United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998
RG-50.106*0112

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audiotaped interview with Jacob Wiener, conducted by Esther Finder on October 25, 1998 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Silver Spring, Maryland and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's volunteer collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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

JACOB WIENER
October 25, 1998

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Jacob Wiener** conducted by **Esther Finder** on October 25th, 1998 in **Silver Spring, Maryland**. This interview is part of the museum's project to interview Holocaust survivors and witnesses who are also volunteers with the museum. This is a follow-up interview that will focus on **Jacob Wiener's** post-Holocaust experiences. In preparation for this interview I listened to the interview conducted with the **U.S.** Holocaust Memorial Museum, and we did two of them, a video on June 30th of 1994, and an audio that was received by the museum on February first of 1996. And you also did an interview with the Survivors of **Shoah** Visual History foundation on October 17th, 1996, and I reviewed part of that also. I will not ask you to repeat everything you said in that interview, instead I will use this interview as an opportunity to follow up on those interviews and focus on your post-Holocaust experiences. This is tape number one, side **A.** I want to thank you for doing the interview with us today. Can you tell me what is your name, and what was your name at birth?

Answer: Presently my name is **Jacob Gerd, g-e-r-d Wiener, w-i-e-n-e-r**. And formerly my name was **Kopel**(ph) **Gerd Zwienizki, z-w-i-e-n-i-z-k-i**.

Q: When did you change your name and why?

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

A: Changed my name as part of the naturalization in 1951, I believe, and the reason was that time I was married, my wife didn't like this name, the all different kinds of pronunciations, and my brother already had changed his name to **Wiener, w-i-e-n-e-r,** and I told the judge at that time that the reason I'm changing my name to **Wiener** is because **Zwienizki** is very hard to pronounce, very hard to write. And just like a herring, where you cut off the top and the bottom, the tail and the **[indecipherable]** so I cut off the **z** and the **icki** and it remains **wien.** But I wanted a two syllable name so I made it **Wiener.**

Q: We're going to ask about your immediate post-war experience. I would like you to tell me how you learned that the war was over.

A: I learned it from newspapers and I also learned it from talking to people who had been in the Holocaust, who knew about the Holocaust **[indecipherable]**

Q: What exactly did you learn from talking to those people who were there?

A: During the war, I was on – i-in the beginning of the war I was still in contact with relatives of mine in **Germany**, I wrote them letters and the letters came back. And from the contents of the letters I knew that it was going worse – from worse to worse – from bad to worse, because they wrote this person is not here any more, he went on vacation. What they meant by this of course was went to concentration camp. After awhile I don't hear from the people at all, letters came back censored,

or no letters came back. This went on every year. Every year I wrote a little article for myself about hoping that the war would end. We went out to the different organizations and – to find out if the war could be ended, but there wasn't much response in that respect, and so it went on til the end of the war. In 1945 the war ended, and many demonstrations were held and people talked about this and they **[indecipherable]** and they heard about this from other people.

Q: You were in the **United States**. How did the American media present the news of the war and what had happened to the Jews?

A: It's unfortunate that the media here in the **United States** didn't write too much about it, a-and if they did, like the **"New York Times"** they wrote it on a – not on a main page, but wrote it on pages afterwards. It's – the only time when they wrote the things on the first page was during **Kristallnacht.** And afterwards they didn't write it on front of the pages. I read the paper, of course, and while I read the paper, I also learned English more, and – and I can only say this, you see, that when the war started I was registered in class **4-D**, which was clergy going to school, because I went to the **Yeshiva** and they were exempt from actually joining the war, even though I tried to join the war and – but the only thing was at that time, either buy war bonds, or I even tried to join the war by being an air raid warden, but after awhile they told me, you cannot be an air raid warden, I was considered an enemy

alien, despite the fact that I was Jewish in the **United States**, and I always had to get permission even to travel, let's say from **Baltimore** to **Yonkers,** where I had a little shop, in **Yonkers.**

Q: What was reaction of the Jewish community around you to the news that was coming out of **Europe**?

A: The Jewish community. A-After the war? After the war, about 1945, 1940 si – 1946, I left the **Yeshiva** in **Baltimore**, the **[indecipherable] Yeshiva** Rabbinical college, I left them. I got **semicha** there and I talked about this, they tried to help Jews in **Europe**, they send out packages to them, they send out packages and then I tried to find people from my birthplace to whom I could talk and who maybe knew more about what happened at my particular place where I was born. And I found people, I found people in **New York.** There was some people in **New York** by the name of **Greenburg**(ph). I talked to them what had happened in **Germany**. I also talked about other people, I went to organizations, like – had a big demonstration in **Madison Square Garden.** They had the em – demonstrations all over, and bringing people e – over, and many people came over afterwards, but they had not actually been in the Nazi concentration camps per se, they had, during the war they had gone from **Germany**, **Russia, Poland** and so forth to **Shanghai** or into other places. And they came over. And then **[indecipherable]** and other people came over.

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

Q: I have a couple questions about what you just said. You said you left the **Yeshiva**, you got **semicha** there. Can you explain what that means?

A: **Semicha** means like ordination to be a rabbi. At that time, the rabbi at the **Yeshiva** was Rabbi **Ruderman,** who had come from **Lithuania** just before the war. In fact, his wife was born in **Königsberg,** was east **Prussia,** part of **Germany**. And it – and it was not – there were not too many people – during the war, of course, the number of students at the **yeshiva** increased and after the war it went down. At the end of the war, especially, I tried to become a **United States** citizen. Already during the war I tried to become a **United States** citizen. In 1943 was the first time I made an appeal to become an American citizen. Now at that time, the immigration policy was that you had to have first papers, and after first papers you have to wait five years and you can make an application to become a citizen. So, when I made my first application 1943, I was asked to come before a board in **Baltimore,** five different organizations, the navy, the – the war , the defense and so forth. And it was – it was rejected because at that time the war was – looked very bad because the Nazis had been stopped at **Stalingrad** and it was very bad, so they didn't want anyone to become a citizen unless they actually went to war. And later on I made the application, think around 1950, though it might be earlier, with the **FBI** to go for translations. So they said, if you want to make translation, we have to send you to

Germany, I didn't want to go to **Germany**, so I stayed here. But they helped me also in – to get my second papers, and I got them in, as I said before, in 1951.

Q: And that's when you became a citizen?

A: Then I became a **United States** citizen, and as I mentioned before, I changed my name at that time. And I was already married then, because we married in 19 – got married in 1948.

Q: Is your wife also a survivor of the Holocaust?

A: Yes, my wife was born in **Nuremberg** and she moved to **Firth**(ph). And they were living there and the – her father was a merchant, he had – they had a business, and – and of course like all people at that time, tried to leave **Germany** after the **Kristallnacht**, which I consider the beginning of the end. Everyone knew that it would not change any more and they had to leave. Before that time, we also had tried to come out of **Germany**, but I don't want to talk before that time, but only say that they finally, in 1939, that's before the war, she came out with the **Kindertransport**, children's transport to **England.** And their parents also came out, because they had some relatives in **England.** I had also tried to come out with the transport, but just on the date when I received the permission to come to **England,** they stopped it.

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

Q: I wanted to go back to something you said a few moments ago, about being at magison – **Madison Square Garden –**

A: Yeah.

Q: – with **[indecipherable]**. Can you tell me about that event?

A: It was a big crowd in **Madison Square Garden.** They made many **[indecipherable]** meetings. But, as I understand it now, you see, and as I read in the newspaper and so forth, there were always requests of people to come to the **United States.** They – at – at that time, in order to come to the **United States**, **[indecipherable]** you needed a – what's called a certificate – **zertifickat**. And there were only a certain number of **zertifikats** available per year for people from **Germany**, because a number of **zertifikats** had been set in nine **[indecipherable]** that time, and at that time the – the – the – the – I mean, the type of population in **America** was different than it was in 1940 and 1950. So, many people got certificates but they were only dated for two or three years later. And who wanted to wait two or three years? We didn't want to wait two or three years. We didn't have an American certificate, even though I know from my records, and my mother, that she had – my father had applied to go to the **United States** already in the 20's, but my mother didn't want to go because she had all her family in – in **Germany**. So that's why we stayed there.

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

Q: I'd like you as an eyewitness, to tell me what was going on in that protest at madis – **Madison Square Garden.** If you could describe the scene and what was said, and – and the feelings that the people had.

A: I don't know any more exactly what went on there. I can only tell you it was a very big meeting. You see, the **Madison Square Garden** has a very big place and it was filled up to capacity. And there were many people who spoke about it, what happened in – in – in – in **Germany**, and what could be done and they wanted to – they wanted to influence the American government to do something about it. In that respect, I mean a little bit to the side, when I was in the **yeshiva,** there was a young man, he was young at that time, who came every week, every Thursday to the **yeshiva** and from there he went on to **Washington** to discuss with cabinet ministers to let Jews out. And his name was **Michael Trist**(ph), and the person he talked to that was discussing, **Moshe Sherer**, which recently passed away, became the president of the **Agudath**(ph) **[indecipherable]** organization. But every week they came out. And some of the **yeshivas** and some of other organizations made it, but it was a very tough time because the **United States** was interested – and it is not against the **United States,** the **United States** was interested to win the war. If we win the war, then everything will change. So we cannot bomb the trains to the concentration camps. And they heard the person, **Jacob Rosenheim,** I have his

book here, and I heard him speak many times, who le – sent letters, and I have the copies of the letters which he sent to **Roosevelt** and other people to do this. Only one person was successful to a certain extent, a limited extent and it was **Ruth Gruber**, I don't know if you heard of her, who arranged with Secretary **Ickes** and **Morgenstern**(ph) and so forth, they arranged that thousand – that they permit a thousand Jews to go to **Oswego**, one of my family, and we also went to **Oswego.** In – that's in the – **Oswego** is near **Lake Erie**, I think, it's in the state of **New York.** So they did very many things, so the people came over and they were protesting and they were writing and they were talking to in-influential people. But it was not the mood at that time. It was just – in fact, they never felt that anything bad happened to the Jews, and it could be changed, until **Kristallnacht.** I think by **Kristallnacht** it changed, because that was the first time that **Roosevelt** called his ambassador from **Berlin** away and talked to him about what happened.

Q: When the war was over, and you said you had read articles, not on the front page, about what had happened to the Jews. I would like to get a sense from you of what the Jewish community in the – in the **United States,** religious or secular, whatever you can share with me, what was the reaction of the Jewish community and – and was there much said by the Jewish community?

Q: Many think that, and it was not always positive, unfortunately, because when I came and the whole family came in, already before the war, in 1939 to the **United States**, to **Montreal** we came, before we went to **Montreal [indecipherable] United States**, there were in – in the community there were mone – mostly older people and they could not believe it that it was as bad as it really was, even if we told it to them, you see, they could not believe it. And we were considered even when we came to the **United States**, refugees, an-and it – an-and considered refugees. We were called greenhorns. It's completely different now, when the Russian Jews came over, and they were accepted as **[indecipherable]**. We were – we be – came there with only four dollars from – from **Germany**, which we could take out, four dollars. This was 10 marks at that time, 10 marks was four dollars. And even when I was in **yeshiva** I had to canvas that – that we put clothing, other things like this, doctors, or medical servicing and so forth. We were not considered actually as it was, as bad as it really was. They did not think it was as bad as it really was.

Q: How long did it take for – for you or the people around you to grasp the full extent of the genocide, just how many people were killed? How long did it take for that information to come across?

A: You must know that everything which was done by the Nazis was done secretly. And that's why people still denied if afterwards. And that's also why many people didn't know about it until very much – because, as I mentioned before, in the beginning we did – we did receive some correspondence, but afterwards we didn't receive correspondence. Everything went – I don't know how it came over here **[indecipherable]** channels, small radios, because they had no television here. It came out slowly after the war, it came out, even so set – so far that last year when I was in **Germany**, I heard certain things which I didn't even know happened during the war. You see, even now, 50 years later, 60 years later you see, there are certain things which had never been publicized and which only come out now. It's unfortunate, you see, when so much in secrecy that people couldn't believe it. It was unbelievable, it's beyond belief what happened there, that a – such a thing in a – a highly civilized, scientific country should happen like this.

Q: How closely did you follow the **Nuremberg** trials?

A: At that time there was already television, I think, 1946 and we tried to see – look at the – look at the television, find out what ha – what was going to happen and we saw other people there. But in my impression, I mean the impression of most people was **[indecipherable]** that these people were so brainwashed, or crazy, or whatever you call this, you see, saying that I had nothing to do with it because I followed

orders. Same thing was when they killed my mother also, they said, we followed orders. But they did not have their own mind, they just said they followed orders. Of course, the world knew by that time that they could have done something because they had power and they had all the authority to do what they wanted to do and they didn't do it. And not only this, the worst thing of it, that they in- intimidated the whole population to do this – to go in the same way. That no one actually acted freely on his own free will.

Q: Did you follow the **U.N.** vote on the partition of **Palestine**?

A: Yes, we followed it very closely. It was in November and we followed the vote and it took some time to find that the majority vote came out about **Palestine**. That was going on for a long time, because it actually started long before the war. In 1936 with the British, you see, were not too happy and were not too much in favor of – of it at all. And they even – many people died because they tried to go there by force to **Israel,** to **Palestine** at that time. They couldn't land, they got sent to the concentration camps in **Crete** and other places. But before the – this, we saw them, that finally came through. We were very much ap – surprised, especially that **Russia** voted for it. But of course no Arabs, they voted for it and they never acknowledged it. And to this date, no one blames them for anything, but they really do because they never voted for it. For them it doesn't exist.

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

Q: Let's take a break and see if we can get – stop that background noise. All right, we're back now and I had been asking you about the partition of **Palestine** and I wanted to get a sense of you – from you, of what was going on here in the Jewish community with respect to the partition and the birth of the state of **Israel.**

A: The entire Jewish community here, as far as I know and I saw, was very much interested in what was going to happen, because many Jews had already gone to **Palestine** at that time, and they did not feel safe in **Palestine**, and they did not know what would happen, the 21 Arab states would be poised to – to break **Palestine** and not to have peace with them, you see, even though the Jewish community in **Palestine,** and I know that, offered any person, whatever nationality, whatever sex, whatever religion, to stay there and they would live in peace. But there was so much hatred and unfortunately we still have hatred in the world, that they said no, don't stay there, go out, because they will kill you. They did not have in mind to kill you, just now **[indecipherable]** in mind to kill anyone. Not as, number one, not **[indecipherable]**. And they went out and they made the concen – they made these refugee camps, in which they are existing today, and the **U.N.** supported it. I went to the **U.N.** when the **U.N.** was, at that time meeting. They were meeting already before 1945, the **U.N.** went in, and what would happen there, they saw people standing – people standing outside and there was – this is – was – o-other people in

there, beca – all the people wanted peace. All the – they want to live in peace with other people too, but they just couldn't. As I mentioned many times, in **Germany** I mentioned it too, the most pious person cannot live in peace if the wicked neighbor doesn't want it. That's one German citation, that the Germans made themselves. **Schiller**(ph) made it. His poem. So we were very much afraid that we would not have peace, but we all very much wanted peace.

Q: Did you every consider making **aliyah** and going to **Israel**, sp – **[indecipherable]** at that time?

A: I know many of my family went to **Palestine**, but I can tell you that already ye- years before that, in 1933, when **Hitler** came to power, already in that ti – at that time they had what they called **Hasharah.** It means preparation for. And I participated in one of such groups. However, like all the Jews, my mother especially thought that things were changed and the neighbors, our neighbors, our non-Jewish neighbor **[indecipherable]** things were changed. And who knows what it is starting in a new life and so forth. I wanted to go there, we learned already Hebrew at that time. But at that moment when – when this happened, the partition happened in 1948, at that time I was in the **United States** and my – my father was in **Canada** and he did not have too much – he did not make too much of an effort at that time to go to **Palestine,** even though we had family in **Palestine** at that time, and I received

[indecipherable] from **Palestine,** but at that time it was not settled yet

[indecipherable]

Q: After the birth of the state, there was the – the war, and there have been subsequent wars. I-I wanted add – to ask you to share in the insights or any thoughts you had during these conflicts, particularly with your life experience, knowing what war can be, and knowing fear as a Jew, I was wondering if you had any insights that you could share about **Israel's** wars.

A: First I want to say that the Jewish people were always against war. We want to try to settle everything by peace as much as possible, even if it's **[indecipherable]** unfortunately. But I remember one instance, I think it was the – the war – the Six Day War in 1967, I think. And at that time I was – I had a job in **New York** and I went to a convention in **Montreal**. We had – and my father's family was living in **Montreal**, and at that convention we had a meeting and at that meeting there was a great British journalist, I think Lady jo – **James**, I don't remember her name. Anyhow, there was a vote. Who votes for **Israel** and – that they should win or that they should be – should be peace and who votes against it. Every person voted with **Israel** that isra – that **Israel** should have peace. Only one person voted no. And they asked this one person why no, they said, there should never be a complete, 100 percent vote. There should always be one – besides, then they asked the question,

what can we do in order to make peace here? Well, there were all different answers and one person, this Lady **James** gave a very interesting answer, she said, we should build a wall, like they have the **China** wall – Chinese wall between **China** and the other things. They had another wall **[indecipherable] Berlin** wall. So we make a – at that time they were all interested in making peace by building walls. So they had the intention, this lady says, you make a wall between the Israelis and the Arabs. Of course it never happened, but that was the psychology and the – the ideas of the people at that time, you see that they might think – that they think by making walls, you can make peace. Just like during the war, you see, when the French made the **Maginot** line, they thought with a wall they can **[indecipherable]** the peace and the Nazis just walk around. And that was an interesting idea she had. Then of course there were the other wars **[indecipherable]** but when the – the Six Day War, you know, when they suddenly saw that the Jews were winning and there was a euphoria and they went in the streets with big bed sheets and you collected money, everything was okay, but unfortunately, this a mistake for the Jewish people, they did not see what they could have done at that time, if they had done it at that time, we wouldn't have trouble now. For instance, at that time the whole west thing, everything was okay. At that time they started to call it the **West Bank.** Before they didn't call it even the **West Bank**. It was **Transjordania**, it **[indecipherable]**

Jordania was – was separated between the east, the west and th-the whole thing about **West Bank** and **East Bank** and who knows what? These terms wouldn't came up there – the other words which were going on between **Israel,** there was always a trouble – they were always afraid the Jews would win. And they did win in some **[indecipherable]** at that time when the **[indecipherable]** and they captured all of the **Sinai** peninsula and they even had **Arafat** surrounded. They did not do anything with him, they let them all go **[indecipherable]** I don't know if the others would have done this if they had cir-circled – encircled the Jewish people and so forth, they would not let one person le – go out alive. But that's what the Jewish mentality is. **[indecipherable]** they don't understand this here.

Q: The comment that you just made with respect to the **Sinai** and the encirclement of the – that's the '56 war?

A: It was the **Suez** canal. And I want to say only one thing, it could have been peace, and this was – and I remember this, you know, **Golda Meier**, who was the prime minister at that time, she made peace with **Sadat**. Cause even **Sadat** had fought the Jews, but they made peace on the basis, and that's why she **[indecipherable]** she said we both have grandchildren and we don't want our grandchildren to live through war. You see, so – so therefore there is some point where you can bring people together. But you can only bring them together – they

mentioned **Germany** too, if you learn from the past. We have **[indecipherable]** grandchildren who – in the future, so have to learn from that.

Q: How closely did you follow the **Eichmann** trial?

A: At that time again, we followed it by radio and by television and we were very much surprised that they found him, because he did not identify himself. Only afterwards they found out about it. And then it was **ORT** and television and a-all, and we heard all the reports which were done. It's unfortunate again that one person **[indecipherable]** he should not have been executed, but – well, I don't know, you see, because he executed thousands and hundred thousands of people, he is one person. He was guilty, that's all **[indecipherable]** but again, to the last minute, he denied that he was responsible. He denied his responsibility. People don't want to be responsible. I did by – by orders. But that was his order, because he was one of the three or four people at the **Wannsee** conference who made the decision of the final solution.

Q: Did you feel justice was done?

A: I think there was done justice, you see. Even though we say – even though the Jewish religion they say God is the final judge, you know, God is the final judge, but – and justice will come eventually and it did come eventually because the war ended and **Hitler** did not achieve what he wanted to achieve, so he was the final

judge, but at that moment it was in the hands of the human court, with the majority of mankind at that time, because everyone was involved. So therefore, I think there was justice done, to that extent.

Q: We're going to pause, and I'm going to flip the tape. One moment.

[break]

Q: This is a continuation of a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Jacob Wiener**. This is tape number one, side **B.** And I wanted to now continue in the 60's, you had just told me about the **Eichmann** trial. The 1960's were very turbulent in the **United States** and I would like some insight from you on how you reacted to some of what was going on around you. Specifically, let's start with the Civil Rights movement. Do you have any thoughts on that?

A: I never felt any animosity, so to say, to anyone who was not Jewish or any other kind of color, because even in school in **Germany**, I had a black person, at that time they were called Negroes, in my class, and he came from a former German colony in east **Africa.** So I – I always tried to reconcile people and to try to – to understand other people's views. Now when this happened with the Civil Rights movement, of course when I was working in the department of Social Services in **New York,** we had also many people who were different colors, Orientals and other people of

different colors and I was always very good with them, and never had any problems. So, besides this, I remember when they had this march to **Selma** there was one Jewish person who was killed, **Schwerner**(ph). And **Schwerner**(ph), we knew his father, who had a wig fam – a – a business of making wigs, **sheitel**, in German. And so we knew about this, you see. Again you see, here you see that there were Jewish people who, as some could say, with what happens to other people and not just saying it like you know, many times people say yeah, we have sympathy, but they deserve it. No, not that way. A-And try to have and try to see what it was. So we had the sympathy with them also, and th – because – because a number of Jews, especially Jews, are very sympathetic to all kinds of people. They have this kind, what you call this **[indecipherable]** hearts. Emotion with other people. It doesn't necessarily mean we – we – we have to leave our religion or our whatever we believe in, but we also acknowledge what others believe in, we don't fight them because of they're – they are different in certain respects.

Q: You mentioned that in **Germany** you had a classmate who was from **Africa.**

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to have him in the class and what the reaction of the other students was to this individual?

A: In the beginning there was really no difference. Under the **Weimar** republic, I mean before **Hitler** came to power, they made no difference between them and them, even though **Weimar** republic said every person has a right to live his way. This person was okay. I don't know what happened to him afterwards, but I'm quite sure that when **Hitler** came to power, he had gone back by that time and I don't know what happened afterwards. But I only know that during this time, it was a – because it was an organization in **Germany** during the **Weimar** republic which was called **verhein**(ph), means a-an assembly, a group, for Germans in the foreign countries, especially in the **Austria**, **Czechoslovakia**, where the Germans were the bordering countries, here was such kind of an organization and they wanted everyone already in the **Weimar** republic, they wanted everyone to join this organization and to work for them. In other words, they already wanted at that time to include them into **Germany**. They were not hiding like **Hitler** did, to conquer them and make them part of **Germany**, but they were just like supporting them, because they were living at the outskirts of **Germany**.

Q: This country had gone to war with **Korea** and then again with **Vietnam**. I was wondering if you had any insights that you could share about what was – what it was like for you to watch this country now go to war.

A: The unfortunate thing is that after the World War II, which is now of course, in **Germany [indecipherable],** it means war of distraction, because that was the whole purpose, more so than winning the war. At – more – many more wars happened. Like you say, the war in **Korea**, the war in **Vietnam** and now even other wars in **Bosnia** and all over the world **[indecipherable]** situation in **Africa**, all these different things which happened afterwards. But that was the – and age – I mean, the 60's were some kind of – it was a rebellion, it was rebellion of the youth. And I saw it myself because there was it – in my department, when the commissioner gave a talk, a group of people came, stopped him from talking and sat in front of him – sat in front of him, you see, so that he couldn't talk any more, and talked against him. No respect. I mean, that was – that is actually the beginning of making peace. The first – the first thing about peace, when you have to re – respect for each other. And honor what other people say, that's a real democracy. This was what **Freud** calls civil disobedience. That means they – they wanted to show their own force, their own selfishness, their own pride by saying I know more than you do. That happens with – I mean, it happened in schools too, that children – and my wife knows about this, that the children many times will see – accuse teacher of something which they want to be the boss **[indecipherable]** be in charge. You see, if people don't work together with each other, you see, that's what I always try to

do, as I mentioned before, with the black people. With other people, if they don't accept this and the respect to other people – respect other people and – and listen to other people, at least listen to them, you see, then we cannot have any peace. So I was always – I didn't really understand the anti-war movement at that time. Of course, we shouldn't have a war which there is no purpose to it. But the government itself, you see, didn't have a key purpose of what they really wanted to do, and therefore it's – it's no wonder that the people themselves didn't know what to do.

Q: I'd like to ask you about – you mentioned children and – your wife and children. What kinds of things did you tell children about your experiences before you came to this country?

A: I told the children then and I'm telling the children now – and I wrote about this, I'm telling the children to grow up in a country where you don't know what's going to happen to you, they make laws against th-the Jews, they make law against other things, the first thing is you have to know what you want to do, you have to know yourself. You start with knowing yourself and then you will either – you cannot be everything, everybody **[indecipherable]**. So therefore I say if you want to be a Jew, you have to know what it means to be a Jew. If you want to be someone else, you have to know what – what it means to be someone else. But you have to know what you want to be. Because you cannot talk to other people if you don't have a point of

view of your own. So it – when I wrote the children and I was many asked to talk about what it means to grow up in **Germany**, and I was many times asked, what do you think about things which are going on in this world, I say, we cannot have all the answers, and I studied psychology, we cannot meet on the – always have all the answers, but we have to know one thing, that we have to have one point of view and sometimes we don't know the an – we don't always know the answer, you see. But then we have to have a belief, a faith **[indecipherable]** I have the faith in God, and finally he will make the final decision. I don't know, we make – made decisions and it would not happen that way. We had – we – we always thought, you see, that if we make this kind of treaty, we'll have peace. No peace came though. No, we – we don't always know the decision, but finally the decision were made **[indecipherable]**. Just like I know that when **Chamberlain** before the war, by the mun – **Munich** conference came back with an umbrella and said, we have thousand years of peace, that what he thought, you see. But I don't know if he ever believed it. If you say something and you don't believe it **[indecipherable]** tell the truth, then nothing will come out of it, that's what I say. That's why I told the children, you have to learn something about yourself and you have to go to school, you have to – education is the most important, now we all know it in **America** too, education is the more important. It's – it's more important than learning about war

[indecipherable] education, because if you haven't educated you don't know how to – what kind of decision to make and where to go. And it also finalize – it also sensitizes a person to what it means, how to live with other people.

Q: I wanted to ask you about some of your writings. And specifically if you had some favorite themes that you revisit in your writing.

A: Favorite themes? When I write certain stories and so on, I make people beli – I bring out – I like to, I intend to, I don't know if I'm always successful, I intend to find out in – in – and – and impress upon them that, as I said before, we have to know what we want. And – and I know there are two types of people who came out of the concentration camps, two types of people. Don't want to be **[indecipherable]**. You see, the one type of people who came out and said, if God lets this happen, where is God? And another type of people came out and they said, I cannot believe anyone and I only believe in God. So just two opposites. And we see this here in the **United States** nowadays, we see that many what we call **bali-chuva**(ph), that means people who returned to Jewish **[indecipherable]** many thing. And we see on the other hand that people say, I don't want to believe that. And I wrote about this. And – and – and I say, if – if a person doesn't at least have one goal or one motive by which to go, he gets lost. And many people committed suicide during the war, afterwards, because they – they didn't know what was going

to happen and they couldn't believe it. From the Jewish point of view, it is an **[indecipherable]** sin to commit suicide, because we have – we are not the masters of our ow life, and that's why suicide is forbidden because our life was given by God and therefore we cannot take it away. He – unless He takes it away, you see. But – but that's the story.

Q: Do you have some favorite works or perhaps a favorite poem that you would like to share?

A: Yeah, I have here two things which I like to tell you. When we first came to **America** in 1939, and I must say that every step in my life was a miracle, and that's what I want to write about, and every person has miracles in his life, everything was a miracle. It was a miracle that we came out, that we came out this way. Even the killing of **Ernst vom Raim**(ph) on **Kristallnacht** was also a miracle because up to that time, the number of Jews emigrating had declined, and this – many Jews emigrated after this happened, who otherwise would have died in the concentration camps. So I don't know – you see, everything is a miracle. But when I came out of **Germany**, I wrote of it. This is a poem, and I only want to read the last two lines because how happy we were to come to the **United States**. It goes like this, "Land of future, our future, everything we bring to you. Seeking refuge we are coming. That is all we have in view. To be treated in your country, duties, rights, like you,

the same. Not despised, distained, detested, that's our honest aim. Continent of mankind's future, world of sun and hope. Far off war and scenes of **[indecipherable]** on the western **semi-globe**(ph). God bless you. From a land of terror we were forced to flee. God bless you **America**, you, the land of the free."

Q: Is there another piece of work that you wanted to – to share today?

A: **[indecipherable]** briefly and this is in answer to the people who said, why did this happen to me? And what do the victims say? The victims say, I may be alive and many are not alive any more. "What was our guilt? We were born a Jew. We are weak and helpless and only a few. We pray to you, God, to **[indecipherable]** the **Shema** for you, we accept our death. The killers rejoice with a stone filled heart to see us defenseless people depart. You will judge them, we know, for their horrible crime to kill us all. You will pay them in time. The Jewish people will not disappear as long as we to you are near." Now, that was what the victims said. Now what do the survivors say? The survivors say, "How can we forget the Holocaust? Yes, some survived, although millions were lost. We survivors will never forget their pain. We'll cry out to the world, never again. To you God, we belong for infinity, because you have never forsaken me. You knew what would be our destiny. Only we cannot fathom your heavenly scope, but we'll never lose love and fear and hope in you, who has the power and might, you who work in justice and

right. You left us alive. We were saved to narrate our brothers and sisters indescrit – indescribable fate. For the world must know what the Nazis contrived, and that it was God by whose love we survived."

Q: You seem to have an ability to explain to people about your experience, either in poetry or in some of the other written work that you've done, and some of your written work is in the file available at the museum. Do you have any advice or any guidance for survivors who would like to – to speak to their children or their grandchildren and find it difficult?

A: Yeah, I sometimes get people who talk to me and who've said they cannot talk to their par – to their children because their children are different. Some children do not want to hear about what happened there. But I can tell you one thing, which I know from my work as – on psychology and in the department of Social Services, that I have found that it's very difficult, often, not always, to talk to the children, and it's easier to talk to grandchildren. And I found this out in three respects. Number one I found it out when I was working with child abuse, what was **[indecipherable],** that the children of – who were abused didn't like to talk to their child – to their parents because they didn't want to make them feel ashamed or responsible. But the grandchildren want to know, they're a little bit further removed. Number two, I found out we had some relatives in **Russia** and my – my

brother once went to **Russia** and he spoke to them. And then some grandchildren of ours, from my – my – my uncle's grandchildren came and they wanted to know about Communism and things like this. The children didn't talk about Communism to their parents, the – on why and what, but the grandchildren did. Then I also have this here – this – I worked with **AAA,** alcoholic anonymous, so the children don't want to talk about it to their parents, because they don't want to picture their parents as alcoholics. But the grandchildren want to get into **[indecipherable]**. And the same is also true with the Holocaust experience, that most of the time you see, the children don't want to hear about it. They hear so much about it, it's too much. But the grandchildren are free, more free and they want to hear about it and they – many times, an-and that's why, for instance my – my wife didn't want to write any book or anything like this for her children. Yeah, now she writes it for her children **[indecipherable]** the grandchildren. **[indecipherable]**. I think eventually they will hear it, you see, but it takes a long time.

Q: I'd like to ask you some questions about your volunteer work at the museum. And I'd like to know specifically what do you do at the **U.S.** Holocaust Memorial Museum.

A: All right. We moved to **Silver Spring** in 1988. When I came here I had a job already right away with the **Montgomery** county to give a course on the search for

identity by the famous **Victor Frankl**. It's an omo – i-it's called – **Victor Frankl.** And then I also tried – I – at that time the museum was just forming, it had an office on **L** or **M** street in **Washington, D.C.** and I was going there and talking to Miss **Morgenstern** and additional people of the museum, I was talking to them about this. But they were not organized yet, so I just let it go. Then I – I didn't want to take a job there, I just wanted to see if anything could be done. I was talking to them to – to the one in charge of the library. And then I started to become a regular volunteer when it opened up in 1993. Even before that I was already a volunteer. And in the first year I was also on the volunteer advisory board. One time I – I was a little bit – for a little while I was chairman, but then **[indecipherable]** two years, then you have to go out and I didn't want to – because you can only stay at wa – at – on the advisory board for two years, then you have to interrupt one or two years, but I didn't want to do it any more, no time. So what happened is now I'm doing three things at the museum. Number one a visitor representative, which means on the floor doing all the different things which should be done, which are necessary on the floor, about information and passes, elevators, all kinds of things. Number two, I'm with the **Fannie Mae** organization **[indecipherable]** about taking groups, leading groups around, young childrens in their teens, junior and high school children. And then after talking to them for two hours or so leading them

[indecipherable]. Then number te – three, I'm in the speakers' bureau. And speakers' bureau, they have different person now, **John Minnick**. I went and I talked to the – different things. I also talk – I was asked by other organizations, by the Catholic University and by **Fort Meade** talked i-in **York, Pennsylvania**, in **White Port, Virginia**. **[indecipherable]** remember what the difference is, and talked **[indecipherable]** you see, I just talked there. But I only talked for a few minutes, let's say for 20 minutes, 30 minutes the most, 20 minutes and then they ask questions. But as we see, I showed them the list and when I talked at this school, the high school, I was surprised that after the school was finished, after school was finished, people came and they stayed and they asked more questions. That's what I'm doing now and I also – I also brought to their attention that it was 60 years now after the Holocaust and to do something about it, they didn't want to do anything in the beginning, but now it seems to be **[indecipherable]** doing something about it, you see. So I just got to all the different people **[indecipherable]** will also give a luncheon and I think it's a luncheon **[indecipherable]** the museum in January next year, about certain experiences in **[indecipherable] Kristallnacht.** There are many things in **Kristallnacht** which I didn't know and I have the documents there and I have some books which I found in the library only last week.

Q: What special insights and talents do you bring to your work at the museum?

A: I don't know if there's any talent, I don't know is there any insight. I think it's just the willingness to – people should know certain things and – which to – which is very hard to get to it – i – a different way, you see. You have to have your contact, you have to know what other people want. The only thing is like – like you say in social work **[indecipherable]** you see, the most important thing of a person is be able to listen, listen, you see. And so I try to listen to the other people, I don't always talk **[indecipherable]**. But I mean, in general it's – it's the attention, it-it-it's mainly to listen to other people, to understand what they mean by that, and if not you ask them. And it's – it's the most important, I think, and people should ask questions. You cannot always have the answers because there are more questions than answers. **[indecipherable]** it's more question than answer. But it also says **[indecipherable]** the Bible says, and too in the Talmud that you don't ask questions, you – you cannot learn. So you see, you have to ask the questions and when you see something, you ask the question, why is this happening, why is this not happening. And not to be so bland and disregard what's going on around you, that don't have anything to do with you. You cannot live in this world, I tell them many times, as one person. You can only live with – you must have other people to live. What would you do if you would be only one person? Who is going to bake? Who is going to **[indecipherable]** Who is going to – to bring you from one place to

another, transportation and so forth. So we need all our other people too. Everyone has a job in this world, and we must all work together. And we must all believe that we are not the final **[indecipherable]** and we'll be judged eventually.

Q: Can you tell me some of your special experiences or special moments that you've had at the museum?

A: I – I – I once – I was working in the – in – on the – in – in the information section **[indecipherable]** two times I had people coming over and tell me – tell me something about this, so I told them – and they came from **Germany**. I – because they needed someone to speak German to them, so they called me over, so I spoke to them. So inter – and was very interesting. This one person, she was a student in history, and the other one was in – working in the German embassy in **Tunis**. It just so happened that they wrote me, they knew that I would be in **Germany**, they telephoned me from **Tunis** to **Bremen** and they excused themselves as they could not come. See, I don't like to start conver – correspondence with others, you see, but they wrote me. So that was one instance and they wanted to see me and they wrote me, by the name – the name of **Schroeder**, that I think they are related to the president – president of wer – **Germany.** So **[indecipherable]** works in the embassy. So then I had, another time I had the woman coming over and she said she was very depressed and she said, we were living in the **zargabeit**(ph), the

Zweibrücken and it's between border, French border. And at that time in 1936 – '36? Yeah. They had the **plevisute**(ph) whether they want to come to **Germany** or not. So they decided to come to **Germany** because **Hitler** made so much propaganda there. But she said, we were always good friends with Jews. My fath – my – my father used to deal with Jews and my – and we always had good relationship. And then afterwards, when we joined **Germany**, then they called over my husband – her husband and they asked him what did he do with the Jews, you see? Why do you still keep contact with the Jews. I didn't understand exactly what she said, if he committed suicide or what he did. But anyhow, after she came back from the – going through the museum, she came back to me and she said to me, I don't want to see all this. In other words, she said, I don't want to remember all this because it gives bad memories back to me. So people come over sometimes and they tell you certain things. There are many other things, but you hear any other things. You sometimes see people who you haven't seen for years. Sometimes people come – I met people from **South America** who – who met – who knew someone of ma – my cousin who lives in **South America**. You see, i-it – all kinds of experiences. It's very interesting there if you are on – on the – with the public, you know? That's why I went with the public, and I could have done translations upstairs if I wanted to, but this is more interesting for me.

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

Q: Have their been any special moments where your experiences as a refugee and survivor have – have had an impact on the students who come in through the museum?

A: Yes, I mean, when I talk to them and they want to hear more about it and – and some people call me back and there is some impact, but I – I don't know actually how much impact it is, I only in – I only can say that when we finish the rounds, you know, I sometimes ask people to write out the comment – the comment cards, you see, and – and they write out the comment cards. They write out certain things that gave them more insight and they would like to hear more about it. It has some insight, but directly I cannot point to any particular theme, you see. There are – it certainly makes an impact on them, and the people come – to most of them. To most of them, I cannot say to all of them. Especially children who, I would say who are more than 15 years old, because if they are less than 15 years old, even though the museum says 11 years can come, you have different types of people. Some have – are very intelligent **[indecipherable]** some only become intelligent at 15, it's all different grades.

Q: There has been a resurgence of interest in the Holocaust. You have been in this country since before the war was over. In your experience, what do you think has accounted for this resurgence in interest?

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

A: It – it took a long time to – people here in the **United States** and all over really found interest in the Holocaust. In the beginning no one wanted to talk about it. And I know the people who come from **Germany [indecipherable]** don't want to – to buy German goods, and things of this sort. After the years go by, people can look a little bit more in unbiased **[indecipherable]** peace and rest about what happened with us, and people want to know more about their past in hitl – in **Hitler's** time. You see, everyone had one had to rate – write a – what is called a family tree. And in the **United States** I think it came about when **Haley** wrote his book on roots and people want to know who's really my forefather, who are really my people before me. And I think this had some influence here that people want to know more about it and the children want to know more about their family. It could be an – and they learn a little bit about it in school, more than before. It's unfortunate that in **Maryland** it's not compulsory to teach the Holocaust. But I know they have five or six states, like **New York** is one of them. And maybe **[indecipherable]** to the education **[indecipherable]** where it is compulsory to talk about the Holocaust, not only in five or six lines like they have in the social studies book, much more about this an-and learn about things, see. How people should live with each other. Human history. And that's why very important, you see that people like **[indecipherable]** we talk about the Holocaust, you see, we try to learn about it, we like to make

people aware about what happened and what can happen if the Holocaust and especially the second ge-generation, they should know about that **[indecipherable]** they doing a good job.

[break]

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Jacob Wiener**. This is tape number two, side **A.** And I had been asking you about the resurgence of interest in the Holocaust, and I wonder if you think that the – the Holocaust Museum itself has had some role in the resurgence of interest. If the Holocaust Museum itself had some role in the resurgence **[inaudible]**

A: Okay, you also asked me about how I feel about certain things. I already told the Holocaust Museum there are certain things which I don't feel are correct. For instance, certain people, you see, certain people who had the experience and so forth, should be used to do some research in certain areas and – and I found that – that the Holocaust Museum is more interested in certain facts, not – they would hear more about the emotions from other people, you see **[indecipherable]**. Of course, when you have emotions, you may not always be neutral, but there is no person in this world who is a neutral, you cannot be neutral in th – in – in th – in your mind **[indecipherable]** where it says you can be neutral in facts, you see. So for instance,

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

I **[indecipherable]** to them that they are – they're preparing people who have studied from books and every book has a certain bias. Because you can have 10 books and you have 10 certain points of view in 10 certain books. You cannot be full of bias. Of course, the survivor, or someone **[indecipherable]** also has certain biases, because what he went through. But his personal bias is – is actually what he learned during the Holocaust, I mean what the experience in the Holocaust, what I experienced or others experienced during the Holocaust, so **[indecipherable]** so therefore I say, if you'd send someone out to visit concentration camps for instant, you know, many survivors don't like to do this, because they want – don't want to have a second experience. But the people who go there with a professional degree and book knowledge, they may not know which questions to ask, proper questions. And that's why I said to them many times that – that I feel you should at least send one person also from the – from those Holocaust people, you see, the sur – survivors and they should bring out their – their emotions, wha – how they feel about it. I feel about certain things, you see, feeling is not **[indecipherable]**. And that's one thing. And then – then, like I, you see, I don't feel too comfortable in maybe saying everything which is there, but you cannot always – you don't know who the other person is, how the other person would take it, if I tell them from my own inner heart, you see, how I feel about it. So I don't honestly know that, you see,

but I don't want to insult the person on – and things like this. But – but let's say when I lead the groups around, you see, I tell them how I feel about it. And I tell the other people who I – how I feel about it. And I don't always know if this is the right way to say or not. You should always say your – your feelings. If you have very strong feelings about it, like I had about – as I mentioned to you before, about people can come out and they say they don't believe in God any more, you see, now I have the strong feelings about this. But – and na – once happened when I – when someone has invited me in **New York,** psychologist, a friend of mine, he asked me to talk about what happened during **Kristallnacht.** I couldn't say it, because it – I was – it was too much for me, I couldn't say it. I do cry. I couldn't say it. So there are certain times, in certain instances which made the greater impression on you. Makes a great impression. I didn't vi – didn't want to talk about the Holocaust, what happened to me, but after awhile I said to myself, the world must know, you see, like the book says. And, so therefore I said I would **[indecipherable]** about it, and so not everyone may like it, but that's what it is. I hope only that we gonna have this hatred any more and this kind of terrorism, and this kind of anti-Semitism, because I experienced anti-Semitism very early in class, in – in school.

Q: Did you experience anti-Semitism in this country after the war?

A: No, not really. You see, there is always some subtle anti-Semitism which, if a Jewish person advances or so, there's always some anti-semi – Semitism in the – and why does he do this, and – and why does he deserve this, and why doesn't he – there is always some anti-Semitism, but I cannot at this point have to think about it, find out special incidents. There are always certain incidences when you see it. I mean, I don't know if this is anti-Semitism, because that the Jews were considered enemy aliens during the war, I don't know if that's anti-Semitism. So I don't know. But, that we were considered like refugees and looked down, that was hard to get a job, you see, at that time it was hard to get a job if you are not pure in your language and you have an accent. In **America** it's not – no longer that way, used to be. So, I mean, you couldn't get a job in the very beginning, you know **[indecipherable]** some anti-Semitism, I think, but – or it's just **[indecipherable]** against foreigners, you see. I don't know. But whenever someone leaves a country, comes to a different country, he's not immediately accepted. Takes a long time. Now we accept people much quicker, when the Jews come in.

Q: Do you see the interest in Nazism from the skinheads and the other neo-Nazi groups as a – as a parallel to what was happening in **Germany** before the war?

A: They could develop into such a thing, I think, because they are very adamant about hating people and – and – and wherever there's hate, there is the possibility

that it develops into the same a-as before. I know this because the thought already is, before **Hitler**, feeling at the time, I saw the – that – that youngsters, you see, called you names **[indecipherable]** that's always possibility. And – and in **Germany**, at least now, they tried to outlaw anti-Semitism, you see, here too, but you cannot completely outlaw it because you never know what really is in the person's heart. There are some people who **[indecipherable]** anti-Semitism. **[indecipherable]** you see in schools too, sometimes they see the teacher **[indecipherable]** people, especially when you go to non-Jewish schools. And they **[indecipherable]** have the books really, what kind of books they read and **[indecipherable]**. But it's not on the old – in the old **[indecipherable]**. I like to – if I see something like this, I'd like to address it head on, you see, like I do many times, you see, even when the Nazis invaded our town, I asked them right away, don't – don't want to hide from them, I just want to ask them, why do you have this? Some like – someone asked me, do you have any – do – don't you – do you – y-you don't like me because I'm not formal, I'm not religious, or so, like this, they ask me this questions. I say no, I would like you to see and be religious, but I – I – it's up to you, you see. You have the choice, you see, and therefore I – I'm not refusing, you know, everything, that is nothing but my point of view is, you see. That's what the most important, like said before, you have to have a point of view.

Interview with Jacob Wiener
October 25, 1998

Q: What are the accomplishments that you feel the most proud of?

A: Most important is that when I came here, you see, I – I found something in – in the education field. And I like the education field because you can influence the children and people and other people and – and I work in that field with – when I was – I had different job, I – I founded a – a Jewish school in th – the mountains, the mountain there, the **Catskill** mountains. I – I worked with the girls' schools, and I helped bring girls over from – from **Hungary** and **Sweden** to the **United States** on a student visa and I helped banking institution in 1956, the children's home for the ke – the re-retarded and emotionally disturbed children, which is still exists in **[indecipherable]**. And I – I learned with other people. So I think that's a – another thing, and I wrote a few things, you see, which **[indecipherable]** and learn from if they want to, and – and I think eh – but could have done more. But we cannot do all everything. We can only do a few things, a few things and everyone does his own and we live together in peace and harmony. And to be well and healthy, that's the most important.

Q: What would you yet like to accomplish?

A: I'm writing this book, I hope to finish it, because they always ask me, when will you finish it, how – how far are you? I – I'm lazy. I just cannot get to it all the time because I have many other things, I have here **[indecipherable]** chaplain, I go there

– there – I give classes here and there and there, so I have to cut down on this, to do one thing. Too many things are not good to do, even if I move it up and – I – I want to finish this book, I hope, and write a little bit more about the experience, and talk to people, that's all.

Q: Tell me about the book that you're working on.

A: The book is actually an autobiography, but it's not only an autobiography, also it's something about history in it, because – I mentioned this in the museum, I said you only want historians to travel overseas, yeah, I said – I said, I'm also a historian because I – I studied history and languages, you know, to see, that's why I n – know a little bit about every language, but not the whole language. Now, towards the end is this, I – I want it to be maybe part of a textbook, so that's why I wrote also a little bit of history in there, you see how it came about, and how the Nazis invaded **Poland.** What you hear mostly nowadays when peoples talk is their experience in concentration camps, and – which unfortunately is – is a very important part of their life – lives, but I think it – I – what people don't know so much, and that's what I am talking to them about in the – for the speakers' bureau I mentioned it, about how was it possible that Nazism developed in **Germany** and what brought it about, you see. The antecedents, what happened before, you see, and ho – what it means to grow up in **Germany**, that's my topic, more or less, you see. Not so much – and it

wasn't in the conversation unfortunately you see, but I understand it was a terrible experience, but here's what I want to – to write about in this book, and I don't have a name for it. But I also want to tell them, you see, that I, among the **[indecipherable]** I wrote about it, every person has to see in this life, miracles happen. **[indecipherable]** a whole list of miracles that happened to me. I wouldn't be here, the miracles. So I feel it's important that a person understands themselves and understands that he is not the guide of the **[indecipherable]** you know, no some – next day something happens, you get sick. But you have to pray and you have to hope, see. That actually i-is what I believe and I would like others to believe it too, but I can't make them believe. But I said to them, you see, you can learn a little bit from me.

Q: You mentioned some miracles that happened to you in **Europe**, getting out of **Europe.** What miracles happened to you in this country?

A: In this country, first of all, when we came to – I have to start here, coming to **Canada**. It happened many miracles in **Canada**, I – it would be too long to talk about everything, I'd rather **[indecipherable]** a miracle happened that we wanted to stay in **Montreal** and we were told by the government you come – go to **Saskatchewan.** And my father had a cousin. A miracle happened that we – we met some people at the travelers' aid and they found out for us and we stayed in

Montreal. We didn't think we would. A miracle happened that I want to come to the **United States** and there was no way for me, I didn't know how. But one day we found a newspaper where some people who have gone to school with me in **Germany**, they on there and I wrote to **Baltimore** and I got an affidavit. And the next miracle was, when I got American affidavit I needed permission to come to **America**, I didn't think I would get it. Had special meeting with the consul **[indecipherable]** and I had no money and I got money from the **[indecipherable]** Jewish American Aid Society, I came to **America** and I came to **Baltimore**. Never thought I would come to **Baltimore** to an institution. And I never thought I would – I would stay there five years or six years. Stayed there five, six years, til I got **[indecipherable]** in the organization. Then I didn't think I would get a job afterwards, I got a job **[indecipherable]** and so forth, so all kinds of – and didn't think I would ever become a citizen **[indecipherable]** and about getting married and children and all the other things coming afterwards. All miracles. The whole story of miracles, and I wrote si – I wrote that the miracle of **Hanukkah**, the miracle of proof of my own stories. **Hanukkah** miracles **[indecipherable]** miracles.

Q: Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't covered today, or was not covered in your other interviews?

A: We will never be able to cover everything, but I just want to say that, as I mentioned before, if you have hatred in your heart, you – you won't get very far and you might only hurt yourself and other people. And since I was a social worker at one time, I still am, that's number one. Number two is, you have to have your own opinion what you want to live with and – and if you feel comfortable, then you should do it. And especially if you're Jewish you should – you should know what it means to be a Jew and – and you should teach your children, you see, and sometimes your children don't ask many things, you see. You should play to their – an age when they ask, and when they ask you should answer them as much as you can. And I hope that the Holocaust Museum will make it possible – makes it possible for people to learn about that and – an-and gives everyone a chance to experience what other people experienced, but they should also give some opportunity for people who experience it to – to do more in this area if they want to. I want to thank you, that's all.

Q: I thank you very much for speaking with us today. And this concludes the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum – excuse me, Memorial Museum interview with **Jacob Wiener.**

Conclusion of Interview