:19,400 --> 00:53:21,380  
'37 or '38--

957  
00:53:21,380 --> 00:53:26,030  
yes, you were beaten up, and

you were, of course, very badly

958  
00:53:26,030 --> 00:53:28,230  
treated.

959  
00:53:28,230 --> 00:53:31,890  
Did you or your family  
consider leaving Germany?

960  
00:53:31,890 --> 00:53:33,780  
And if so, when?

961  
00:53:33,780 --> 00:53:35,340  
Well, the classic story--

962  
00:53:35,340 --> 00:53:38,430  
my father said, I'm a  
veteran of World War I.

963  
00:53:38,430 --> 00:53:39,930  
They're not going to bother me.

964  
00:53:39,930 --> 00:53:41,520  
I don't have a big business.

965  
00:53:41,520 --> 00:53:45,690  
I'm getting old, I can stay.

966  
00:53:45,690 --> 00:53:49,510  
You have no future, you're  
going to have to get out.

967  
00:53:49,510 --> 00:53:52,740  
So when I was 13  
or 14, my mother

968  
00:53:52,740 --> 00:53:55,770  
had an uncle in New York  
who had left Germany

969  
00:53:55,770 --> 00:53:59,520  
after the Franco-Prussian

war because his older brother

970

00:53:59,520 --> 00:54:00,780  
had died in battle.

971

00:54:00,780 --> 00:54:03,690

His mother didn't want  
him to be drafted.

972

00:54:03,690 --> 00:54:05,760

And he helped a lot  
of family members.

973

00:54:05,760 --> 00:54:09,810

My mother wrote to her uncle  
and her uncle said, don't worry,

974

00:54:09,810 --> 00:54:12,600

I have a friend who  
always made something.

975

00:54:12,600 --> 00:54:16,110

And when he's old enough  
to work, which is 16,

976

00:54:16,110 --> 00:54:17,510

he can come to  
the United States.

977

00:54:17,510 --> 00:54:20,840

978

00:54:20,840 --> 00:54:23,990

Your parents didn't think  
about leaving themselves

979

00:54:23,990 --> 00:54:25,800

at this point?

980

00:54:25,800 --> 00:54:28,040

My parents didn't  
think of leaving.

981  
00:54:28,040 --> 00:54:30,830  
I don't think my  
uncle at the time--

982  
00:54:30,830 --> 00:54:32,600  
or rather, his wife--

983  
00:54:32,600 --> 00:54:36,200  
were inclined to send any  
more affidavits, which

984  
00:54:36,200 --> 00:54:39,320  
you needed in order to get in.

985  
00:54:39,320 --> 00:54:44,870  
Fortunately, I guess  
by 1938, I think

986  
00:54:44,870 --> 00:54:47,790  
it became clear-- my father  
sold his business in May,

987  
00:54:47,790 --> 00:54:54,020  
and I think after the Austrian  
annexation, which ratcheted up

988  
00:54:54,020 --> 00:54:56,390  
the anti-Semitism  
by several degrees,

989  
00:54:56,390 --> 00:55:01,070  
it became plain that maybe  
you can't stay after all.

990  
00:55:01,070 --> 00:55:06,860  
So my father applied for a visa  
number for the United States.

991  
00:55:06,860 --> 00:55:10,010  
And of course,  
you needed a visa.

992

00:55:10,010 --> 00:55:13,280

And since the United States only gave out

993

00:55:13,280 --> 00:55:15,590

a certain number, which was actually

994

00:55:15,590 --> 00:55:21,710

only half the number that legally could be given out,

995

00:55:21,710 --> 00:55:24,510

at least he had a place in line.

996

00:55:24,510 --> 00:55:28,430

So by that time, they started to make some preparation.

997

00:55:28,430 --> 00:55:32,630

It was very lucky they did when they did, because they were

998

00:55:32,630 --> 00:55:35,930

just about among the last ones to leave Germany

999

00:55:35,930 --> 00:55:38,450

before World War II broke out.

1000

00:55:38,450 --> 00:55:43,730

They left in July of '39.

1001

00:55:43,730 --> 00:55:47,060

I want to do this with your departure,

1002

00:55:47,060 --> 00:55:50,050

because your departure was before theirs.

1003

00:55:50,050 --> 00:55:52,055

July '37, two years before.

1004  
00:55:52,055 --> 00:55:56,290

1005  
00:55:56,290 --> 00:56:02,760  
What arrangements did  
you have to make for you

1006  
00:56:02,760 --> 00:56:05,370  
to get out of Germany?

1007  
00:56:05,370 --> 00:56:07,020  
What problems did  
you have to overcome?

1008  
00:56:07,020 --> 00:56:08,280  
And how did you overcome them?

1009  
00:56:08,280 --> 00:56:10,870  
Well, actually, there  
were no real problems.

1010  
00:56:10,870 --> 00:56:15,150  
The only thing is I had to  
have a lot of different papers.

1011  
00:56:15,150 --> 00:56:17,550  
And my father thought  
it'd be a good idea

1012  
00:56:17,550 --> 00:56:20,830  
for me to do it myself,  
which I greatly resented--

1013  
00:56:20,830 --> 00:56:25,050  
to traipse from one office to  
another, go into the first one,

1014  
00:56:25,050 --> 00:56:28,740  
they said, you have to  
go somewhere else first.

1015



00:56:28,740 --> 00:56:30,840  
I finally got the  
hang of it, and I

1016  
00:56:30,840 --> 00:56:32,940  
was able to make the rounds.

1017  
00:56:32,940 --> 00:56:36,570  
And what I essentially needed  
was birth certificates,

1018  
00:56:36,570 --> 00:56:41,310  
then statements that my  
father wasn't in any debt that

1019  
00:56:41,310 --> 00:56:44,100  
could be lost somehow--

1020  
00:56:44,100 --> 00:56:47,560  
passport, and visa, and  
all that sort of thing.

1021  
00:56:47,560 --> 00:56:52,440  
And then, of course I was  
allowed to take things out with

1022  
00:56:52,440 --> 00:56:53,640  
me-- clothes--

1023  
00:56:53,640 --> 00:56:58,320  
I think all of probably  
\$10 or \$15 in cash--

1024  
00:56:58,320 --> 00:57:01,170  
but clothes and other  
things you could take out--

1025  
00:57:01,170 --> 00:57:04,120  
so shopping for these things.

1026  
00:57:04,120 --> 00:57:10,712  
And that's what took  
up a good bit of time.

1027  
00:57:10,712 --> 00:57:12,670  
Do you remember the date  
that you left Germany?

1028  
00:57:12,670 --> 00:57:14,410  
Yes.

1029  
00:57:14,410 --> 00:57:18,550  
I left from Hamburg on an  
American ship, the Manhattan,

1030  
00:57:18,550 --> 00:57:21,490  
and my parents  
accompanied me to Hamburg.

1031  
00:57:21,490 --> 00:57:25,810  
We stopped on the way to visit  
relatives who lived on the way.

1032  
00:57:25,810 --> 00:57:31,780  
And I sailed on the  
31st of July of 1937,

1033  
00:57:31,780 --> 00:57:34,690  
and arrived in New York  
on the 5th of August--

1034  
00:57:34,690 --> 00:57:38,380  
almost to the day 60 years ago.

1035  
00:57:38,380 --> 00:57:41,050  
Anything eventful  
happened on route?

1036  
00:57:41,050 --> 00:57:45,280  
Other than I got seasick, no.

1037  
00:57:45,280 --> 00:57:50,800  
Tell me about your thoughts when  
you left Germany and were out

1038

00:57:50,800 --> 00:57:53,910  
of Nazi Germany?

1039  
00:57:53,910 --> 00:57:57,720  
It's a little bit hard to  
realistically talk about.

1040  
00:57:57,720 --> 00:58:03,330  
It seems to me I wasn't  
really greatly concerned.

1041  
00:58:03,330 --> 00:58:06,060  
I always thought I was a  
rather independent person,

1042  
00:58:06,060 --> 00:58:09,580  
because every vacation  
I spent with relatives

1043  
00:58:09,580 --> 00:58:11,820  
who lived about 300 miles away.

1044  
00:58:11,820 --> 00:58:13,590  
And I went there by train--

1045  
00:58:13,590 --> 00:58:17,010  
went to the station, got  
the schedule together,

1046  
00:58:17,010 --> 00:58:20,580  
traveled by myself, stayed  
there, and came back.

1047  
00:58:20,580 --> 00:58:28,070  
And so to me, this was really  
just another face of it.

1048  
00:58:28,070 --> 00:58:30,730  
I'd come here, and I  
had glowing pictures.

1049  
00:58:30,730 --> 00:58:34,070  
I was told I was going

to be taken care of,

1050

00:58:34,070 --> 00:58:39,030

I was going to have employment,  
and would be paid, and so on.

1051

00:58:39,030 --> 00:58:40,660

So I looked forward to it.

1052

00:58:40,660 --> 00:58:46,930

And I don't think I was greatly  
worried about this thing,

1053

00:58:46,930 --> 00:58:50,680

at least not that  
I could recall.

1054

00:58:50,680 --> 00:58:56,710

It didn't really hit me until  
I arrived in Danville, Illinois

1055

00:58:56,710 --> 00:58:58,810

and was shown to a  
small room, which

1056

00:58:58,810 --> 00:59:02,710

was my room, among  
total strangers

1057

00:59:02,710 --> 00:59:06,700

with different customs,  
habit, language, and all

1058

00:59:06,700 --> 00:59:09,950

that that all of a sudden it  
hit me like a ton of bricks,

1059

00:59:09,950 --> 00:59:10,450

you know?

1060

00:59:10,450 --> 00:59:11,440

This was for real.

1061

00:59:11,440 --> 00:59:14,170

This wasn't like going  
to visit relatives

1062

00:59:14,170 --> 00:59:16,000

and having a good time.

1063

00:59:16,000 --> 00:59:18,200

In New York, I had  
a wonderful time.

1064

00:59:18,200 --> 00:59:20,980

I was there for two weeks  
until the people were

1065

00:59:20,980 --> 00:59:23,590

ready to accept me in Danville.

1066

00:59:23,590 --> 00:59:27,470

And my relatives took  
very good care of me--

1067

00:59:27,470 --> 00:59:31,340

wonderful accommodations-- I  
went to the beach and all that.

1068

00:59:31,340 --> 00:59:36,310

So it wasn't hard at all until  
the reality set in that I

1069

00:59:36,310 --> 00:59:39,938

was not totally on my own.

1070

00:59:39,938 --> 00:59:41,980

Did you ever have any  
thoughts that you might not

1071

00:59:41,980 --> 00:59:43,240

be reunited with your parents?

1072

00:59:43,240 --> 00:59:46,290

1073  
00:59:46,290 --> 00:59:48,240  
I was worried about my parents.

1074  
00:59:48,240 --> 00:59:51,040  
At that point, especially  
then, of course,

1075  
00:59:51,040 --> 00:59:54,690  
after the Kristallnacht,  
I was worried.

1076  
00:59:54,690 --> 00:59:58,680  
And I felt when I  
was there that I had

1077  
00:59:58,680 --> 01:00:01,530  
to prepare the way for them--

1078  
01:00:01,530 --> 01:00:05,100  
work on my uncle and also  
possibly on other people

1079  
01:00:05,100 --> 01:00:07,460  
to give them an affidavit.

1080  
01:00:07,460 --> 01:00:11,730  
And also I was aware  
that if they came,

1081  
01:00:11,730 --> 01:00:14,770  
they would not have  
any money with them.

1082  
01:00:14,770 --> 01:00:16,450  
So--

1083  
01:00:16,450 --> 01:00:18,638  
I'm going to hold you  
back for just a second.

1084  
01:00:18,638 --> 01:00:20,430

We'll get to Kristallnacht  
and your parents

1085  
01:00:20,430 --> 01:00:21,930  
coming in just a minute.

1086  
01:00:21,930 --> 01:00:26,720  
I wanted to try and  
get a sense from you

1087  
01:00:26,720 --> 01:00:35,240  
that when you left Germany, did  
you have any feelings of relief

1088  
01:00:35,240 --> 01:00:37,280  
or a lessening of  
anxiety because you

1089  
01:00:37,280 --> 01:00:40,020  
were no longer subject  
to all the things

1090  
01:00:40,020 --> 01:00:41,870  
that were happening in Germany?

1091  
01:00:41,870 --> 01:00:45,440  
To be honest, I can't  
recall that I did.

1092  
01:00:45,440 --> 01:00:49,510  
I probably had some  
mixed feelings.

1093  
01:00:49,510 --> 01:00:54,960  
I very probably did because  
I've had a good life there.

1094  
01:00:54,960 --> 01:01:01,630  
And I knew things weren't  
going to get any better.

1095  
01:01:01,630 --> 01:01:07,500  
And so I probably had

some mixed feelings.

1096

01:01:07,500 --> 01:01:12,230

What were your first impressions of America and Americans?

1097

01:01:12,230 --> 01:01:17,750

Well, arriving in New York, I thought it was the greatest.

1098

01:01:17,750 --> 01:01:21,230

New York, especially in the '30s, was a very exciting

1099

01:01:21,230 --> 01:01:27,630

place, and lots of things to see and do, new impressions,

1100

01:01:27,630 --> 01:01:30,110

and so on--

1101

01:01:30,110 --> 01:01:35,600

then visiting relatives, going to the beach, seeing movies,

1102

01:01:35,600 --> 01:01:36,920

and so on.

1103

01:01:36,920 --> 01:01:38,260

It was great.

1104

01:01:38,260 --> 01:01:39,140

It was wonderful.

1105

01:01:39,140 --> 01:01:41,710

1106

01:01:41,710 --> 01:01:45,040

How were you received by Americans in general--

1107

01:01:45,040 --> 01:01:48,820



not your relatives, but just the average Americans that you met?

1108  
01:01:48,820 --> 01:01:51,820  
Reception was friendly and curious.

1109  
01:01:51,820 --> 01:01:56,530  
In a small town in Illinois, most people had never been that

1110  
01:01:56,530 --> 01:01:58,420  
far away, let alone in Europe.

1111  
01:01:58,420 --> 01:02:00,770  
They didn't have any idea at all.

1112  
01:02:00,770 --> 01:02:03,400  
Yeah, they had heard of Hitler.

1113  
01:02:03,400 --> 01:02:05,680  
They've heard of some of the things he did.

1114  
01:02:05,680 --> 01:02:10,960  
But the first question usually was, how do you like it here

1115  
01:02:10,960 --> 01:02:12,760  
in America?

1116  
01:02:12,760 --> 01:02:15,270  
And they always expected to hear, it's wonderful,

1117  
01:02:15,270 --> 01:02:16,460  
it's great.

1118  
01:02:16,460 --> 01:02:22,580  
And I liked America.

1119

01:02:22,580 --> 01:02:23,750  
I liked being there.

1120  
01:02:23,750 --> 01:02:26,540  
I didn't particularly  
like the kind of life

1121  
01:02:26,540 --> 01:02:30,550  
that I now led when I  
was at my destination.

1122  
01:02:30,550 --> 01:02:36,560  
But on the whole, I was  
treated friendly and well.

1123  
01:02:36,560 --> 01:02:38,900  
Did you experience any  
anti-Semitism, either New York

1124  
01:02:38,900 --> 01:02:39,530  
or in Danville?

1125  
01:02:39,530 --> 01:02:40,030  
No.

1126  
01:02:40,030 --> 01:02:43,880

1127  
01:02:43,880 --> 01:02:47,780  
And how exactly were you  
able to support yourself?

1128  
01:02:47,780 --> 01:02:51,170  
Let me just go back to  
your previous question.

1129  
01:02:51,170 --> 01:02:55,040  
I knew who the Ku Klux  
Klan was, and I also

1130  
01:02:55,040 --> 01:02:59,430  
was aware that the Midwest  
was a stronghold, particularly

1131  
01:02:59,430 --> 01:03:01,520  
in neighboring Indiana.

1132  
01:03:01,520 --> 01:03:04,610  
I had heard that they had  
marched in those areas.

1133  
01:03:04,610 --> 01:03:07,730  
I personally never  
saw or heard them.

1134  
01:03:07,730 --> 01:03:14,230  
Now, I had heard of Father  
Coughlin, but for some reason

1135  
01:03:14,230 --> 01:03:17,170  
I never listened  
to his broadcast.

1136  
01:03:17,170 --> 01:03:19,960  
I didn't know where he  
spoke, so I never heard him.

1137  
01:03:19,960 --> 01:03:22,760  
I would have been greatly  
angered and alarmed, of course,

1138  
01:03:22,760 --> 01:03:27,970  
if I had heard him give the  
kind of Nazi talks that he did.

1139  
01:03:27,970 --> 01:03:30,810  
I'm sorry to have--

1140  
01:03:30,810 --> 01:03:32,680  
Let's follow up on  
what you were saying.

1141  
01:03:32,680 --> 01:03:37,090  
Did anybody ask you about  
Hitler and all that stuff

1142  
01:03:37,090 --> 01:03:38,440  
that was going on in Germany?

1143  
01:03:38,440 --> 01:03:39,640  
They did, yes.

1144  
01:03:39,640 --> 01:03:43,000  
And I would tell  
them what happened.

1145  
01:03:43,000 --> 01:03:47,110  
They were surprised.

1146  
01:03:47,110 --> 01:03:50,140  
People without the  
background of what

1147  
01:03:50,140 --> 01:03:53,920  
life is in a total dictatorship  
couldn't understand

1148  
01:03:53,920 --> 01:03:59,230  
why couldn't you buy a foreign  
newspaper, or a magazine,

1149  
01:03:59,230 --> 01:04:02,740  
or listen to the radio, or  
that-- well, yes, to the radio.

1150  
01:04:02,740 --> 01:04:03,550  
You could listen.

1151  
01:04:03,550 --> 01:04:07,750  
A lot of people didn't  
have radios, unlike here.

1152  
01:04:07,750 --> 01:04:12,270  
So it was hard for  
them to understand

1153  
01:04:12,270 --> 01:04:14,380  
why did you put up with it?

1154  
01:04:14,380 --> 01:04:17,020  
Why didn't you shoot one  
of them people in Germany

1155  
01:04:17,020 --> 01:04:20,090  
didn't have guns and  
you didn't shoot people.

1156  
01:04:20,090 --> 01:04:23,170  
And if you did,  
with the Nazis, you

1157  
01:04:23,170 --> 01:04:27,130  
couldn't go and hire a  
lawyer who would get you out.

1158  
01:04:27,130 --> 01:04:31,410  
The Gestapo didn't  
respond to that.

1159  
01:04:31,410 --> 01:04:34,050  
To them, it was just  
incomprehensible.

1160  
01:04:34,050 --> 01:04:37,785

1161  
01:04:37,785 --> 01:04:39,160  
The question I  
had asked you was,

1162  
01:04:39,160 --> 01:04:42,430  
how were you able to support  
yourself when you came here?

1163  
01:04:42,430 --> 01:04:45,610

1164  
01:04:45,610 --> 01:04:48,830  
With very great difficulty.

1165

01:04:48,830 --> 01:04:54,710  
I was hired at the minimum  
wage of \$12.50 a week--

1166  
01:04:54,710 --> 01:04:59,660  
\$0.13 social security, which  
just then had gone into effect.

1167  
01:04:59,660 --> 01:05:02,420

1168  
01:05:02,420 --> 01:05:05,990  
The man who hired me,  
he was an older man

1169  
01:05:05,990 --> 01:05:08,750  
who was himself an immigrant  
who had been helped

1170  
01:05:08,750 --> 01:05:11,640  
by mother's uncle in New York.

1171  
01:05:11,640 --> 01:05:15,230  
His son was a rich kid  
who had gone to college

1172  
01:05:15,230 --> 01:05:19,880  
and who didn't have quite the  
sensitivity and understanding.

1173  
01:05:19,880 --> 01:05:25,970  
When I came there, I had had  
two years of English in school.

1174  
01:05:25,970 --> 01:05:29,180  
And in anticipation  
of emigrating,

1175  
01:05:29,180 --> 01:05:32,060  
I had additional  
English lessons.

1176  
01:05:32,060 --> 01:05:34,760

But of course, I spoke with  
a thick accent, something

1177  
01:05:34,760 --> 01:05:36,620  
like Kissinger.

1178  
01:05:36,620 --> 01:05:41,060  
And Danville was so hard  
hit by the Depression.

1179  
01:05:41,060 --> 01:05:43,250  
There was a lot of  
unemployment, and here comes

1180  
01:05:43,250 --> 01:05:45,230  
this foreigner who  
gets a job and he

1181  
01:05:45,230 --> 01:05:46,760  
speaks with a foreign accent.

1182  
01:05:46,760 --> 01:05:48,450  
That doesn't look good.

1183  
01:05:48,450 --> 01:05:51,650  
So he said, we've got  
to work on your English.

1184  
01:05:51,650 --> 01:05:53,930  
You've got to get  
rid of your accent.

1185  
01:05:53,930 --> 01:05:56,460  
He says, I've hired  
a woman for you

1186  
01:05:56,460 --> 01:06:00,950  
who is a teacher, who because  
she is married, under the law,

1187  
01:06:00,950 --> 01:06:03,410  
couldn't teach anymore  
since she had a husband who

1188  
01:06:03,410 --> 01:06:05,150  
was earning a living.

1189  
01:06:05,150 --> 01:06:08,990  
And you go out to her,  
and she will work with you

1190  
01:06:08,990 --> 01:06:10,570  
on your accent.

1191  
01:06:10,570 --> 01:06:14,600  
Now, this was a very good  
thing, because my education

1192  
01:06:14,600 --> 01:06:15,690  
had been disrupted.

1193  
01:06:15,690 --> 01:06:17,700  
And this woman was great.

1194  
01:06:17,700 --> 01:06:22,070  
She used the English lessons to  
teach me American literature,

1195  
01:06:22,070 --> 01:06:23,750  
and history, and so on.

1196  
01:06:23,750 --> 01:06:25,100  
But I had to pay her.

1197  
01:06:25,100 --> 01:06:28,360

1198  
01:06:28,360 --> 01:06:33,550  
The people where I lived were  
employees of this friend,

1199  
01:06:33,550 --> 01:06:35,200  
and I had complete  
room and board.



1200

01:06:35,200 --> 01:06:38,370

I was a member of the  
family in a lot of respects.

1201

01:06:38,370 --> 01:06:43,690

And it cost me \$9 a week, which  
was, again, not a lot of money.

1202

01:06:43,690 --> 01:06:46,030

The lessons were \$1 apiece.

1203

01:06:46,030 --> 01:06:47,470

That makes \$12.

1204

01:06:47,470 --> 01:06:49,840

And I had to take  
the bus to go there.

1205

01:06:49,840 --> 01:06:52,120

That makes \$12.30.

1206

01:06:52,120 --> 01:06:55,880

That left knee  
\$0.07 out of my pay.

1207

01:06:55,880 --> 01:07:00,350

Now, fortunately, it was  
possible for my parents

1208

01:07:00,350 --> 01:07:07,250

to send me a maximum of  
something like \$8 a month.

1209

01:07:07,250 --> 01:07:09,560

But, you see, I  
felt that my parents

1210

01:07:09,560 --> 01:07:13,320

might have to come here, so  
that wasn't really my money.

1211

01:07:13,320 --> 01:07:16,130

So I had to conserve that.

1212  
01:07:16,130 --> 01:07:19,280  
But of course, you  
can't live on \$0.07

1213  
01:07:19,280 --> 01:07:23,630  
a week, even if you have room  
and board all that paid for.

1214  
01:07:23,630 --> 01:07:29,210  
So I had to go into that  
money, and I managed to do it.

1215  
01:07:29,210 --> 01:07:34,280  
But I don't know if I was  
able to save anything at all

1216  
01:07:34,280 --> 01:07:36,080  
out of what they sent.

1217  
01:07:36,080 --> 01:07:40,130  
But I would walk  
to save a nickel.

1218  
01:07:40,130 --> 01:07:44,250  
I would go to the movies early  
to save a nickel and so on.

1219  
01:07:44,250 --> 01:07:49,600  
So it was very difficult  
to live on what I had.

1220  
01:07:49,600 --> 01:07:52,390

1221  
01:07:52,390 --> 01:07:54,370  
Apparently you were able  
to have communication

1222  
01:07:54,370 --> 01:07:57,640  
with your parents, if they  
were able to send you money.

1223

01:07:57,640 --> 01:08:03,550  
Were you able to have free and  
open correspondence with them?

1224

01:08:03,550 --> 01:08:04,300  
Open?

1225

01:08:04,300 --> 01:08:09,810  
No, because any correspondence  
was subject to--

1226

01:08:09,810 --> 01:08:11,885  
what do you call it--

1227

01:08:11,885 --> 01:08:12,385  
Censorship?

1228

01:08:12,385 --> 01:08:14,080  
Censorship, yes.

1229

01:08:14,080 --> 01:08:16,210  
So you always had to  
expect that somebody

1230

01:08:16,210 --> 01:08:17,830  
would read what you wrote.

1231

01:08:17,830 --> 01:08:19,630  
I wrote weekly.

1232

01:08:19,630 --> 01:08:22,500  
My parents bought me a  
little portable typewriter

1233

01:08:22,500 --> 01:08:24,220  
that fit into a briefcase.

1234

01:08:24,220 --> 01:08:25,450  
And I think I still have it.

1235

01:08:25,450 --> 01:08:28,279

It used to be a  
marvel at the time.

1236

01:08:28,279 --> 01:08:30,830

And so I was able to  
type the letter to them.

1237

01:08:30,830 --> 01:08:33,870

They were also able  
to send me stamps.

1238

01:08:33,870 --> 01:08:36,990

And every week,  
I wrote to them--

1239

01:08:36,990 --> 01:08:40,020

and of course, what I wrote  
is what I did, what I saw,

1240

01:08:40,020 --> 01:08:43,050

and so on, and  
health, and all that.

1241

01:08:43,050 --> 01:08:47,850

But of course, you stayed away  
from the political aspects.

1242

01:08:47,850 --> 01:08:50,460

What were they able  
to communicate to you?

1243

01:08:50,460 --> 01:08:53,880

Well, of course, I heard  
about the Kristallnacht.

1244

01:08:53,880 --> 01:09:00,729

And my mother and my father  
both always wrote to me.

1245

01:09:00,729 --> 01:09:03,090

And then suddenly,  
only my mother wrote.

1246

01:09:03,090 --> 01:09:05,310

My father was away on a trip.

1247

01:09:05,310 --> 01:09:09,540

So I guessed something went on--

1248

01:09:09,540 --> 01:09:12,000

I didn't know or  
didn't want to know.

1249

01:09:12,000 --> 01:09:14,250

And my father is  
still not home yet, we

1250

01:09:14,250 --> 01:09:17,160

hope he'll be home  
soon again and so on.

1251

01:09:17,160 --> 01:09:20,729

And then after a while,  
he did write again.

1252

01:09:20,729 --> 01:09:27,300

And so I surmised that he had  
been in a concentration camp.

1253

01:09:27,300 --> 01:09:31,423

1254

01:09:31,423 --> 01:09:33,340

Do you know how long  
your father was interned.

1255

01:09:33,340 --> 01:09:36,700

Yes, he was picked up the day  
after the Kristallnacht, which

1256

01:09:36,700 --> 01:09:40,090

is November the 10th, and  
he came home just shortly

1257

01:09:40,090 --> 01:09:43,800

before Christmas in 1938.

1258  
01:09:43,800 --> 01:09:45,399  
That is about five weeks.

1259  
01:09:45,399 --> 01:09:47,590  
He was in Dachau.

1260  
01:09:47,590 --> 01:09:52,729  
Do you know the conditions  
of his internment?

1261  
01:09:52,729 --> 01:09:54,350  
Well, it was pretty  
much standard

1262  
01:09:54,350 --> 01:09:56,090  
of what they did at the time.

1263  
01:09:56,090 --> 01:09:58,010  
They picked up  
people, hauled them

1264  
01:09:58,010 --> 01:10:00,710  
away on trucks to the  
local police station,

1265  
01:10:00,710 --> 01:10:04,400  
kept them overnight, and  
then put them on a bus

1266  
01:10:04,400 --> 01:10:07,100  
and took them to  
Dachau, where they

1267  
01:10:07,100 --> 01:10:09,125  
were issued prison uniforms.

1268  
01:10:09,125 --> 01:10:14,830

1269  
01:10:14,830 --> 01:10:17,380

First, you weren't  
fed for quite a while.

1270  
01:10:17,380 --> 01:10:19,060  
You were poorly fed.

1271  
01:10:19,060 --> 01:10:20,820  
And of course, most  
of the time was

1272  
01:10:20,820 --> 01:10:24,670  
spent in roll calls where you  
stood in your prison uniform

1273  
01:10:24,670 --> 01:10:30,040  
without winter clothes for  
hours three or more times a day.

1274  
01:10:30,040 --> 01:10:33,130  
My father caught  
serious bronchitis,

1275  
01:10:33,130 --> 01:10:36,400  
which was with him  
as long as he lived.

1276  
01:10:36,400 --> 01:10:39,310  
People in the barrack  
where he was, some of them

1277  
01:10:39,310 --> 01:10:40,340  
were mistreated.

1278  
01:10:40,340 --> 01:10:43,210  
They told me one case  
where a father and son--

1279  
01:10:43,210 --> 01:10:44,770  
a young son who was 16--

1280  
01:10:44,770 --> 01:10:48,760  
were in the same  
barrack, and the Nazis

1281  
01:10:48,760 --> 01:10:53,170  
made sport of having the  
son beat up his father

1282  
01:10:53,170 --> 01:10:57,940  
so that they had something  
they could amuse themselves by.

1283  
01:10:57,940 --> 01:11:03,350  
My father, he never mentioned  
of being beaten or anything.

1284  
01:11:03,350 --> 01:11:05,640  
But one of the sports  
that the Nazis did

1285  
01:11:05,640 --> 01:11:08,050  
was when they had  
to take a shower,

1286  
01:11:08,050 --> 01:11:11,080  
they would shut off the  
hot water so that suddenly

1287  
01:11:11,080 --> 01:11:14,500  
in the middle of November, you'd  
stand in the ice cold water,

1288  
01:11:14,500 --> 01:11:16,240  
then they shot  
the cold water off

1289  
01:11:16,240 --> 01:11:20,230  
so you'd have practically  
boiling water come down--

1290  
01:11:20,230 --> 01:11:25,360  
that sort of thing is  
what he was subjected to.

1291  
01:11:25,360 --> 01:11:30,580  
And then they were also made to



run double time around a parade

1292

01:11:30,580 --> 01:11:31,370

ground there.

1293

01:11:31,370 --> 01:11:33,340

And these were people  
who were middle aged,

1294

01:11:33,340 --> 01:11:40,500

and some people died as a  
result of the treatment.

1295

01:11:40,500 --> 01:11:43,740

Under what conditions  
was he released?

1296

01:11:43,740 --> 01:11:45,570

Standard condition.

1297

01:11:45,570 --> 01:11:47,770

You sign that you're going  
to leave the country,

1298

01:11:47,770 --> 01:11:50,220

you bring proof that  
you leave the country

1299

01:11:50,220 --> 01:11:52,800

in a certain length of time,  
and you would immediately

1300

01:11:52,800 --> 01:11:54,090

be released.

1301

01:11:54,090 --> 01:11:58,230

So my mother wrote to her  
uncle again and told him

1302

01:11:58,230 --> 01:12:01,800

that my father had been  
arrested and would be freed only

1303

01:12:01,800 --> 01:12:03,430  
if he could leave the country.

1304

01:12:03,430 --> 01:12:06,000  
So he immediately  
sent the affidavit.

1305

01:12:06,000 --> 01:12:09,020  
And of course, that's  
what saved their life.

1306

01:12:09,020 --> 01:12:10,230  
Yeah.

1307

01:12:10,230 --> 01:12:13,800  
They had some other  
little nice things.

1308

01:12:13,800 --> 01:12:17,550  
For example, for the privilege  
of being transported from

1309

01:12:17,550 --> 01:12:19,320  
and to the  
concentration camp, you

1310

01:12:19,320 --> 01:12:22,680  
were also made to pay the  
cost of transportation.

1311

01:12:22,680 --> 01:12:26,250  
And those who were too poor, the  
others had to make up for it.

1312

01:12:26,250 --> 01:12:29,640  
This was sort of  
standard Nazi chicanery

1313

01:12:29,640 --> 01:12:34,427  
to make people just  
suffer a little bit extra.

1314

01:12:34,427 --> 01:12:36,260  
What mode of transportation  
did your parents

1315  
01:12:36,260 --> 01:12:38,870  
use to come to  
the United States?

1316  
01:12:38,870 --> 01:12:45,230  
They emigrated legally  
after they had the papers.

1317  
01:12:45,230 --> 01:12:47,600  
They left Germany  
and went to Belgium

1318  
01:12:47,600 --> 01:12:50,300  
to be with relatives  
for a week and to Paris,

1319  
01:12:50,300 --> 01:12:52,730  
where we had relatives  
at that time.

1320  
01:12:52,730 --> 01:12:57,680  
And my father, my parents,  
and my father's brother

1321  
01:12:57,680 --> 01:13:01,930  
and sister-in-law, and  
sister and brother-in-law,

1322  
01:13:01,930 --> 01:13:09,290  
then came by a Dutch ship from  
Boulon in France to New York.

1323  
01:13:09,290 --> 01:13:12,430  
And from New York,  
they came to Danville.

1324  
01:13:12,430 --> 01:13:16,390  
They arrived one week before  
World War II broke out.

1325

01:13:16,390 --> 01:13:19,500

We're going to pause  
so I can change tape.

1326

01:13:19,500 --> 01:13:20,000