

Interview with Fred Goldman
November 19, 2001

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Fred Goldman**, conducted by **Gail Schwartz** on November 19th, 2001 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 tape number one, side **A**. What is your full name?

Answer: **Fred Goldman**.

Q: And what name were you born with?

A: **Siegfried Goldmann**, with a double N.

Q: And where were you born and when were you born?

A: I was born in **Fürth**, it's a city in **Bavaria**, south **Germany**, and I was born on September 6th, 1915.

Q: And who were the members of your immediate family?

A: My father, my mother, then I had a sister. That's my im -- my immediate family.

Q: What was your father's name?

A: **Jacob**.

Q: And your mother's name?

A: **Meta, M-e-t-a**.

Q: And your sister's name?

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A: **Rosi, R-o-s-i.**

Q: Was she older or younger than you?

A: She was one year younger than me.

Q: Tell a -- tell me a little bit about your family. How long had they been in **Germany**, th-the family -- a little bit of the family history.

A: My mother -- my mother's family dates back to a couple of hundred years, and my father was born in **Poland**. They got married in 1914, I think, and because my mother was German, my father was Polish born, they -- for some reason they could not get married in **Germany**, so they had to go to -- th-the near-nearest ci-city outside **Germany**, which was in **Czechoslovakia**, and they were born -- they were married there. I found this out only much later.

Q: How did your parents meet?

A: This I don't really know. I don't know th --

Q: Cause you said your father was in **Poland** and your mother was in **Germany**, I was wondering how they met.

A: No, my father me -- moved to **Germany**. I guess he go -- hm -- for what reason I don't know, but many Polish Jews at that time moved to **Germany**.

Q: Did you have an extended family of aunts and uncles or grandparents when you were very young?

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A: Yes, I had my -- my -- my mother's parents, who -- who lived in the same town in **Firth**, where I lived. My father's grandparents lived in **Poland**. I -- I think I met them only twice before, they -- when they came for a visit, for lengthy visits.

Q: Y-You said your father's grandparents, you -- do you mean your father's parents?

A: Yeah, that's it.

Q: Yeah. And their names? Do you know the names of your family?

A: My grandfather's first name was **Isaac**. My grandmother's name in **Poland** I do -
- I -- I forgot. I really don't know.

Q: And your mother's parents?

A: My mother's father's name was **Samson, S-a-m-s-o-n**. And my grandmother's first name -- can't think of it right now, me --

Q: Okay, that's okay. What kind of work did your father do?

A: Ma -- ma -- my father was businessman wi -- he owned a store.

Q: What kind of store was it?

A: It was a -- a -- we had two st -- we had two stores, a wholesale and a retail store, and the merchandise we had was haberdashery and wo-woolen things.

Q: And what kind of neighborhood did you live in when you were very young?

We're ba -- we're also talking pre-1933 now. What kind of neighborhood? Was it a Jewish neighborhood, or mixed?

A: It was a mixed neighborhood, it was not a Jewish neighborhood.

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Q: Did you live in an apartment or a house?

A: Yeah, we -- we lived in an apartment, but it was a small apartment house which we owned, and the two businesses, the wholesale and retail store were downstairs in the same building.

Q: What was the name of your father's business?

A: The name of my father's business was **Jacob Goldmann**, that's a -- that's a --

Q: Uh-huh, mm-hm. And was your family very religious?

A: No, we were not. We were members of a Reform synagogue. In **Germany** it was not called Reform, it was called Liberal, and Liberal was not as liberal as in -- as in this -- Reform was not as reformed as in **America**. It was a little less reformed. For instance, men and women were sitting separately in the synagogue, though we had an organ and otherwise when we consider Reformed service. But -- but -- but the sexes were separated.

Q: And did you observe the hol -- the Jewish holidays at home?

A: Yes, we observed the Jewish holidays. Saturday we did not observe too well, because our store was open, all the stores were open on Saturday.

Q: And what kind of religious training did you have?

A: I -- my religious training was in public school. It was all -- in **Germany** i-it all over like this. You could not choose. Religious education was given to you in -- in public school. That -- that went for other religions, too. Twice a week a rabbi came

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to our s -- or a cantor came to our school and the different religions were separated in the different classroom for these lessons.

Q: So yo-you went to what we would call a public school, today. What was the name of your school?

A: First I went to a private elementary school, and later on to -- to -- to a high school, which is called gymnasium in **Germany**. I -- I got a humanistic education there. So the emphasis was on Latin, Greek and so on. Not only the languages, but also we learned about culture of the old Romans, Greeks and so on. There -- the history, geography and all that.

Q: You said you lived in a mixed neighborhood when you were small. Did you have friends who were not Jewish?

A: Yes, I did. Mo-Most of my friends were Jewish, but I had a number of Christian friends, too.

Q: Did you feel any different than the -- than the Christian children did? Was there - - were there any problems? Did you s-sense that as a young child?

A: No, as a child before **Hitler** came to power, there were no problems wi -- of that kind.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Had a -- a good relationship with all my friends and there was no -- no -- there were no traces of anti-Semitism.

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Q: How would you describe yourself as a young child? Were you dependent on your parents, or were you very independent?

A: Dependent. The only thing, f-for awhile in my childhood we had -- we had a nanny, because my -- both of my parents worked in the business and the first four or five years or so of my childhood, I spent more time actually with my nanny than with my mother, because my mother was mos -- busy in the store.

Q: Mm-hm. Would you describe your family as a middle class, upper class?

A: Middle class.

Q: Di-Did you have a car -- did they have a car?

A: No, they -- at that time people in **Germany** -- very few people had cars.

Q: Any hobbies?

A: In my childhood? Mu-Music was my hobby. I started an early age, I had violin lessons when I was six, piano lessons when I was eight or nine, and later on i-in high school I learned the cello and played in the school orchestra.

Q: Mm-hm. And your relationship with your sister?

A: I think was normal. Was a normal relationship.

Q: Any favorite holidays that you remember?

A: As I -- I guess like in any other country, for children Passover, **Hanukah** and **Purim**.

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Q: Any particular holiday that re-remains in your mind that you'd want to describe?

Any particular holiday that you would want to describe in detail that you remember?

Did you celebrate with your extended family?

A: No, there were no special -- I have no special memories in that respect, as far as holidays are concerned.

Q: And were y -- was -- were your family members political -- your parents politically active?

A: You mean in -- in the congregation or in religious respect? No, they were not.

Q: In -- in -- in **Germany** itself, though. In the country itself were they politically active? In the con -- in the city.

A: No, I don't think so. Actually not.

Q: And were they -- would you describe them as Zionists, did they talk about **Palestine** at all?

A: Yes ,we were interested in -- in Zionism and **Israel**, but not especially active in it. Later on, of course, when **Hitler** came to power, remem -- we were even more interested in -- in Zionism and **Israel**.

Q: What language did you speak at home?

A: German, only German.

Q: Only German. And wha -- what languages did you learn in school?

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A: In school I learned German and in high school, as I said before, a lot of Latin and Greek. Latin started me -- I had -- I had nine years of Latin, six years of Greek and then I had -- I had four years of English in high school.

Q: Oh. [inaudible]

A: And then of course Hebrew in -- in the religious part of our Jewish education.

Q: Did you have a **Bar Mitzvah**?

A: Yes.

Q: Describe that. Can you describe your **Bar Mitzvah**?

A: My **Bar Mitzvah** was on **Rosh Hashanah**, and I hated the idea that there was a full house, that I'd -- I was on the bachelor's side, so I didn't like the idea that I had to do that in front of a full house.

Q: But you -- you say you had a -- you were very musical, so you were -- were you able to do the chanting without a problem?

A: Yes, there was no problem in that respect, no. I chanted it all.

Q: And what about a celebration, did your parents have a celebration for you after the service?

A: No, we -- we had a dinner in our -- as it was customary in **Germany** at that time, people -- people didn't go to catering places or hotels or anything like this. We had a big dinner with all family members present, in our own house.

Q: What kind of presents did you get?

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A: The usual presents. Books, fountain pens, a watch and things like that, as far as I remember.

Q: What -- did you like to read as a child?

A: Yes, I did. I read a lot.

Q: What were your favorite of aw -- who were your favorite authors? Who were your favorite authors?

A: I guess th-the best known German authors, and I don't even remember which. There was one which was very popular at that time, **Leon Kalmay** [indecipherable] he was pronounced in **Germany, Kalmei**. He wrote about American Indians and so on, and he wrote at least 25 books of this type, and th-tha-that -- i-in my childhood was my favorite author.

Q: Any songs from childhood that you remember? Any songs?

A: No. I -- I actually don't remember the kind of songs. I guess German folk songs. And then, of course, we -- we knew some Jewish songs, which are popular in this country, too.

Q: What were their names, what were their titles?

A: The songs? Th-Th-The well-known **Hanukah** songs, and that's all the -- that's all I remember about the songs.

Q: [indecipherable] right. And sports, did you do any kind of physical activity?

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A: I was very active in that respect. I loved to play soccer. Later, when **Hitler** came to power, all Jewish kids joined -- th-th-they founded Jewish sports clubs because we were not allowed to be members of others. So that was also a social outlet for all Jewish kids. So I was very active there. F-F-Field and track, and soccer I played and I was -- I wa -- I was one of the socc -- soccer players on my team and we traveled every Sunday to -- to towns nearby and played games there. I was very active as far as sports are concerned. And I was the -- one of the best athletes in si -- in high school, too. Was my special ambition because being the only Jew in my class, I -- I excelled in that respect, and I knew that the Germans respected people who were physically active and successful.

Q: How old were you when you started high school?

A: I was 10 years old.

Q: So from 10 to 18 y-you were --

A: 19.

Q: -- 19, you were active in sports. Did you have any ideas about a future career?

A: No, I was not -- because the situation changed all the time. When the rights were taken away from all Jews, I -- you had less possibilities and chances t-to go to certain schools and universities. As a matter of fact, shortly after **Hitler** came to power, Jews could not go to colleges any more, and universities. So I had to change my professional plans all the time.

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Q: Let's now talk about when **Hitler** came into power, unless there's anything else you wanted to add pre-**Hitler**.

A: Pre-**Hitler**?

Q: Anything else that you wanted to add about your life then.

A: You mean before **Hitler** came to power?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: No.

Q: Okay. What is -- okay, so it i -- you were 18 years old -- or 17 and a half when he came into power.

A: Yes.

Q: What is your first recollection of **Hitler**?

A: My first recollection of **Hitler** is shortly after he came to power, there was a boycott of all Jewish stores, all over **Germany**. That me -- it meant that storm troopers stood in front of -- a couple of storm troopers stood in front of all Jewish stores and stopped people from going in. The -- well, that lasted only a couple of days and then they discontinued that, but it made a deep impression on me that time.

Q: Now, when he came into power, you were still in the gymnasium?

A: Right.

Q: And were there any changes in the beginning among your fellow students and among the faculty when he came in, in the beginning?

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A: No, in the beginning, hardly any changes took place, this all happened later, very gradually. So that was one reason why we all thought it might end very suddenly again. We thought it couldn't last, that **Hitler** would be thrown out again, and we thought it only for a short while. We couldn't believe that this would stay forever. But later on of course, it got more serious.

Q: In the beginning, did you talk things over with your parents about the changes when **Hitler** came into power? Were they open with you?

A: Oh yes. These were the only people you could talk with about things like them. We were always very careful to make remarks about **Hitler** in the Nazi time, so I spoke only to my -- mainly to my family about this. Actually, my father was not alive any more when **Hitler** came to power. My father died in 1927.

Q: Wh-What did he die from?

A: He had a stroke, he was awa-away -- away on vacation and he -- he died of a stroke.

Q: So did your mother keep the business going?

A: My mother kept the business, and her sister joined -- joined her and to ha -- to -- to be helpful to her, and this way they could keep the business going.

Q: And the bi -- business was successful up til -- up til the **Hitler** time.

A: For the time.

Q: Yeah.

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A: For the time being.

Q: Did you notice any changed attitudes on the part of your non-Jewish friends in early to middle 1933?

A: In the beginning there was hardly any change in 1933, but 30 -- '34, and shortly after that, it slowly changed. In the beginning I was still very friendly with all of -- we were a class of 25, who stayed together by the way, until the nine years were over, so we -- we were always together. So I was still very friendly with most -- almost all of them. And then --

Q: This is boys and girls?

A: Yes, boys and girls, right. And they kept on talking to me, we had friendly relations, but slowly they all joined the **Hitler** youth, the Nazi organization. And they didn't stop talking to me, but they were -- they were still more distant. And slowly this changed too, for the worse.

Q: What about your teachers?

A: My teachers behaved all right. They didn't show any anti-Semitism, even actually up to the end when -- when I left. When I -- when I -- when high school was over. But I was banned from certain activities in school. When they were in nationalistic celebrations or national holidays, in -- in which I always had taken part of before, we were banned from these thing -- I was banned from there, which I actually didn't mind. I was very happy I didn't have to take part.

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Q: At this time did you feel very German or very Jewish?

A: I felt very German in the beginning, but this changed when **Hitler** came to power, of course, it's changed completely. And a-at that time I was of -- felt more Jewish than I had before.

Q: So w -- do you remember the book burning? O-Or was there book burning in **Fürth**? Was there ba --

A: No, there weren't any book burnings in **Fürth** which I was aware of. I don't think there were any.

Q: Mm-hm. And how aware were you of what was happening in the rest of **Germany** at this time?

A: Actually, we were in an -- in an area of **Germany** which was very, very Nazi. Nurem -- we were right next to **Nuremberg**, which it was the -- the place where every year the Nazi party had a --

Q: A rally?

A: It was more than a rally, actually. It was a -- they were -- can almost say a million of -- of storm troopers and all kinds of party members gathered in the -- in **Nuremberg**. And of course, being -- **Fürth** being so close was -- was affected in that way, too. So the place was full of Nazis every year in fall.

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Q: And what is it like for a young Jewish person to see these men in these uniforms?

What -- what were your -- what were your feelings when you looked at storm troopers and others in military garb?

A: Of course we didn't like it at all and we felt -- we were looking forward to the day -- it last five, six days. We were looking forward to the day when that was over. In the beginning we were not actually afraid that something would happen to us, but I -- I know that a couple of Jewish people were beaten up on the street and insulted and that happened, by the way, in other ways, too. Slowly, 1933 - '34 - '35, it got worse, and people were insulted on the streets. They called us dirty Jews and many times they -- they hit us, especially the young people.

Q: We-Were you ever attacked?

A: I personally was never attacked, but I was insulted a couple of times. People came over to me and insulted me.

Q: What kind of things would they say to you?

A: Dirty Jew, and you should get out of **Germany** and things like that.

Q: And -- and what would you do when -- when you were insulted?

A: There isn't much you could do, we just try to walk away as fast as we could.

Q: Well, did you tell your parents?

A: Yes, I always told my parents about it.

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Q: And your mother's business, did it continue to -- to be in effect after **Hitler** came in?

A: Yes, it -- it kept on going for awhile, then it got worse and worse because of all the anti-Semitic propaganda in **Germany**. Customers stayed away and slowly business got worse.

Q: Was your mother's business boycotted?

A: Just a -- no, just on that one day in 1933 when there was that German boycott, which covered all of **Germany**.

Q: And so you finished school, you finished the gymnasium, and then what happened?

A: When I was finished I had -- I had to make the decision what to do after it, which was --

Q: Le-Let's back up. What kind of graduation did you have from the gymnasium? Was there a ceremony, were you recognized at that time?

A: There was no -- no celebration or anything like this. We -- the one that took place in school, I don't think I took part of. Yeah, I remember now. I was -- I was a member of the s -- of the -- I played piano pretty well, and I accompanied so -- acco -- I was supposed to accompany a couple of singers at the final celebrations at the graduation. And I was supposed to play two solos, piano solos, and that was in 1933. So in the last moment I was told that I couldn't do it.

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Q: And how does a young man respond to that?

A: I was very disappointed, of course. That was my first chance to perform in public and I was -- I had looked forward to it, so I was disappointed.

Q: Were you angry?

A: I think I was angry, yes.

Q: What was the reasoning they gave you?

A: That due to the political situation, I -- I could not take part in this.

Q: Were you recognized at all during the graduation ceremony, or were the Jewish students recognized at all?

A: No, being the only Jew in my class, I -- I was the only one. So of course, they -- they told me that before already.

Q: How is it that you were the only Jew? Because of the neighborhood you lived in?

A: No, some of the other Jewish kids went to different schools, different high schools, which did not -- which were not humanistic gymnasium. And it just happened that in my -- in -- in my age group I was the only one.

Q: What --

A: Can you -- can you excuse me for a second?

Q: Sure. **[tape break]**

A: When I had to make a choice what to do after high school, i -- it was very hard.

As I said before, you could not -- colleges and universities were not open to you any

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more. So I, be-being very much interested in music, I was looking for some activity for something to do in connection with music. An-And I thought of becoming a cantor in the synagogue. There was a Jewish teacher's college in **Berlin**, and I asked a couple of my -- we had some acquaintances which were -- knew a lot about music and s -- and voice and singing and so on. So I consulted some of our friends, sang for them, and asked them if -- if they thought my voice was good enough to be a cantor. So I finally heard of s -- of the Jewish teacher's college in **Berlin**. And -- so, in other words, I would have to be trained as a cantor and as a teacher, mainly as a teacher, of course. This was a teacher's college, which specialized, of course, in Jewish education and public school and everything like this. So I applied for that and I was accepted and started in -- in spring 1936, and I was there for three years in **Berlin**.

Q: Was that hard for you to -- to leave your mother? She was a widow, did she -- was she positive about your moving, or did she not want you to?

A: Now, if she -- if she felt bad about it, she didn't let me know. Besides that, my sister was still there too, but it was quite a move f-for me, at the age of 19 to go from the small town -- small city to **Berlin**, which is -- was a city of four million people.

Q: Had -- after your father died, did you kind of feel like you were the man in the family? Did you feel a responsibility? You were only 12 years old when he died. Wa -- a-after your father passed away --

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A: So, what is your question?

Q: My question is, did you f-feel like you had to be the man in the family because there was no man there?

A: No, actually not. At that time I was too young for that, at 12 years. I didn't feel I had any responsibility in that respect. But there were my uncles of -- there were two uncles of mine living in **Fürth**, too, who of course w -- tried to help my mother manage things and so on.

Q: So now you go off to **Berlin**, an-and what was your experience there at this teacher's college?

A: It was very hard for me in the beginning because I felt very lonesome. I didn't know a soul in **Berlin**, and -- but that's -- got slowly used to it and I did pretty well in school there. I had some voice teachers, too. One was one of the best known cantors in **Berlin**. The other one was an opera singer at the **Berlin** opera. And they gi -- first one, then the other one gave me singing lessons, so I improved my voice to a certain extent.

Q: And their names? The cantor's name and the singer's name?

A: The cantor's name was **Davidson** and the -- the opera singer's name was **Relane Goodman**. He was pretty well known.

Q: And so you -- you were with all other Jewish students at the time, because this was a Jewish college.

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A: Right, that was a Jewish college, right. A Jewish teacher's college. Half of it consisted of regular teacher's classes and teaching. The other half was Jewish education because we had to teach religion, too. So I -- I -- a lot, a lot of Hebrew, of course, and everything connected with the Jewish religion, customs and ceremonies. Some **Talmud** studies we had too, just to give us a taste of it.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Fred Goldman**. This is tape number one, side **B**. And you were talking about your experience at this Jewish college in **Berlin**. And all the students, of course, were Jewish. What was it like to study with only Jews, as opposed to your gymnasium experience?

A: It, of course, was a pleasant experience to be together with Jewish kids all the time. In that respect, I liked it very much. We were very good friends to each other. Was a class of about 24 boys and girls.

Q: I imagine you saw many swastikas and many flags hanging, not only in **Fürth**, but of course in **Berlin**. How did that make you feel, to see them?

A: No I -- everybody got very fast used to that, it was something that you see everywhere, and you didn't even notice it any more.

Q: Mm-hm. And when someone would **heil Hitler**, did that upset you?

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A: The same thing, you got used to that too. After awhile it didn't bother you too much any more.

Q: Any experiences on the street when you were in **Berlin**, if you were walking down the street? Did you look very Jewish?

A: Yeah, I -- I looked Jewish, of course. But in -- in the big city of four million, you di-disappeared in the crowd. And you could do in -- in certain ways it was even better in **Berlin** than in **Fürth**, because you could go to the places here still. In **Fürth** you couldn't even go to a swimming pool, or in -- all the -- in -- in the rest of **Germany** you couldn't go to a swimming pool, to theaters or movies or any place like this. In fir -- in **Berlin** you could do that, because you just disappeared in the crowd. You could even go to the opera and to concerts. So in that respect, life in **Berlin** was easier than in **Fürth**.

Q: And how much communication did you have with your mother and your sister?

A: I spoke to them on the telephone, I guess once a week.

Q: And how were they managing back in **Fürth**?

A: That -- it seems they managed all right without me, but business got worse at that point. Th-The longer **Hitler** was at pow -- in power, the worse economic conditions for Jews became.

Q: And how did your mother support the family then?

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A: There was still enough business just to barely support us, but it -- I know it was not easy for her to have me in **Berlin**, of course. Did not help our financial situation.

Q: Did you have to pay tuition to go to this college?

A: Yes, I had to pay tuition there.

Q: What -- and where did you live when you were a student in **Berlin**?

A: I lived in a furnished room with a Jewish family, not far from our teacher's college.

Q: And what kind of experience was that?

A: I had no special experiences in t -- I mean, they were -- I was pr -- became pretty close to the family, which made it easy for me to be alone in **Berlin**.

Q: You had previously mentioned the **Nuremberg** rallies. Did you ever go to any of them, or hear them from a distance?

A: No, you could not go. You -- you stayed away from them as far as you could. It never entered our minds to a -- to attend these things. You stayed away from -- from the -- these Nazi hordes as -- as much as you possibly could.

Q: Any close Jewish friends that you could talk things over with?

A: In **Fürth**, yes, but a -- a lot of them left **Germany**, emigrated over the years.

Everybody tried to get out of **Germany**, of course. And this way it was not easier.

On one hand you wanted to get out of **Germany**, on the other hand you didn't know where to go to -- and especially older people found it very difficult to leave, because

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all -- they had all their roots in **Germany**, their livelihoods, their friends, family.

And for a young person, of course, it was easier to leave, unless you were -- of course, you -- you were very attached to your family.

Q: Did your family have any contacts in the -- in the **United States** at that time?

A: My mother had a cousin in -- in **America**, in -- in **York, Pennsylvania**. He was a fairly wealthy man and he had vouched for quite a few people already to come to **America**, but when we asked him he couldn't do it any more. He must have vouched for maybe 20 people, and when you reach a certain point, you couldn't do it any more. So he had to say no to us in the beginning, but later on, for some reason he could do it again, and he asked -- he asked our family if they -- who -- who should -- he could vouch for one more person, who should come. And because I was the only man in the family and more in danger of being persecuted by the Nazis, so my family agreed to send -- to let me go.

Q: We-We'll get to that in a moment. You heard about the **anschluss** into -- into **Austria**, and --

A: Yes.

Q: -- what did that mean to you?

A: It didn't mean much to me except I didn't -- we didn't like the idea that something like this could happen. We -- we thought ma -- there mi -- m-more

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countries might -- might be occupied by **Germany**, which actually happened later on. We saw this the beginning of something very bad.

Q: Is that when you realized that what was happening may not be temporary?

A: That was the time when -- when most Jews realized that things would not get any -- an-any better any more. Before we always thought **Hitler's** regime might stop any moment it ca -- when it came to a certain point, and it would not get worse. At that time we realized we couldn't stay. That's when people -- many people really started looking to get out seriously. Many, of course, had left already in 1933, but these were the Jews who lived in very small towns, in villages, mostly in south **Germany** and they were worse off than the Jews who lived in b -- in the big cities, because everybody knew everybody and people were beaten up and sent to concentration camps in these small place, much more than b -- in big cities, at that time. But after this happened at the **anschluss** and later on **Kristallnacht**, we came to the conclusion that there was no way of staying here.

Q: What was your experience during **Kristallnacht**?

A: In the middle of the night we heard a lot of noise, at maybe two, three o'clock in the morning, and the bra -- the breaking of glass. And then we looked out of the window, we saw that storm troopers marched all over the place and knocked in store windows and went inside and then they came -- they went upstairs out -- in these houses an-a-and arrested all the Jewish people. An -- and that -- that happened with

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each and every Jew in the whole place, and happened all over **Germany**. And then they -- they burned all synagogues. And I knew it -- I could see that our synagogue in **Fürth** was burning at the time, too.

Q: Were you in **Berlin** or **Fürth** during **Kristallnacht**?

A: I -- I was still in **Fürth** at that time. No, that was after I came back.

Q: This is November 1938.

A: I was back in **Fürth** already, th -- after my three years in **Berlin** when the kr -- **Kristallnacht** was November 9th, 1938, and th-th-they t -- they took us all to a large square in the middle of the city and we had to stand there for five hours, men, women, children, everybody. Then they let women and children go home. The men were taken to a big hall, which had been donated by a Jew, by the way. And we spent all day in there. And they took men, took them up to the stage an-and beat them. And we had to watch it, we were sitting underneath, i-inside the hall and we had to watch everything. And that went on all day like this. And in the evening, about six, seven o'clock, we all had to pass a certain table, and we were -- there th-th-they decided what to do with us. So the majority of the men were sent to concentration camps, and to prisons. My -- my future father-in-law, for instance, was sent to pri -- was taken to prison and many other men were taken to concentration camps. And when I -- when I passed the table, they heard that I -- that I was almost ready to emigrate, my papers were almost ready. And they -- on

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account of that they let me go. I was very lucky, cause I was able to go home. But the majority of the people did not. It's --

Q: Mm-hm. Le -- le-let's back up a little bit. You went to the teacher's college in **Berlin** for three years?

A: Right, yes, for three years.

Q: And that -- and then you completed the course, and then what happened?

A: Then I wa -- I was trying to find a job as a cantor teacher and I -- I had two auditions, I was in two cities in **Germany**. And in one place they didn't take me because I was t -- they found me too young, they wanted some -- somebody who -- who was a little older. And in the -- in the second case I don't know, they d-didn't accept me. So I went home, then I realized that it -- it was better for me not to accept a job, and try -- rather, try to -- to speed up my emigration. And that was a good thing, because I know some of the others who accepted jobs as teachers never got out of **Germany**. In that respect I was lucky.

Q: And who did you work through to get the papers? You said you had that relative who had already completed the 20 affidavits -- i-in the **United States**, you said you had a relative who had sponsored 20 people, it -- did you work through him also?

A: What do you mean by work for him?

Q: No, no, work through him. I mean how -- how did you make arrangements to be able to leave?

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A: No, he's -- he's -- he must have sent a -- a letter to the American consulate in **Stuttgart** in **Germany**, and they contacted me and then I was invited to come to the American consulate in **Stuttgart**, and that was the beginning. An-And then I tri -- I tried to get -- the-they wanted a certain document, which sort of -- many -- in **Germany** when you moved, and thi -- it went for anybody, if you moved from one city or town to another one, you had to get permission by police. And that wa -- didn't go only for Jewish people, for everybody as th -- might still be the same nowadays, I don't know. So, and they told me I needed a certain paper, a declaration that I didn't owe any money to anybody or the taxes [**indecipherable**]. And I wrote to **Berlin** because I had been there before, a-and they -- I didn't get an answer. So my da -- emigration depended on -- on this document. And I wrote three times and never got an answer, so I decided I had to go there in person. So I made a trip to **Berlin** and I had to go to the Gestapo building, which everybody dreaded at the time. Nobody wanted to go there. So I went in, I -- I -- I met a -- an official there, and he yelled at me right away, he said, what's the matter with you, are you crazy? You're writing three letters to me? Do you think we have nothing better to do than that? I feel like sending you to a concentration camp. And -- and then he said a few more words I forgot, and then he let me go. But I d -- I didn't know whether it was okayed or not. About five days later I got the paper and -- and he -- I had asked for.

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It was sent to me by mail. And that made it possible for me to leave **Germany** after I had gotten that.

Q: How -- when did you get this final paper in -- how much before **Kristallnacht**?

Or had you gotten it before **Kristallnacht**?

A: What final paper?

Q: That paper you said that you -- you said five days later you received the permission.

A: It was after **Kristallnacht**.

Q: So how did they know, when you came up on **Kristallnacht** you came up to that table, how did they know that you were --

A: They took my --

Q: -- getting permission to go to the **United States**?

A: They took my word for it, believe it or not. So in that respect I didn't have any problem.

Q: Hm. When you were -- were you with your mother and your sister in the square, or -- y-you said when you were all called up the next day. Were you standing with her?

A: The women and children were sent -- were let g -- were let go, they le-let -- they send them home.

Q: But prior to that, were you standing with her?

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A: Yes, in -- while we were standing in that public square we were together. And then they -- they said, all women and children go home now, an-and the men have to come with us. And we were taken to that hall.

Q: What was your mother's state of mind then?

A: She was very much afraid, she was scared. When we were taken out of our house, there was ou-our two aunts were along with us, and they -- they gave them the push with the -- with the boots to re -- to -- to make her walk a little faster and things like that.

Q: And the overall atmosphere there, of the Jews in that square was what?

A: No, people were mu -- very much afraid, of course. They did not know what they had intended to do with us. But everybody, I guess, was too much o-occupied with his own problems at that moment, with his own worries.

Q: And then you came back home to your mother and sister, after they released you.

What did **America** mean to you at that point? You were around 23 years old. What did **America** mean to you?

A: **America** didn't mean too much to me e-except that it was ow -- actually our only hope to get out and to ha -- to escape from all this.

Q: You knew English by then, you said you had taken English in school.

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A: Yes, I -- I n -- I knew -- I knew English and in -- by the way, in -- in our teacher's college, we also had English classes. When I came back from **Berlin** I took private English lessons to -- to improve my English.

Q: Why?

A: By that time I knew I was -- h-hoping that I was going to **America**.

Q: And so did you finally get a job in **Fürth** before -- obviously before you left?

A: No, in -- in our own synagogue, in our Reform synagogue, I -- they engaged me as a cantor on the high holidays and shortly after. Our former -- our other cantor emigrated himself, and they didn't have a cantor, so for maybe two or three months I was the cantor in that -- in our home synagogue at that time.

Q: And how was the family business doing then?

A: The family business got worse and worse all the time. Of course, customers didn't come to us, either because they were anti-Semitic, or because they were afraid to go into Jewish stores. So it -- it -- and another thing happened, kristall -- a-after **Kristallnacht**, about one or two days later, we were told to come to th -- to police headquar -- not police headquarters, the city government in -- in city hall, and we were forced to sign papers that we relinquished our houses, our property, our businesses and everything, we had to sign -- we had -- just had to sign it away. And I remember on the way out when we went home, my mother and I and my sister, some people came down the stairway in the city hall and they were bleeding. So we

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asked them what happened. So they said n-n-not much, we just fell -- fell down the stairway. But we -- we know that they were -- they were beaten up, but -- they were people who refused to sign, so they forced them this way to sign these papers. So after that we hel -- we had almost nothing to live on.

Q: How would you describe your mother's state of mind? She was what, probably in her -- was she in her late 40's, early 50's --

A: Her 50's.

Q: She was in her 50's. How stoic was she? Would you describe her as a strong woman?

A: She must have been a strong woman because the way she reacted and first of all, she had a-all the responsibility for me and my sister and the business. The business didn't exist any more after that, but she -- she had to be strong to go through all this the way she did. She had a lot of help by my aunt, of course, and my uncles.

Q: When you came back -- so you're -- she did not have the business after that, or once she had to sign over the ownership, then what happened?

A: She couldn't go into the business any more though it was in our b -- in our house, in our building. And then they -- they tried to sell the merchandise and -- for almost nothi -- for almost nothing, maybe a tenth of what it was worth, or something like that, and she got only part of that.

Q: A-And --

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A: She was completely impoverished now of course, and I remember sh-she had -- she asked -- had to ask some other relatives of ours for a -- a loan or something like this, at that time. What she lived on after I -- later, after I left and went to **America**, I don't even know.

Q: So then, how soon after were you able to leave? How soon after **Kristallnacht** were you able to leave **Germany**?

A: **Kristallnacht** was November ninth and I left early in January.

Q: How did you make those arrangements, which boat and so forth.

A: I -- I knew some other people who had made the same arrangement, and they -- they helped me, they told me where to go and what to do. I had to correspond, of course with the -- especially with the American consulate in **Stuttgart** at that time. And I contacted the **Holland America** line for my passage to -- from **Holland** to **New York**. And I know after th -- af -- after it was -- this was paid, there wasn't really much left for my mother. I arrived here with 12 dollars in [indecipherable]

Q: And so your mother gave you the money t-to pay for the passage?

A: Yes. That was the family money, you know.

Q: And w-were you in agreement that you should be the one to have left? Did you agree with that also? Was that something you felt was the right decision?

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A: Yes. Yes, I was in agreement with that. I really believed the fact that I was -- being a man I was more in danger than the rest of my family, sister, mother, grandmother, aunts and so on.

Q: Mm-hm. So when it came time to leave, what did you take with you? Did you take anything special?

A: I ha -- I -- I -- e-everything I took along was two suitcases, which I carried in my two hands. That's all I -- I could take along. Though I'd be -- I had intended before to take a lot more, and we had bought a lot before it -- about a year before I left, we had bought a lot of things for me, clothes and ba -- a fan and all kinds of things. And a -- I'd a -- I -- I couldn't take all that along, of course.

Q: Because they told you you couldn't?

A: Yes. They told us that time that that's all you could take along, just what you could carry with your hands.

Q: Besides clothes, what did you take?

A: That was about all I could take, clothes. There wasn't much more left.

Q: So, could you take any music, any instruments?

A: No, I could not take any instruments along, but a couple of music books I think I took along.

Q: Family photographs?

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A: Very few. And that was something I really missed very much, but later on, when I was in **America**, I -- I had ways of getting some pictures, which I hadn't --which I missed very much and which I didn't have. So I was able to get some of these pictures [**indecipherable**]

Q: What was it like to say goodbye to your family?

A: It was very, very hard because at that time I -- I -- I was afraid I would never see them again, which really happened. I ho -- my whole family died in concentration camps, each and every one of them. I was the only survivor of my family. The same with my wife, by the way, too. She lost her whole family.

Q: Where did you leave from? A-After you left **Fürth**, where did you then go?

A: My -- my boat left -- I had to go to **Rotterdam, Holland**.

Q: H-How did you get there?

A: By train. And I'll never forget the moment when I crossed the border. It was so -- such a relief.

Q: An-Any trouble on the train up to the border?

A: No, I didn't have any trouble, but I know that many other people did. They had trouble when they -- when they crossed the border. I didn't have any problems in that respect.

Q: What were your thoughts upon leaving **Germany**? What were your thoughts upon leaving **Germany**?

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A: Good riddance, I guess. And then, of course I had to -- I felt very bad of my family. Even I didn't know at the time yet what would really happen to them, but I didn't have much hope.

Q: And you got to **Rotterdam** and got on what boat?

A: It was a Dutch ship, **Zaandan, Z-a-a-n-d-a-n**. There wa -- that was a ship belonging to the hum -- to **Holland America** line; it was one of the smaller ships.

Q: Did you know anybody als -- who was going with you, or were y -- was anybody else that you knew that was accompanying you?

A: No, I befriended a young man from a town near ours. We be -- spent all our time together on the ship. When we ar -- we ar -- we arrived in **New York** and said goodbye to each other and the same evening we both lived in the same apartment, by sheer accident.

Q: Tell me about the voyage going over. Who else was on the boat?

A: It was without any incidents, it was pleasant. It was a completely different life all of a sudden, of course.

Q: And so you ha -- you stayed in a cabin and had regular meals. How long was th- the voyage?

A: I think eight days, if I remember right.

Q: Mm-hm. And your first view of **New York**?

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A: It was very -- I was very much impressed when I saw **New York**. I didn't have to go to **Ellis Island**, that was not in use any more at that time, and I was processed outside **New York City**, on the boat. An immigration agent came on board -- an immigration inspector came on board and took care of our papers and everything, so I didn't have to go to **Ellis Island** or any -- any other place like that.

Q: Were there many other Jewish refugees like you on board?

A: There were a few more, yes. And then, of course, this young man an -- whom I befriended.

Q: So who were the other passengers?

A: This I re -- I don't remember. I -- I --

Q: Di-Di-Did you stay among the other Jewish refugees? Were they young people like you?

A: Yeah, there were some others like me, but not -- not too many. Must have been regular travelers, people who do a lot of traveling.

Q: Did you talk about your chil -- your -- your background with the other young Jewish refugees?

A: Yes, I certainly did. We all compared out experiences.

Q: Were they all from **Germany**?

A: Yes, they were all from **Germany**.

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Q: And what was it like to put your foot down on American soil when you first arrived?

A: It was a wonderful moment, I remember that. And I -- then I looked, of course -- I had relatives in **New York** who were supposed to pick me up from the boat, and I had trouble finding them, so I -- my -- I couldn't pay much attention to anything else, but I finally found them, and they had arranged for a -- a place for me to live.

Q: They had come down to the pier to meet you?

A: Right. They came -- they came to meet me at the boat and they took me home. And they had fren -- rented a furnished room for me in **New York**, and that's the place where -- where the other friend of mine also showed up at the same day.

Q: But what was his name?

A: **Kurt Hirschfeld -- Hirschfield.**

Q: And so then what did you do?

A: Then I tried looking for a job, and at that time it wasn't so easy. It was still the e -
- the depression going on at that time.

Q: We're talking about January 1939.

A: There was still a depression. That was the end of the depression, and it was very hard to find jobs at that time.

Q: And you're 23 and a half years old.

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A: Right, yes. And first of all I tried to find a job as a cantor. I never expected to get a job as teacher because of my heavy German accent, so I never expected to find that. But as a cantor I had some hope. But it just happened that at that time all the European cantors arrived in **New York City** in those years, and then there was a lot of competition. And I -- I auditioned in a couple of places, in a couple of synagogues, but I guess the competition was too strong. So then I looked for any kind of a job, and I -- I found job in a department store as a -- as a busboy. That's **Klein Union Square**, that was a pretty well known place in **New York**. There were many other refugees working there too, and I had to do the basic things, I had to pick up dre-dresses which fell down to the floor by the hundreds, and brought -- did stock work and all that.

End of Tape One, Side B

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Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Fred Goldman**. This is tape number two, side **A**, and you were talking about your experience working at **Klein's** on **Union Square**.

A: So I stayed there for awhile. By the way, we were paid 30 cents an hour and we ha-had to work 48 hours a week at -- and a lot of overtime. Whenever they had a sale on for the next day, they kept us until 12, one o'clock at night. It was forced overtime.

Q: How -- how close were you living to the store?

A: About 45 minutes by subway.

Q: And wh-what did you do in the time that you weren't working? What activities did you do in the time that you weren't working?

A: When I was not working? I looked for some other kind of work [**indecipherable**] and I -- I worked in a -- I was hired in a professional choir, I sang. It was a Jewish choir. We sang at special Jewish occasions and we sang carnedi-- **Carnegie Hall** and in the Russian tea room, and at the World's Fair, and all kinds of things. And we had rehearsals almost every night in addition to my regular work. And concerts maybe every two weeks or so, and we got even paid for the rehearsals, one dollar a rehearsal.

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Q: What was the name of the choir that you sang in?

A: **Vinaver** choir. **V-i-n-a-v-e-r**.

Q: Was that someone's name, or was that the name of the town?

A: That was the name of the man who do -- was in charge of the choir, the conductor and the one who did the whole thing.

Q: And what kind of communication did you have with your mother and sister once you got to the **United States**?

A: With my mother and sister? In the beginning, of course, we corresponded all the time, but then -- then the war broke out and once **America** entered the war we could not write to them then, we could not write to each other any more.

Q: Let's talk about September '39, when the war broke out. How did you hear about that?

A: When the war broke out with **England**, you mean?

Q: No, no, in -- when **Germany** invaded **Poland**.

A: Wa -- i -- from that time on we could not write any more. We could write only Red Cross letters, and that happened -- we couldn't do that too often, so I had very few letters from them, actually. My sister also tried to get -- tried to go to **England**. There was a possibility for a young woman to get -- to go to **England** as a -- as a domestic h-helper, and she got a job like this. But three days before the war -- no, she was supposed to go there and begin -- in the beginning of September the war

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broke out, and -- about three days before she would have gone, so she -- she couldn't go. And the same o -- a similar thing happened to her later on, she was in the concentration camp, she was in **Bergen-Belsen** and three weeks before the war ended, she died of typhus, before she would have been liberated by the British. So she missed two chances.

Q: So **Germany** invades **Poland**, and then what do you -- you stay at your work?

What -- what did you do?

A: I kept on doing the same work, then when -- when the war broke out, I got a job in a -- in a uniform factory. They make uniforms for the American forces, and I had a job which was a little better.

Q: In other words, you stayed there til -- til **Pearl Harbor**, is that what you're saying?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: So 1939 and '40 and '41, you stayed at the department store.

A: Right, and then I -- th-then I -- I was drafted to the -- into the army and spent three years in the army.

Q: And did you think about becoming a citizen?

A: Yes, I became a -- I -- as a matter of fact I became a citizen [indecipherable] a short time after I entered the army, which was a little fa -- a little earlier than it would have been if I had not been in the army.

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Q: So the war broke out, des -- on December seventh, and then you said you went to work in a factory making uniforms.

A: Right, yes.

Q: And then when did you go into the army?

A: I went into the army in March '43.

Q: And did you have any kind of social life when you were living in **New York**, while you were working at the department store or in the uniform factory? Were you with other young people? Any kind of social life besides the choir?

A: Yes, I -- yes I -- th -- first of all I met my f -- my fu -- my wife there.

[indecipherable]

Q: How -- how did you meet your wife?

A: I met her by accident on the street, I -- I knew her. She was also from **Fürth**, and by accident we met on the street and we got married about nine months later or so, 10 months later, and --

Q: Did you know that she had left **Fürth** and come to the **United States**?

A: No, I didn't -- I didn't even know that. So I was very much surprised to see her and we were both very happy because it was a -- a memory of our old days, which meant a lot at that time. And we bo -- we were both alone in **New York**, so --

Q: But what was she doing?

A: She worked in a -- in a -- she did household work.

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Q: And -- and her name then? Her name then?

A: **Ruth Schuster.**

Q: And her family was back in **Germany**?

A: Her family was back in **Germany** too, right, in **Fürth**. And they all perished too, later on, each and every one of them.

Q: So you just met her on the street, just by chance?

A: We met by chance on the street. We made a date for the same night. We both had other dates and we b-b-broke them both.

Q: Did she live near you, is that how you happened to meet her on the street?

A: No, she -- I lived in uptown **Manhattan**, she lived in midtown **Manhattan**, something like this. About half an hour away by subway.

Q: Mm-hm. Whereabouts were you living? Where were you living?

A: I lived in **Washington Heights**, it's the northern part of **Manhattan**.

Q: Mm-hm. And then you got married, and you said nine months later, and then where did you live then?

A: And we lived in -- also in -- in **Washington Heights**, in u-upper **Washington Heights**, in a different part.

Q: And -- and you both continued to work at your same jobs, and then you said you went to work on the uniform factory, and then you got drafted. And where did you start your training?

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A: I was -- I -- in **Fort Dix, New Jersey**, like everybody else and we were all classified -- we were supposed to be classified according to our f -- our previous experiences and then -- and professions. So I told them I had a Master's degree in education and what I did before and all that. And then when they heard I worked in the department store as a floor boy, they classified me as a laborer, but they -- they did write down that I spoke German. So I -- I became a member of the medical corps, and was about to be sent overseas to the **Pacific** in the field hospital, and two weeks before I was supposed to ship out, I was reclassified. They found out that I speak -- they finally noticed that I speak German and I ba -- I became a member of military intelligence. I -- I went to fort -- to a camp in -- in **Maryland**, near **Hagerstown**, **Camp Ritchie**, which was a t -- a training camp for military intelligence, not only for German speaking, but for other languages too. And I -- I -- I went to school there for a couple of months. I was promoted from private to staff sergeant after I -- when I graduate from the -- from there. And then I went to -- I was sent to **Europe** to interrogate war prisoners.

Q: What was it like to put on an American uniform?

A: Oh, I was very proud of that, I really enjoyed that. I was very happy about that.

Q: What did it mean to you?

A: Then I re -- I really realized that I was an American, more than before.

Q: So you had to leave your wife then.

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A: Yes.

Q: Was that difficult?

A: It was difficult, but I -- I was al -- always hoping to -- to be able to go home every couple of weeks you know, and -- and to furlough a -- a day off. And I was sent to -- first I was -- but that was before I was in military intelligence, I was in th -- in the -- in a camp right outside **New York City**. I'm just trying to remember the name of that. It was ha -- **Halloran** Hospital on **Staten Island**. And they needed me there because they had a lot of German prisoners, and I had to work as an interrogat -- as a interpreter and I had to go around with nurses and doctors, had to make the rounds when they saw the patients. They used me as an interpreter.

Q: Who were the patients? Who were these patients?

A: They were German prisoners from **Africa**. They were members of the **Africa** corps. These were all fanatics -- fanatical Nazis who were volunteers. And of course w -- being prisoners they changed their attitudes very much, were not so fanatical any more. And they depended a lot on me, of course, so was -- they very ni -- were very nice to me.

Q: Did you let them know you were Jewish?

A: No. They didn't even know that I was German. They -- when they asked me where I learned my German I told them I learned it in high school and they were satisfied with that. They didn't question it for a moment.

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Q: And how did you feel inside looking at these German soldiers?

A: I hated them, of course, and I -- I -- I used them for certain purposes. I was able to go home almost every night to -- to **Manhattan**, and I came home at two, three o'clock in the morning, I was always tired. Of course, I had to get up at 5:30 again. So there were a lot of empty beds. So I rested on these -- I slept on these beds, and I put these German soldiers in -- up as guards on both ends of the -- of -- of the room in case my own people came and checked on me. So they guarded my sleep. So I -- I -- I took advantage of them.

Q: Had you changed your name at this point?

A: Not at this point but later on when I was in military intelligence, I was advised to change my name because my family was still supposed to be alive, or at least I did not know any different. I thought I'm di -- in case I'd become a prisoner, it might be harmful for them or even for -- and for me too. They advised me to change my name. So within one day I re -- changed my name. I didn't know what to changed it to -- what to change it to. So I took a telephone book and the -- the first name I ran into was **Stevens**. So I changed my name to **Fred Stevens**. At the same time my name -- my wife's name was **Goldman**. Who -- we both had different names at that time.

Q: So -- so -- but up to that point you had been **Siegfried Goldman**?

A: Right.

Q: And then --

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A: Then I was **Fred Stevens**.

Q: Then you became **Fred Stevens**.

A: Sar -- Sergeant **Fred Stevens**.

Q: And -- and then you said you were sent abroad?

A: Then I was sent to -- to the European theater [**indecipherable**] **Germany**. First to
fr -- to **England** and **France** and then I -- to **France** for the front lines, and I had to
interrogate war prisoners.

Q: These are German prisoners?

A: German prisoners.

Q: And -- and again, what was your re-response, your reaction?

A: Pardon me?

Q: And again, what was your reaction when you talked to these German soldiers?

A: In the beginning it was a strange experience, but later on I got used to that too.

And I -- whenever I had a chance, I tried to get information from these prisoners
about what happened to the Jews, to -- to th -- to European Jews under -- under

Hitler, and -- but they couldn't tell me much. One of them was from

Theresienstadt and -- and later on I found out my mother actually was at **Theresien**

-- maybe -- I think I knew it already, at that time. I had a Red Cross letter. That was

the last letter I ever -- I ever got from my mother, from **Theresienstadt**. And just

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one soldier was from **Theresienstadt**, so I tried to find out as much as I could, but he didn't know much, either.

Q: How did it feel to go back to **Europe**?

A: I had mixed feelings about it, of course. I hated the people, of course, and especially these German soldier I got in touch with. And that was my main feeling, actually, about it. Actually, the feelings were not mixed.

Q: Did you tell other people about that? Di -- were the other army personnel that you came in contact, aware of your background?

A: N-Not normally, but I remember one instance at the end -- near the end of the war when everything moved very fast and we marched through **Germany** -- I mean, I didn't march, we dr-drove through **Germany**. Be -- we went through the -- the small town in -- in south **Germany** where my -- my grandfather was born. So I told my fellow Americans that we are going through the town where my grandfather was born. I remember I -- I -- I told them that time.

Q: But they knew about your background?

A: I hadn't told them about it before, but they were not too interested in it.

Q: So most people thought you were born in **America**?

A: I don't know what my -- what my American f-fellow soldiers thought at that -- I don't know. But the Germans I got in c -- in contact with during the year or so I spent in **Germany**, they all thought I was -- I d -- I did not tell them that I came

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from **Germany**. I told them the English I know I learned in high school and they believed it, strange enough as it sounds.

Q: So where were you in -- in **Germany**? Where were you stationed?

A: I was all over **Germany**, we -- I -- I came from **France**, from **Alsace**. We crossed the **Rhine** and then we went to south **Germany**, but that was in the -- near the end of the war. As a matter of fact we came to the point when interrogations of prisoners were -- was not even necessary any more. They cou -- they could not -- they didn't need any more interrogations. It was -- it was nearing the end and everything moved so fast that it wasn't necessary to get information from them. So they used me for different purposes. I was -- became a member of a task force, we had to interrogate pri -- civilians about certain -- about Nazis, big Nazis. Where they were located and -- and factories where -- where they manufactured war materials, where they were trying to -- to build an A bomb and things like that. They were all secret targets which we had to visit. So we -- we tr -- we traveled around in teams of six each and o-of course I had to interpret for y -- for the officers who -- who -- who questioned these people. Oh, I did some of -- some of my own interrogating, too. And we found it -- some important places.

Q: What can you tell -- what can you say now, 50 - 60 years later? Wh-When you say you found important places, such as?

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A: No, th-they were hidden places where they -- where the Germans di -- did a -- experimented with certain things. Chemicals and a-a-all the way, I guess, trying to -- to find an -- an -- an atomic bomb, to build an atomic bomb.

Q: And then you would relay this message to your superiors?

A: Yes, I did, yes. I wrote reports of what we saw and what we found.

Q: Do you remember where these places were, where they worked on these?

A: No, I don't know -- remember any spe -- any particular places. Then a -- then I -- I wound up in a -- in a camp near **Frankfurt** where a lot of -- that was at the -- a- after the end of the war already, when -- where they kept a lot of high German officials and officers, generals and admirals and so on, near ha -- near **Hamburg**.

And then they put me on -- then I had to work on documents di -- di -- that was already in preparation for the war crime trials in **Nuremberg** later on. So I wrote for a couple of weeks on documents as I had to find out which documents they might be able to use, which might be important to them. So I -- I had to -- to ma -- make decisions what might be necessary for the war crime trials and whatnot. That was very interesting work and I liked that. I had a couple of people working under me who did the same work and a -- I was in charge of that.

Q: When -- before the end of the war, when you were moving around **Germany**, did you see any Jewish refugees? Did you come across any of them?

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A: No, I -- I -- I found I -- we were in -- in a couple of small -- of these small labor camps where they kept j -- especially in south **Germany** they had lots of them. They actually belonged to the big concentration camps, they were branches. And they were small camps, strictly for -- for forced labor, and some of them were all Jewish. So I -- in -- in two cases I was the first Jewish American soldier who -- who entered them. And they were very happy to see me. I tol -- I told them of course that I was Jewish. In one camp I remember they -- they begged me I should -- I should protect their camp commander who was f -- who was very good to them, protected them, and they asked me to protect him.

Q: Were you able to do that?

A: I passed on the information I had. That's all I could do at the time.

Q: What was the name of the camp?

A: I don't remember that. They were small camps, I don't remember.

Q: In -- in what area?

A: That was in ba -- in **Bavaria** in south **Germany**.

Q: How did you feel, here you, thank goodness was able to get out of **Germany**, and now you come back and you see these Jews who were not able to get back -- get out.

How -- ho -- what does that feel like?

A: At what point?

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Q: When you said you were in the army and you were talking to these Jewish people in the labor camps.

A: Then it was much later already and it was at -- near -- that was shortly after the end of the war. We were, in a -- in a way the army of occupation. We were actually [indecipherable] military government already at that point.

Q: But my question was, how did you feel inside? Did you feel an affinity for these people, a connection to these people?

A: No, not at all. For the Germans, you mean?

Q: No, no, no, for the Jewish --

A: Oh yeah, certainly. I tried to help them in any way I could. I'm -- I met some -- a lot of these **DPs** later on, who lived in **Germany** shortly after the war and I did anything I could for them. By the way, I also met my -- my brother-in-law after the end of the war when I came -- I came back, I went back to **Fürth** i-in the end -- the war was over in -- in May, and in June or July I -- I got myself a pass from my commander to go back to my hometown to see i-if -- by a sheer miracle maybe some of my relatives came back. And I went to military government in **Fürth** and they told me that -- that my brother-in-law had come back from a concentration camp. So of course I -- I visited him right away.

Q: Th-This is your wife's brother?

A: My wife's brother, right, yes.

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Q: And his name?

A: I'm sorry, no, it was not my wife's brother, it was my sister's husband.

Q: Whe-When had your sister gotten married?

A: Shortly before -- before th -- she was deported.

Q: And what was -- what was his name? Do you remember your sister's husband's name?

A: **Paul Seligman. Paul Seligman** was his name. And I -- I was able later to get him to **America**. I could give an -- give an affi -- affidavit for him, and not long already, 1946, I think it was. Sorry. In the meantime he died. He is not alive any more.

Q: And you stayed in **Germany** after the war, you said, working on documents and preparing for the n --

A: You mean with the army?

Q: With the army, yes.

A: Right, yes. That's when I did this kind of work, and selecting the ma -- the documents which I mentioned before, which they were able to u -- or supposed to use later on in the war crime trials.

Q: Were they used?

A: This I don't know. I -- I have no way of knowing that.

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Q: Where did you go when you came back to **Fürth**? You said you saw your -- your brother-in-law, but what -- did you go back to your family home and the family store?

A: No, I -- I passed it, of course, I saw it, but I -- when I came to **Fürth** I -- I checked in with some American outfit and I slept with the other soldiers in the same barracks. Mostly factories or things like that.

Q: Did this feel like your home? Did this town feel like your home?

A: No, not at all, it did not feel like my home -- my home at all, in any way.

Q: And ho -- and then you went back. You left **Fürth** and went back to your headquarters and then how long did you stay?

A: No, I went back a couple -- I went back a couple of more times, because my -- as long as my brother-in-law was still there, I visited him and brought him food because he needed many things, clothes and food. My wife sent him care packages all -- every week until he came to **America** himself.

Q: Uh-huh. And then how long did you stay in **Europe**?

A: I stayed in **Europe** until March 1946, so I was in the army exactly three years.

Q: And then you came back?

A: Then I came back, right. Then I had to find a new son -- a -- a new activity, some profession. Somebody recommended diamond setting. So I took a -- the **G.I.** course in diamond setting and became a diamond setter.

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Q: This is while you were in -- in other words, under the **G.I.** Bill? You mean you to

--

A: Yes. That course I took was under th-the **G.I.** Bill of Rights.

Q: Mm-hm. And you started to work in that field?

A: Yes, a-after the end of that course, which took about a year, I -- I worked in that field and I did that until my retirement.

Q: And did you have any children?

A: I had two children, right here. A bo -- a boy and a girl.

Q: And th -- were they born in **New York**?

A: They were both born in **New York**, right.

Q: And -- and when were they born?

A: My daughter was born in 1948, my son in fi -- '56.

Q: And their names?

A: My daughter's name is **Marian**. My son's named **Jack**.

Q: Mm-hm. Are they named after anybody in the family?

A: Yes, we used the initials. My mother's name was **Meta**, th -- **Marian**. And my son after my father, who was also **Jacob**. Ja -- **Jack** and **Jacob**, you know.

Q: Right, mm-hm. So you stayed in the diamond setting business in **New York**?

A: Yes. I did something else. I -- I became an organist. I had started already when I -
- when I was in **Berlin**, in the Jewish teacher's college, I had taken a course in organ

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playing already. And when I -- when I was back in **New York** later on, somebo -- somebody o-offered me this job in the synagogue in **Washington Heights**. So I -- I trained myself actually. I'm -- I'm partly self taught when it comes to the organ. But I was able to get this job and later on I improved myself because I went to a bigger synagogue. So I had the side income for a long time as an organist, for 35 years.

Q: And how long did you stay in **New York**?

A: Until 12 years ago -- 18 years ago. Eighte -- 18 years ago we moved here, to **Silver Spring**.

Q: And what brought you here?

A: My children. They were both living in **Washington**, in the **Washington** area. My daughter -- my son-in-law worked for the state department. He was in the -- in the diplomatic corps. He went -- he went to **Chile**, and worked there in the -- in the American embassy. And my -- my son, I-I don't even remember for what reason, he moved to -- to **Washington**.

Q: And do you have any grandchildren?

A: I have six grandchildren, three from each one.

Q: And so now you've been retired?

A: I'm retired since -- yeah. I retired when I was 68, I think.

Q: Do you do anything with your music now?

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A: No, except give piano lessons. I gave piano lessons to my gra -- each and every one of my six grandchildren.

Q: Do you th -- d-do you feel very German today, and -- well, do you feel very German and what are your thoughts about **Germany**?

A: I never felt very German in my life, because when I see what happened to Jews who became too attached to one country, I -- I thought it's not a good thing to be very patriotic. But later on I -- I -- I felt differently about **America**, of course.

Q: Did your -- did your children when they were growing up ask you a lot of questions about your childhood, and what had happened to you and why you came here?

A: Yes, they were very interested. My grandchildren, too. And two years ago I started to write my memoirs and I'm st -- I'm still not completely finished with it, with the purpose, of course, to sh -- to le-let my grandchildren -- my children and grandchildren read it. As much as I told them about my -- my past, there were many things, of course, I didn't remember, and this way I wanted to gi -- give them more to know about my past.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Fred Goldman**. This is tape number two, side

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B. You were talking about how you've written down your memoirs for your children and your grandchildren and -- and many of the details are c-coming back.

A: What did you --

Q: And you said you wanted -- you wanted to tell them the fuller story, that many of the details have come back to you.

A: The reason for my -- for writing my memoirs was to give them a more detailed story of my past. It was the main reason why I did this.

Q: Why is that important?

A: I think it's very important that they know what happened to me. In a way I felt it was my duty to let them know about my past.

Q: Do you feel that you would be a different person if you hadn't gone through the experiences that you did? Did those experiences shape you? Your experience under Nazism, having to leave your family, start a new life? If you hadn't had to go through that, do you think you would have been a different person today?

A: Yeah, I think so. I'm almost sure that I -- my -- my life was shaped by -- by what happened to me, and my experiences and what I saw in my life. It must have had a bi -- a big influence on my -- on my life.

Q: In what way?

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A: Living i-i-in Nazi **Germany** for six years certainly must have done a lot to me which ma -- otherwise would not -- would not have done anything. Would not have happened.

Q: Did it make you more fearful?

A: In the beginning, yes. It did make me more fearful. When we ca -- when I came here, and my wife told me the same -- that happened to many German refugees who came at that time, we didn't even speak loud. We were -- were not used to speaking th -- in the normal way. We whispered. And th -- and this went on for quite awhile and it took me a long time and I'm sure it must have happened to others, too.

Q: Because you didn't want other people to hear you speaking German, is that it?

A: No, because we were always afraid in **Germany** to speak loud, that Nazis didn't hear what we were talking -- saying to each other. So we got used to s -- to speaking very softly. Now one thing I would like to tell you in that respect. My daughter complained to us when she was an adult already that she -- she was influenced very much by our behavior. She -- she -- she must have felt how sad we were and she feels that this influenced her life very much so. And later on we asked our son i-if he had the same experience and he said no, because this was already six years later and he was not so mu -- we were not as much influenced by our past any more six years later, than she was.

Q: And how did that affect her?

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A: It made her sad, too.

Q: And how did you explain to your children that they had no extended relatives?

A: They know -- they know why. They never -- they never knew what it means to have a -- a grandparent, for instance.

Q: How old were they when you explained what really happened to them?

A: Certainly not -- not too early. They must have been in their teens by that time, or maybe a little earlier when we told them all that.

Q: And how did they take that knowledge?

A: They took it as a matter of fact. I mean, they -- they took it as a fact. They met some other people, the -- older people who took the place of their grandparents. They became grandparent figures for them, and they almost considered them as grandparents.

Q: Were these other German refugees?

A: Yes, they were, yes.

Q: So when you and your wife were starting out in life together, were your friends other German refugees, or Americans? Who did you s-spend your time with?

A: They were mostly -- they were mostly German refugees too, in our earlier years. Later on of course, this was different. Now our fre -- we have mixed friends, all types, but at that time, we lived in -- in an -- in areas where there mo -- were mostly refugees, like in **Washington Heights in New York.**

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Q: So your children grew up knowing other German refugee people?

A: Yes, they did, yes.

Q: Mm-hm. Are there any sights today or sounds today that you hear or you see that trigger memories of Nazi **Germany**?

A: Yes, there are. You -- you -- you see movies, for instance, of that area. Confer -- con -- like, you know, wh-where concentration camps were pictured, and ...there are all kinds of things which remind you. Sometimes books you read, magazines you see. My wife seems to be more sensitive to this than I am. My wife would never go back to **Germany**, for instance. Many other refugees have been invited to go back to their hometowns by -- by the -- by the city governments of these places, and many did go back, and my wife would never go back. I am not too tempted to go back either, but I'm not as strict about this as my wife is. I feel this -- it's three generations later and I don't think you can blame the present generation for the sins of their grandparents. And working -- working in the Holocaust Museum, I see a lot of magazine -- magazines of present **Germany** and I -- and I see that they -- they have changed.

Q: D-D-Do you -- would you go back to **Fürth** if they invited you back?

A: We have been invited back, a c -- a couple of times [**indecipherable**] I don't think I want to, no.

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Q: Why not? I-I know what -- n-not from your wife's point of view, but your point of view.

A: [indecipherable] There's still -- still too many bad memories from that time, and especially if I see the older generations, my own generation, I would hate to see them when I go back to **Germany**. I have nothing against the young ones, but the older ones I don't want to meet again.

Q: Did you have any close non-Jewish friends when you were growing up, and how would you feel if you met them now?

A: I had a ver -- very good friend, a Christian friend who went to school with me, graduated with me and everything. He became an -- a -- a doctor and he became a member of the armed -- German armed forces and he was in **Russia** all the time as a doctor, a German army doctor. And I -- I met him when I -- when I went back to visit my brother-in-law and I kept up my -- th -- my friendship with him. And he -- I really believe he was never a Nazi. As a matter of fact, near the end of my -- when -- of the time when I was in **Germany**, he made -- he made it a point to walk with me and -- through the streets in **Fürth**, to be seen with me. So I kept on corresponding with him until he died of -- a couple of years ago. There were exceptions, of course, not all ba -- not all Germans were bad. I'm the last one to believe that.

Q: When your children were the age that you were when **Hitler** came to power, 18 - 19 - 20 and then all the difficult years between 1933 and '39, when your children

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were that same age that you were, did it remind you of those six difficult years you lived through in **Germany**?

A: No, I never saw any connection between myself and my children in that respect.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They lived a completely different life and didn't know anything about it except for the few things which we -- we told them.

Q: Are you angry that you had to go through the experiences that you did and other Jews did not, let's say in this country?

A: I'm sorry, I didn't understand the question.

Q: Are you angry that you had to go through what you did in **Germany**, through Nazism, losing your family and so forth, and other Jews in the -- for instance, in this country, did not have to go through that. Does that make you angry?

A: No, it doesn't, it does not make me angry, but it -- it frustrates me sometimes that American Jews don't seem to understand what we went through and went through the experiences, and many of them are not even interested in it. I wouldn't say the majority does that, but there are -- I've -- I've -- I've run into a number of them who don't abs -- absolutely understand what Nazism meant at that time, what it did to the Jews. Of course they -- they -- they couldn't know. You have to experience it yourself, otherwise you -- they just don't know. For instance, I remember I had a conversation with one man I knew pretty well in this building here. He asked me one

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time, I co -- I don't understand that you German Jews didn't -- didn't go to the nearest gun store, bought yourself a rifle or a gun and defended yourself. Having known what went on, and what the circumstances were, this is sheer nonsense, was completely impossible. If I had done that, if I had shot a -- a -- a German that time, they -- they wo -- they -- fi -- 10 minutes later they would have killed a thousand others -- sa -- a thousand Jews. So I couldn't understand that a well educated and informed man like him could even think of that. That was not understandable to me.

Q: So you feel the importance of Holocaust education, I assume.

A: R-Right. It's very important. And I know that the Holocaust Museum plays a large part in that.

Q: Mm-hm. How has your experience affected how y -- your feelings of being Jewish? Did it change you spiritually, religiously in any way having undergone this because you were Jewish?

A: What was your original question?

Q: Ho-How has all that you've lived through affected your feelings about being Jewish?

A: No, it has not affected my feelings about being Jewish, in any way. It hasn't made me more religious or less religious. It just didn't affect me in that respect.

Q: Are you proud that you're Jewish?

A: Yes, I am.

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Q: Even though you were discriminated and you lost your family?

A: Yes. I've always been proud of that. There's no problem in that respect.

Q: Were you active in -- in the **United States**, were you active in the Civil Rights movement? After all, you lived through a time in **Germany** where civil rights were taken away from you. Did you feel a connection to the Civil Rights movement here in the **United States**?

A: Yes, I'm very much in favor of the Civil Rights movement, not that I personally was active in it, of course, but I have a lot of sympathy for it. I feel it's the right thing to do.

Q: After all, you lived in a country where the civil rights were taken away.

A: Right. There's a special reason why I -- I'm in favor of the Civil Rights movement, because I see what happens if it's not --

Q: And your feelings politically, do you think they have been influenced by your background?

A: Who me? Politically? No, I don't think so.

Q: What about your feelings about **Israel**?

A: I'm very much in favor of **Israel**, I'm a great admirer of **Israel**. That's all.

Q: Would you have wanted to settle there?

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A: Under certain stircum -- circumstances, I would. There was even a time when I considered it, when I was still in **Germany**, going to **Israel** -- to **Palestine**, at that time.

Q: When you were in **Germany**, were you a member of any youth groups, Jewish youth groups? When you were in -- in -- young, in **Germany**?

A: Yes, there were many Jewish youth groups. Many Zionist one -- Zionist, and I -- there were times when I considered joining -- joining a group, but somehow I never got around to it. I was a member of a Jewish sports club in **Germany**, which was Zionist.

Q: And is that the time you thought you would maybe go to **Palestine**?

A: Yes, I -- there was a time when I considered it, but for practical purposes it didn't -- it was not possible.

Q: Mm-hm. Have you been to **Israel**?

A: Yes, I have been, yes.

Q: Mm-hm. Do you think about th -- your experience in the 1930's often now, as you've gotten older?

A: Yes, I do. Especially si -- since I'm -- I'm working in the hol -- in the Holocaust Museum, that of course has a lot to do with it. I'm constantly reminded o-of things at that time.

Q: What were you -- what were your thoughts during the **Eichmann** trial?

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A: I -- I admired the fa -- the fact, of course, that -- that **Israel** was able to -- to do that, get him out of s -- of **South America** and bring him to **Israel**. I was very proud of **Israel** at that time, that they could put him on trial. That they -- to capture in -- him in -- I think in **Argentina** and bring him to **Israel**. I was very proud of that fact. That's the right thing to do, of course.

Q: Was it painful for you to look at his face in the pictures? Was it painful for you to look at his face in photographs?

A: No, I begu -- I didn't know his face before, I had never seen him before in na -- not pictures or anything else. I think **Israel** did the right thing, definitely, no question.

Q: Are you more comfortable being around other German refugees? Do you find yourself staying more with them, socializing, being with other refugees as opposed to American born Jews?

A: What -- what is your question?

Q: Are you more comfortable around Jewish --

A: Refugees.

Q: -- refugees, as opposed to non-Jewish or Jewish Americ -- you know, people who were born here.

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A: I must have been in my earlier years, but now it -- it doesn't matter to me any more who my friends are, whom I'm together with, as far as that is concerned. But there was a time, a period when I was more comfortable with German refugees.

Q: Why?

A: They were -- they were the people I knew, I -- I grew up with and who had the same experiences, whom I had a lot of common with -- in common with.

Q: If you met somebody today and that person said where are you -- you know, where were you born, where did you come from, how much of your story would you tell to a s -- a new person?

A: The same things I -- just the story as it happened, completely.

Q: Do you feel this need to tell others?

A: Yes, more so in my later years now than I did earl -- before. I feel there's a need to -- to tell my story and our story.

Q: Wh-Why is that?

A: Because I s -- I see that if it -- if this as a story is not told, it might happen again. It might be a way of preventing a future **Hitler** from appearing.

Q: Do you think that's possible? That there could be a future **Hitler**?

A: Personally, I'm an optimist, I don't think so. But I would not say it's impossible.

Q: Do you think there could be one in this country?

A: I don't think so.

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Q: Because?

A: Having seen Americans, having observed Americans in -- all the time, I don't think they have it in them to the same extent as the Germans did.

Q: With what happened on September 11th this year, did that trigger anything for you? The destruction, the loss of life?

A: No, I never b -- I never brought it in connection with what's happened in **Germany**. I don't think that ever entered my mind.

Q: I was thinking the destruction, the loss of life.

A: N-No, I never -- I never saw any connection with -- with Nazism.

Q: When you hear about a man like **Osama Bin Laden**, does that make you think of **Hitler**?

A: Frankly, I -- I never did.

Q: When you're -- do you think in German? When you're thinking to yourself do you think in German or in English?

A: I'm -- I'm not sure. I don't think so. I don't think so.

Q: And you and your wife converse in?

A: Mostly in English. I would say 80 percent -- 80 percent in English.

Q: Did you teach your children German?

A: No. My daughter was more exposed to some German because she's older and at that time maybe we spoke more German than w -- than we did later on. So she

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picked up some German. Sh-She understands quite a bit, but she doesn't speak any.

My daughter also made the statement that she would never go to **Germany**.

Q: And what reasons does she give?

A: I guess after all she heard from us, she acquired that attitude.

Q: And how d -- how -- how do you handle this with your grandchildren when they question you, how -- wh-what are the -- what is the age range of your -- your grandchildren?

A: My grandchildren ra-range from 11 to 31.

Q: Mm-hm. And so when they were younger, and they would ask you questions, what -- how would you respond about your family?

A: They didn't ask me too many questions, I must say. I mean, of course I volunteered many things, they didn't have to ask me. But actually, they never asked me any -- hardly asked me any questions about -- that's one of the reasons why I think it's important that I write my memoirs.

Q: Mm-hm. And your children then explained to their children what you and your wife had -- have been through?

A: Frankly I d -- I don't know that. I don't know how much they touched that subject.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Ta -- I should ask them, actually.

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Q: Let's now talk about your experience at the museum.

A: About my what?

Q: I-I wanted to talk about your experience at the museum itself.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: What was your first encounter with the museum? How did you hear about it in the beginning?

A: I heard about it right away when I came to -- no, when I came here there was no Holocaust Museum yet. I was looking for some volunteer work I could do, and I couldn't think of nothing -- I could think of nothing better than the Holocaust Museum.

Q: So you -- you -- you started working with them after the building was built?

A: Yes, right. I must have started f-four years ago. Four to five years ago. And do you know what I'm doing? I'm do -- making translations.

Q: I wanted you to explain what you're doing.

A: Yes. I'm translating German documents. Not only documents, collections of letters, all kinds of p-political, military docum -- whatever. Whatever they give me to translate. I'm surprised that now, after 60 years almost after the end of the war, that they are still -- there's still more available. I expected three years ago that they wouldn't have any more work for me, but it seems they do. They get a lot of collections now. Letter collections. Letters which people wrote to their relatives.

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People who were left behind in **Germany** and their children were in a -- in foreign countries already. And many people it see -- it seems, send these letter collections to the Holocaust Museum now, and asked -- asked the Holocaust Museum to have them translated.

Q: So you're not translating German military documents or anything like that?

You're doing personal --

A: It's not military --

Q: -- Jewish -- Jewish letters.

A: -- **[indecipherable]** few things which are similar to military document -- documents. Orders which were given by the German military to the civilian population, let's say in **Poland**, what to do with the Jews, things like that.

Q: And how do you keep yourself going when you read -- when you translate these things, it's -- is it painful?

A: I-In many cases it's pai -- it is painful. There are many nights when I cannot fall asleep. It's not always easy to -- to work on this, especially when I've run into cases which are similar to my own family's fate. Concentration camps and so on.

Q: How -- how often do you work at the museum?

A: Once a week, four to five hours each time.

Q: Do you think that you bring any special insights as a -- as a staff member, as a volunteer staff member because of your background?

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A: Yes, I think so. I-I do.

Q: Wha-What kind of insights do you bring?

A: Now, I have a -- I-I understand many -- many things better, how people -- how people felt about certain situations, especially in these collections of letters. Ma -- for instance, parents whose children left **Germany** and they -- and the parents were still caught up in germ -- caught in **Germany**. And I could understand very well how these -- how the parents felt, first about not being able to get out any more. Number two about feeling left behind.

Q: So you are translating these German letters from both the children and the parents?

A: Or in some cases from the German fra -- from the parents, and some cases from the chil -- but mostly -- mostly ger -- parents to the children.

Q: Wh-Who are writing to their children in the **United States** in German?

A: In -- In the **United States** or other countries. Mo-Mostly o -- **United States**.

Q: Yeah. About what their experience i-is back in **Germany**?

A: Right. About their attempts to -- to get out of **Germany**, and so -- in many cases when they were -- they knew already they would not be able to get out.

Q: How else has working at the museum affected your life? You -- you said that there are times when you -- it's difficult to fall asleep after you've read something very personal. In any other ways has working at the museum affected --

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A: In which ways?

Q: In any other ways, has working at the museum affected your life?

A: I can't think of anything right now, in that respect.

Q: Do you bring work home with you or only work at the museum?

A: I wanted to take things home, but I'm -- we are not allowed to do that. We are not al-allowed to take any documents home.

Q: When you meet other people here who are from **Europe** --

A: Yes?

Q: Do you encourage them to volunteer at the museum?

A: Yes, I d -- I do. I tried a couple of times t-to persuade people to work in the Holocaust Museum. But I don't think so far I've been successful.

Q: What do you -- what reasons do you give them?

A: It's ver-very interesting work, and -- and that they'd learn a lot about -- about th -
- about the Judaism by doing this kind of work.

End of Tape Two, Side B

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Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Fred Goldman**. This is tape number three, side

A. And we were talking about your work as a volunteer at the museum and -- and why you do it and the lessons that have been learned. Is there anything else you want to add to that?

A: Lessons which I've learned by working in the Holocaust Museum?

Q: Yes.

A: I was very happy to see that so many people, looking at the nu -- large numbers of volunteers there, very happy to see that people are interested in it. People who -- who do not come from **Europe**, who are -- maybe less motive -- must be less motivated than I am, but that still a lot of people have interest in this kind of work.

Q: What -- what is your relationship with the other volunteers who are survivors or witnesses to the Holocaust? Do you have a special relationship with them?

A: No, I don't think I have a special relationship with them. I meet a lot of them, I am a member of the survivor's group, and that's when I -- when I meet them sometimes wa -- once a month. And I'm very happy to see there are so many in this group. I never considered myself a survivor, not having been in the concentration camp. Originally I thought survivors are only people who went through a concentration camp and are survivors of concentration camps. But I am not, and the

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-- I see there are many others on the same position. But it seems we are -- we are considered survivors in -- like in my case having lived in -- in Nazi **Germany** for six years.

Q: And having to escape to -- t -- having to escape to save your life, and then having lost all of your family.

A: Right, yes, yeah.

Q: Wha-What is your relationship to the volunteers at the museum who are not from **Europe**, who are not survivors and refugees?

A: The same thing. The same relationship as with these sur-sur-survivors. Very friendly with quite a number of them. And I'd like to meet them, I'm looking forward to -- to every session there, every week when I go there.

Q: What do you feel like when you walk into the building? Do you feel like this is a part of you? What -- what -- what are your thoughts when you put your foot over the threshold?

A: Yeah, it's a very important part of my life by now. I -- I feel that I'm do -- doing important work and I -- for that reason I'm looking forward to going there every week.

Q: As opposed to walking into another government building, let's say, why is that building different than another Federal building?

A: Because it has a lot more meaning to me than other government buildings.

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Q: What -- what kind of meaning? What kind of meaning does it have to you, does that building represent to you?

A: I feel it -- it -- it's very important to me. More important to a -- to other government buildings, because of my fate and of what's happened to me. And because I'm becoming more and more convinced that it's very important to ha -- to - - to have the Holocaust Museum. I'm surprised to see there's a -- so many non-Jews are going there. To me it looks bi -- looking around, I have the feeling that 80 to 85 percent of the people who come there are non-Jews, and I'm very happy to see that they seem to be interested. Of course, they don't come all -- they don't all come on their own account, they come besa -- because they're being sent by I don't know whom.

Q: Is it appropriate that there is this building in the **United States**, in **Washington**?

A: Definitely. It's very important. They should have more Holocaust museums in the rest of the country. There should be more -- more of them. Like in new yor -- in **New York City**, they -- they have some kind of a Holocaust museum, but it -- it's not what this one is. Th -- like th-the new one they have in **New York** is only -- only part of it is Holocaust museum, the rest is jew -- Jewish museum. I understand only one floor there is u -- being used for that purpose, right?

Q: Have you been to **Yad Vashem** in is -- in **Israel**?

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A: Yes, I've been there, a number of years ago. And I was very impressed by there, too. But of course, the **Washington** mem -- memorial hol -- Holocaust Museum is better for the purpose it is supposed to be. It's a -- it's more technically advanced, whatever they show, than what I saw that time in **Yad Vashem**. So people must be more impressed with what they see.

Q: Have you had any very powerful experiences or memorable experiences when you're working there? You did mention how when you read letters from people who were left behind that that was very touching. Any other memorable experiences you can talk about?

A: No, I don't think so. I know many people -- many other people did, but I can not remember of any case that I was especially impressed by something.

Q: Are -- is there -- are there any particular parts of the museum, or the exhibits with which you identify, when you've gone through the exhibit? Do you see anything that really touches you personally?

A: That one big room where all the -- where the -- where children express their thoughts about the -- about the Holocaust. What -- what do you call that place?

Q: You're talking about the tiles, the room with the tiles?

A: The tiles, right, yes. They impress me very much and I go there very often to look at these tiles. Some of them are excellent of these tiles. They tell you a lot. It also shows how children, espe -- especially children react to these events. What means

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more to them than to other people and -- and so on. I think that's an excellent idea to have these on -- on -- so prominently displayed as they are.

Q: In the permanent exhibit, wa -- in the beginning when it shows life in **Germany** and then the increasing restrictions that were imposed on the Jews -- do you know what I mean, in the -- on the top floor, on the fourth floor, when you read this, does it bring it all back to you, what you lived through in the 30's?

Q: Yeah, it certainly brings everything back to me. I had the same experiences. But of course, in my case it's a long time. That was 60 years ago or more, so maybe these impressions were not too strong i-in me any more. But now, of course, this -- this all reminds me very much of what's happened.

Q: So you feel as you've gotten older and for -- farther removed in time, it does make a difference?

A: Yes. It certainly brings it back much -- much better. When I see these things I -- I notice that I had forgotten many things which happened that time to me and to th -- to the other Jewish people and which slowly diminished in my -- in my memory. This brings it back again, very much.

Q: Did you have to change your name to **Israel** or add your name **Israel** to your papers?

A: Yeah, I did have to sha -- like everybody else. I still have it in my old passport when I -- when I left **Germany**. Everybody had to do that.

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Q: What did you feel like when you had to do that, when you were forced to do that?

A: There were so many other th-things, and worse things which happened to us in that time, that it didn't make any particular impression on me. I considered it more as a nuisance, I think, at the time when it happened. Seeing -- with all the other things hap -- happening to us, that was only a small part. **Comparively** -- a small nuisance compared to many other things which happened which were much worse at that time.

Q: How did your sister take to adding **Sarah** to her name?

A: Frankly, I don't remember that. I don't think we ever discussed it.

Q: Do you receive reparations from **Germany**?

A: Yes, I do. I got restitution for a number of things. For the loss -- for the loss of our house, our business and i-interruption of our education. But it was -- it -- it didn't amount to much money. And for many things I didn't get anything at all. For instance, the value of our -- our stock in th -- in our business, you know.

Q: Did it take a long time to receive it?

A: Yes, it was very difficult, very hard. It had something to do with the fact that our -- my lawyer was not very efficient, I think. He was -- I guess he was too old at the time. For every letter I -- I wrote, I had to wait -- wait a long **[indecipherable]** sometimes I had to write three or four times to get a answer -- an answer from him.

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Q: Thi-This was the lawyer in **Germany**?

A: Yes, it was a Jewish lawyer. It was in **Fürth**. Maybe that's the reason why I took him that time. And I -- then later on I changed lawyers, then it was a little better.

Q: And are you still getting monthly payments?

A: I'm still getting German Social Security, monthly.

Q: How do you feel about that?

A: Doesn't bother me. I -- I think it's coming to me, after what happened to me.

After al -- all the other things I've lost.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add, maybe for your grandchildren when they listen to this tape? Any -- any thoughts that you have about what you went through, or what you wanted them to learn from it? Anything?

A: I don't think so. Whatever I -- I think my grandchildren should learn about it or find out will be in-included in my life's story, in my memoirs. And I must have put that down already in my memoirs.

Q: Well, it's important that you are doing your memoirs, that's wonderful --

A: Yeah, I think so too.

Q: -- it's a won -- it's a wonderful gift to your children, so -- and thank you very much for doing this interview today.

A: I thank you too for doing it.

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Q: This concludes the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with
Fred Goldman.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Conclusion of Interview