

Epstein, reel one. And if I could ask you first of all then Hedy, about your life before the war, whereabouts you were living in Germany, and the sort of family life that you had.

I was born on August 15, 1924 in Freiburg, Germany. And Freiburg is located in the Black Forest. But we lived in a village called Kippenheim, which is about 40 north of Freiburg. My father's family had lived there for a long time. I don't know exactly how long.

I do know that my father was in business, and it was a business started by my great grandfather in 1856. It was a dry goods business. And my father was in business with his brother. Really, very much against his own wishes, my father was a veteran of World War I. And he was a prisoner of the Russians, yeah, I guess the Russian government. And was in camp on the Black Sea, and was repatriated quite late.

And when the boat that he was on traveled through the Mediterranean and through the straits of Gibraltar, around Spain, and then when they got to where Spain and France abut each other, there was a tremendous storm. And my father told me that for about a week every morning when he woke up, he saw in the distance the same church steeple. And finally, the storm abated. And they went on. But they had to make an emergency stop in England to take on fuel and food. And my father knew when he would go back to Germany, he would have to go into his father's business.

And it was not what he wanted. And so he jumped boat and stayed in England, and notified his parents. And they were, of course, very upset and wanted him home and he wouldn't come. And finally they wrote to him and told him his father was very ill. And if he wants to see his father, he'd better come home soon. And he believed that and went back to Germany. And his father was not ill. And he had to go into the business. And he did, and remained in that.

But my father was a man of many, many interests, both intellectually as well as he was very good doing things with his hands. He was always building things, repairing things. And he was very different from the rest of the siblings or the rest of the family. And at that time, the way men and women met was it was an arranged kind of thing. That's not how my parents met. Both my parents, independent of each other, they didn't know each other were at a fair in Frankfurt, which is maybe 200 kilometers north of Kippenheim.

And my mother came from a city which is very close to Frankfurt. And she came from Hanau. And they were both viewing the same exhibit, and started to talk to each other. And then after that, at some point later on, they got married. That was very much looked down upon and disliked, and made his family very unhappy. And I think my mother always remained the outsider. She was never totally accepted because of the way they met, that she didn't come from this area. She was almost like a foreigner.

And I think my mother was probably very unhappy because of that. Also, my mother's interests were different than a lot of the people in the community. She was more a worldly person, whereas people in the village, really all they knew was the village, and not much else, if anything else.

And so I always felt that my parents were different than the rest of the family, the rest of the community, which then made me different. And I wanted very much that we would be like everybody else. But for instance, if I was in somebody else's house or a friend or so, I didn't feel comfortable there. Because it was different from what I was used to. And I wanted to be back at home. And when I was back at home I wanted to be someplace else again. And I never really resolved that, but always felt different.

Another way that we were different. We were Jewish. And Jewish people in the community, the men on Friday evening would go to the synagogue to services, and the family would go on Saturday morning. And then the custom was after services on Saturday morning, families would visit with each other. My parents never went to services. Consequently, we never had any visitors. They also didn't visit. And that made me unhappy. But nothing I could do about it.

I didn't really know that I was Jewish until I was in first grade. Because we didn't observe anything at home. And I had been on the Jewish High Holidays, my parents did go to services. And so I'd been to synagogue. But I'd also been to church. There was only at that time one church which served both the Catholics and the Lutherans, which were the only

two denominations in the village-- only two other denominations.

And I'd been to church. And I didn't understand what was going on in church. And I didn't understand what was going on in synagogue. And it didn't really make any difference to me. And when I was in first grade, probably during the first week in first grade, because religion was taught as part of the regular curriculum. The teacher said the next hour is going to be religious instruction and I don't know all of your denominations. So would all the Catholic children raise their hands and up went my hand.

And the teacher who was a neighbor said, Hedy put your hand down. You're not Catholic. Well, OK. No problem. And then all the Catholic children left and went to some other room. And then she said, now all the Lutheran children raise their hands. And up went my hand again. And she said, but Hedy you're not Lutheran. And oh, I'm not? Well what am I? And I must have heard somewhere something that being Jewish wasn't good, though I can't recall what that may be. But when she told me that I was Jewish, I protested vehemently. And I said, I'm not Jewish. And I'm not going to go to this class. And I'm going to tell my mother about it. And my mother is going to straighten all this out, and I don't have to go.

But she made me go. And the whole hour in that class I protested, I'm not Jewish. I don't have to listen. I'm going to tell my mother, and so on. And then I came home that day. And I said, I don't like the teacher. I don't want to go back to school. And my mother said, what happened? And I told her. And she said, but you are Jewish. And I said, no, I'm not. Why are you? And she said, yes, I am. And I said is daddy Jewish? Is grandma Jewish? My uncle, my aunts, and so on? Yes, they are all Jewish. And I said, well, maybe all of you are, but I am not.

But I had to attend religious classes in school because it was part of the regular curriculum. By the way, the school that I attended which was a public grade school, was the same school that my father had attended. After I was in that school for four years, I left that school to go to attend what is called a gymnasium, which I guess at the lower end is probably still like grade school. At the upper end, it's more like what one calls in the United States junior college. And that was in a neighboring community. That was also a school that my father and my grandfather had attended many years before.

But before I go on with that, I want to go back just a little bit. I want to go back to 1933 which is the year that Hitler came to power on January 30, 1933. And I remember very clearly hearing my parents and other adults talk about Hitler and that he was a bad person. And that at first, that they hoped he wouldn't come to power, and when he finally did that his regime wouldn't last and it couldn't last.

And I didn't really pay much attention to it. This was adults talking. And I thought, well, adults sometimes talk all this nonsense. It doesn't really have anything to do with me. But it didn't last very long before I realized it did indeed have something to do with me.

Just two months later, on April 1, 1933, there was a boycott of all Jewish businesses all over Germany. And since my father had a business, that boycott affected him. And I remember there was an SA man, those were the brown-shirted Nazis, stood in front of my father's business with his legs spread apart, his hands folded behind his back. And he seemed to be looking off into the distance.

The purpose of that man standing there was to prevent Christians from coming to the store. And not only was there this man standing in front of my father's store, but also I saw one standing in front of the Jewish butcher, the Jewish baker. There was a big Jewish hardware store. There was somebody standing there. And I asked my father, what is this? Why are these men standing in front of the stores?

And my father said, don't worry about it. It's nothing. It's going to go away. And I wanted to believe that. And indeed, it did go away it lasted just that one day. But I'm sure the economic effects were not just that day when Christians probably hesitated or didn't come into Jewish stores. But it was long range also, though what exactly it meant in terms of actual money I don't know because I was too young.

The next thing then that happened was when my father took me to register me for the gymnasium, the principal said to him, I'm very sorry. But Hedy cannot attend school here because you're Jewish. And my father didn't say anything, but pointed with his finger to something that he wore in his lapel. And it was something that I'm not exactly sure what it

was. But it had something to do with the fact that he was a veteran of World War I.

And the principals looked, and said, oh. I didn't know that you were a veteran of World War I. In that case Hedy can attend the school. And that's how I was allowed to go there. And that was in 1935.

When I first got to that school, there were a lot of Jewish children in that school, quite a lot of them from Kippenheim even. Over the years, the numbers decreased, some perhaps due to the fact that parents couldn't afford to pay the tuition. The other reason were that families were fortunate to leave Germany, and so the children, of course, went with them.

The next thing that happened that caused me to realize that Hitler and his regime does have some effect on me was in 1936 my grandfather, my mother's father who lived in Hanau and was in business there, a shoe business that he started in 1896. He came to live with us for a lengthy period of time. And I thought at first that was wonderful to have my grandfather there every single day. Because before he would come maybe on the weekend.

My grandmother had died in 1930. And the reason my grandfather lived with us was because one day he was walking on the sidewalk in Hanau, when a Nazi came up to him and said, Jews are not allowed to walk on the sidewalk. Get off. And so he walked in the street. And the same Nazi said and Jews aren't allowed to walk in the street either. You are under arrest.

And he was taken to jail. And after he was there several days he was told if you promise to sell your home, sell your business, leave town and never come back, we will release you. And so he agreed to that. And so he no longer had a livelihood. He no longer had a place to stay.

And so he came to live with us and stayed with us several months. And when he felt he was perhaps too much of a burden for us, he moved on to my mother's brother and his wife and stayed with them for a while. And then when he felt it was too much for them, he would go to an old age home and stay there for several months. And then he'd come back to us again. And at first I didn't know why that was. But later on, I learned what the reason was.

Things in school began to deteriorate. As fewer Jewish children were left, it also seemed almost simultaneously that the discrimination against me by the Christian children increased. And of course, I was more dependent on socialization with them, as there were fewer Jewish children there. For instance, on break which usually is the best time of the day was the worst time of the day for me. Because nobody would talk to me. The last couple of years there were only one other child and I in school, and the other child was a boy a year younger than I.

And during recess, the boys were in the back of the school and the girls in the front. So he was alone in the back of the school and I was alone in the front of the school. And I used to lean up against one of the pillars of the building. And in fact, when I went back there last year, I went to the school. I looked to see if there wasn't an indentation in that pillar from where I used to lean up against it. But there wasn't.

And for the last 2 and 1/2 years in that school, I was there a total of 3 and 1/2 years. But for the last 2 and 1/2 years that I was there, I had a math teacher who used to come to school most of the time in his SS uniform, the black uniform. And he wore knee-high boots. In his right boot he always carried a revolver. I don't know if it was loaded or not. And when he asked me a question, he would either hold his hand on the revolver or a couple of times actually pointed it at me.

And so learning was probably zero for me because I was petrified. And when he asked me a question, regardless whether my answer was right or wrong, he would always ridicule me in front of the class and say, well, this is a Jewish answer. And we know that Jewish answers are no good. And then the children would laugh.

And I would come home and I would share this with my parents, and say I don't want to go to school anymore. I want to go back to the grade school that I used to be in because I had no problems there. And my father, who was perhaps more of a dreamer and my mother was more of the realist, my father would say to me well think about what you're going to be doing later on when you graduate from this school which was many years away yet, you will be going to the French speaking part of Switzerland or to France to perfect your French.

And this is something that most of those children, if any of them, probably will never do. So think about that, that wonderful opportunity that you will have. And I wanted to think about that and believe that. But the next day I was back in school and I had to deal with the children not talking to me, or calling me a dirty Jew, or some other derogatory term, the math teacher ridiculing me. And I got angry at my father for saying something to me that was so far off that was not a reality for me.

I heard my mother couple of times in discussion with my father say, maybe we should take her out of school. And also I heard her talk still later saying, financially we really can't afford it anymore. We should take her out. And my father said, we can starve. But we're not going to take her out of this school. And so I remained in this school. And it was a very unhappy experience. And all the other teachers were fine. But this one teacher just spoiled my whole school life there.

I want to talk now about November 9 and November 10, which has been known as Crystal Night or the Night of the Broken Glass, and how that affected me and my family. And I think what I'm going to say probably can be more or less duplicated as having happened all over Germany and Austria at that time. Austria had already been annexed to Germany.

I remember on a Wednesday night which was I think November 9, if I'm not mistaken, in 1938. Before I went to bed, my father said to me if you hear some strange noises during the night, immediately get out of bed and go out and get into the wardrobe in the hallway. And I said, what are you talking about? Why? What kind of noise? And he said, don't ask any questions. Just do as you're told, which was totally unlike my father or unlike my parents. I was always encouraged to ask questions and received answers.

Or if I didn't receive direct answers I was encouraged to find the answers. But here I'm told don't ask questions. Just do as you're told. And so I went to bed. And I probably laid in bed for quite a while before I was able to sleep, listening for something I didn't know what to listen for, and finally fell asleep, and got up the next morning, and forgot all about it. And got ready to go to school, and left for school at 10 minutes after 7:00 just like I did every other day, with my bicycle together with this one other Jewish child who was at the school who was also from Kippenheim.

And as we approached the school, we had to pass a house where a Jewish dentist had his home and his practice. And I noticed that every window in that building was broken. I'd seen a broken window here or there. But here was a whole row of broken windows. And though I didn't know why, I assumed it was because he was Jewish.

And as we entered the school yard and parked our bicycles, I could just sense something is different. But I didn't know what it was. And I was afraid to ask. And so I proceeded on to my classroom. And this young boy proceeded to his classroom. And classes started as they did every day. And about a half hour later the principal walked in. And he gave a long talk which even later that day I couldn't remember what he actually said. But at some point while he was talking, he pointed his finger at me and he said, get out, you dirty Jew.

And I heard what he said. But I could not believe it. I mean how could this nice man, this Gentile man, this good man whose daughter is one of my classmates, how could he have said that? I must have dreamed this. And so I asked him, please repeat what you said. I'm sorry. I didn't hear it. And he not only repeated it, but came over and took me by the elbow, and pushed me out the door.

And I stood out in the hallway and all kinds of thoughts were racing through my head. What did I do? Did I not listen? Did I yawn? Did I fall asleep? What did I do? What am I going to tell my parents? And the kinds of searching questions that I was asking myself later on I learned, is typical of victims look to themselves for what have I done, rather than realizing that it's an outside force that has caused them the problem.

And as these thoughts were racing through my head and I had no answer for them, the door opened and the children came running out. They were putting on their coats. Some pushed me and others called me a dirty Jew and so on. And they all left. And I had no idea where they were going, because there was no field trip planned that day. And I didn't know. Now, what do I do? Do I go with them? Do I stay in the hall? Do I go back in the classroom. And I finally decided to go back into the classroom. And I sat at my desk, got out a book and tried to study.

I don't think I had any idea what was in that book. And very shortly afterwards, I heard soft knocking on the door. And the other Jewish boy came in. He had had very much the same experience as I did. And because I was a year older than he, he came to me for advice. And I said to him, well, you go back to your classroom and you study. I'm studying. And he said, I can't. I'm scared. I want to stay here. And I said, all right you can stay here. But you have to be quiet because I am studying.

I was being very authoritarian. And he said, well, can I go over there to the window and look out? And I said, yes, go ahead and look out but you've got to leave me alone now. I need to study. And he was at that window maybe an hour or hour and a half, when he suddenly became very excited. And he said, look. Come here. What is this? And I joined him at the window. And we saw men in a row, three in a row chained to each other, chained to the ones in front of them, chained to the ones behind them, with SS men with whips, hitting them and urging them to walk faster.

And though we didn't recognize any of these men, we just assumed that they were Jewish. And with that, we decided nothing so far today has made a whole lot of sense. We better call home. And I called my mother and somebody answered the phone and said the phone is no longer working. And I called my father at his business. My aunt and my grandmother and all those phones were I got the same answer. The phone is no longer working.

And Hans, the young boy, called his mother. And I don't know if some other people. And he got the same answer. So with that, we decided we just better go home. Though we were afraid to leave the school, you don't leave at 10:30 in the morning without asking somebody. But there also was nobody there to ask or we thought there was nobody there to ask.

As I approached my house, I noticed that it looked differently than the way it looked when I left in the morning. We had green shutters on the house. And they were never closed during the daytime, sometimes at night in the winter if it was very cold and very windy they would be closed. And they were closed. And I ran to the door. And it was locked. And I didn't even know that you could lock the door.

And I ran around the back of the house and that door was locked. I came back around the front, rang the doorbell. I could hear it. But nobody answered. And I wondered, where is my mother? She should be home. And I stood on the sidewalk in front of the building for a couple of minutes just trying to understand what seemed-- I just wasn't able to comprehend what was going on. When I saw a man walking down the street who any other time if I found myself on the same side of the street as he, I would have crossed the street because I knew him to be one of the town's worst or the village's worst Nazis.

But in my desperation that morning, I said to him do you know where my mother is? And he said, I don't know where the bitch is. But if I find her and she's still alive I'm going to kill her. Well with that, I just took off and decided I've got to find my father, my aunt, my grandmother, somebody. And on my way I had to pass this Jewish hardware store. And all the windows were broken. And there was a crowd of people there reaching in and taking out stuff, laughing and joking. And it was a carnival kind of atmosphere which I also didn't understand.

And as I approached my aunt's house, I could see my mother and my aunt looking out of the second story window. And I wondered why are they looking out. What are they trying to see? And my mother opened the door. And she looked kind of grotesque. And she was taller and thinner than my aunt. And she was wearing my aunt's clothes. And we exchanged what had occurred to both of us. And my mother told me that about 10 minutes after I left for school that morning, some Nazis came to the house and arrested my father and took him away.

He was still in his pajamas and slippers. They did not give him an opportunity to get dressed or even put a coat on. And it was very cold. And as he was walking out the door, he said to my mother find Hedy and try and stay together.

A couple of the Nazis stayed behind and they broke all the windows. And that's why my mother closed all the shutters. They also did some other vandalism in the house. And then after my mother closed the shutters, she secured the house and ran down the street to my aunt, not realizing that she was still wearing her nightclothes. And my aunt--

[AUDIO OUT]

Epstein, reel two. My uncle had also been arrested earlier that morning, though there was no vandalism to their house or any broken windows. The reason they were looking out the window is somehow, and I don't know how or I don't remember how they learned, that all the Jewish men starting with the age of 16 who had been arrested that morning had been taken to the village hall. And you could see village hall in the next block from my aunt's house.

And they wanted to see if they were coming out. So I joined them at the window. And it wasn't long after that that we saw men or we saw people coming out of village hall. And they formed into group and started to march down the street right past my aunt's house. And in that group was my father, and my uncle, and many other men that I knew also many men that I didn't know.

And I found out just last year when I was back in Kippenheim, who these other men were that I didn't know. Apparently men from the surrounding area were all brought to Kippenheim, and from Kippenheim they all marched together to a railroad station in the neighboring community. But I didn't know that at that time.

My mother practically hung me out of that second story window. And she called out to my father. We have Hedy and we're all together. Whether my father heard me or saw me, we didn't know. But what we saw was exactly what I had described to my mother before, men chained to each other, and with the SS men whipping them, urging them to go faster.

And there were men. Some men were fully dressed. Others were partially dressed. Some were in pajamas like my father. We watched them until they went around the bend in the road, and we couldn't see them anymore. And we closed the windows, and we just sat there. And very soon after that, we heard loud banging on the door downstairs. And knowing what had happened in our house, we decided to go up in the attic and there was an old wardrobe up there. And my aunt, my mother, and I hid in that wardrobe.

I don't really know how long we were in there. It seemed to me I spent a lifetime in there. And I remember also whispering to my mother, I want to get out of here. And I don't mean just this wardrobe, but I want to get out of Germany. And the reason I was saying getting out of Germany probably came from the fact that my parents had tried for many, many years to get out of Germany. And it was easy, or relatively easy, to leave Germany because the Nazis wanted to get rid of the Jews. It was difficult to find a place or a country that would receive you.

It was difficult particularly if you didn't have any relatives in those countries or didn't know anybody there, and we didn't. And so although at some point, my father found some cousins, 10 times removed, in Chicago. And I remember he wrote to that cousin asking him to help us to get out of Germany. And if he couldn't, to go to his employer. Maybe his employer could do something. And if not, go to the Jewish community and maybe they could help.

And I remember very clearly the letter that this man wrote back to my parents saying that he was very fortunate that he had a job at that time. There was a depression in the United States. And he was supporting his elderly mother. And so he couldn't help. He was afraid to go to his employer, because he was afraid he might lose his job. And he also did not wish to go to the Jewish community because he didn't want to make a fool of himself. And so why don't you wait and things will get better?

And to this day, when somebody says you know it takes time or you've got to wait, it's almost like putting a red cloth in front of a bull. I mean, I get extremely angry. It upsets me tremendously. When there are times when one cannot wait, when one has to act, and has to act now. And that was one of those times.

As I said earlier, I don't know really how long we were in this attic. But when it seemed quiet for a long time, we decided to come down. And there was nobody in the building. In fact, they never actually broke down the door. They did scratch it up, but nothing really happened. And what we learned later on that at noon on that day, all activities or all aktions against the Jews in Kippenheim were called to a halt. And they came to my aunt's house, probably a minute or so before noon.

There were a lot of other things that happened that day. For instance, all over Germany synagogues were burned, or if

not burned they were badly vandalized. In Kippenheim, the synagogue was set on fire. But they very quickly realized that on either side of the synagogue there were Christian homes. And since the fire wasn't going to be put out, there was some concern that those Christian homes would catch fire. And so the fire was put out very quickly before it did a lot of damage.

But they vandalized the synagogue, both inside and outside. For instance, on the top of the synagogue it came to a peak. There were the two tablets of Moses with the Ten Commandments on it. And they were knocked down. The windows were broken. And again, this is something that I just learned last year. The Torah scrolls had been taken out and taken to the railroad station, where the men had been taken to. And were opened up and hung on the railroad station on the platform.

That would have been a very sacrilegious act, would it not?

Yes, it would have been. Because those are, it's like the Jewish law, and all the rituals, and all the commandments are in the Torah. It's a very holy document.

Money was confiscated. All Jewish businesses had to be permanently closed. If you were a doctor, or a dentist, or a lawyer, you weren't allowed to practice. Christian doctors weren't allowed to treat Jews. Jews weren't allowed to go to hospitals. Jewish children were no longer allowed to attend public or private schools. So that morning when I left school, that was my last day of school in Germany.

Jewelry had to be turned in, and other valuables. The name Jewish Women had to take on the name of Sarah. Jewish men had to take on the name of Israel. I think that actually, that law was passed earlier, may have been passed as early as 1935 as part of the Nuremberg laws. But I think it was really enforced only then.

I was so traumatized by what happened that day that I would not permit my aunt or my mother out of my sight. If one of us had to go to the bathroom, three of us went to the bathroom. Since we could not really stay in our house with all the broken windows, we decided to stay at my aunt's house. And I did not want to sleep alone, nor did I want to go to bed before my aunt and mother would go to bed, so an extra bed was put in the bedroom. And all three of us slept in the same bedroom.

For two weeks, there was no information about where the men were, if they were even still alive. And then pre-printed post cards arrived. And the only thing that was in handwriting was to whom it was addressed and from whom it came. And the top part of the postcard, the left side of the postcard, it said concentration camp, Dachau. All the men from this section of Germany where I came from were sent to Dachau.

Dachau, by the way, was the very first concentration camp that was built in 1933 by the Nazis. And the pre-printed cards stated all the do's and don'ts, that you cannot come and visit, that all attempts to try to get the person released are futile, and so on and so forth.

Once we knew where my father was and where the other men, because everybody within a day or two received a postcard like that, my mother took it upon herself to visit the Gestapo office. That's the Nazi secret police, which was in a community of probably 100 kilometers or so, or maybe more, away from Kippenheim. This was in Karlsruhe.

And it was very difficult for me to let my mother go. But my mother said, you want your father to come home, don't you? And I'm going to try and see what I can do to facilitate that. So you must let me go. And so she left every morning, early in the morning by train, and came back in the evening, and came back every day with no information. On the Monday of the fourth week after the men had been gone, my mother was told that my father would come back that week.

However, if he does not come back by Friday, he will never come back because he's dead. Unbeknownst to my mother that day, the first Jewish men arrived back from Dachau in Kippenheim. And we heard about that. And so we visited them. And I was allowed to come along and say hello, and how are you. But then I had to leave the room. Because my mother said, we adults want to talk. And this is not for you. You're still a child.

But a lasting impression for me was that each and every man that came back that day and in the ensuing days had his hair completely shaved off. And I had never seen that before. And just it horrified me somehow. It seemed degrading. The next morning, Tuesday morning, we of course went back to our house because that's where my father would naturally come. And the people that had arrived on that Monday, arrived early in the morning on a train that came in at about 7 o'clock.

And my father did not come home on Tuesday, not on Wednesday, and not on Thursday. And on Friday morning I think my mother temporarily partially lost her sanity, because she refused to get out of bed and she just carried on saying it's no sense getting up. My husband is dead. I don't want to go on living anymore. I don't ever want to get out of bed. There's no sense to life anymore. And my aunt and I tried to prevail upon her to get up. That it was important that she get up.

And I was telling her, my father's coming home today and you've got to get up. We've got to go over to the house. It's getting late. We've got to go. And she just wouldn't and so I said to my aunt, please go with me to the house. And she said, I can't leave your mother in the condition she's in. You go by yourself. And I said, no. I'm afraid to go by myself. And just about then we heard a knock on the door downstairs.

And I did something for the first time in four weeks on my own. I went to the window and looked out and I thought I saw my father there, and called out to my aunts and my mother. Daddy's home. And my mother said, no, it's the Nazis. It's just a ruse. Let's go back up in the attic and hide in that wardrobe again. But I went downstairs and opened the door, and indeed it was my father. I expected him to come back in pajamas because that's how he left. But they had given him clothes.

And he took off his hat. And I said oh, my God. They shaved your hair. And I thought he's my father. He's different. They're not going to do this to him. And he was so ashamed. He took that hat and pulled put it back on, and pulled it practically all the way down to his chin. And we could hear my mother screaming upstairs. Let's go up in the attic. The Nazis are here again!

And my father went upstairs, stood next to her bed. And she didn't recognize him. And it took a while before she finally came around to it and realized this is her husband. This is my father. And then of course, the joy was great that he was back, though somewhat dampened by the fact that my uncle hadn't come back yet, my father's brother. And there was my aunt standing there. And her husband isn't back. But my father had some news about him because he had seen him in Dachau.

I noticed that my father's hands were in really bad condition. And I asked him, what's wrong with your hands? And he said, well, it was very cold in Dachau. And I didn't have any gloves. And I have frostbite on my hand. And also my job was to go to the kitchen at noon and pick up this big cauldron of hot soup and take it back to the barracks. And some of that hot soup would spill. And so I also got burns on my hand. And he says, but it's nothing. It's getting better already and it will heal.

And my mother tried to prevail upon my father to change his clothes, to take a bath, or to at least wash up, and get out of these clothes. And he said, no, not now, later. And finally he admitted that he really was afraid to change clothes or to take these clothes off. Because he was beaten while he was there. And his body was swollen and sore. And he felt like he was sort of poured into those clothes. And they fit so snugly, he was afraid that it would hurt.

And so my mother got a pair of scissors and cut the sleeves on his jacket open and just sort of peeled him out of that jacket. And they then went to the bathroom. And I never saw my father's body so I don't know how badly it looked. And my mother never told me and my father never told me. While in the bathroom, he apparently had a mild heart attack. And as I mentioned earlier, Jewish doctors weren't allowed to practice. There weren't any in Kippenheim anyway. And Christian doctors weren't allowed to treat Jews.

But somehow, my mother had gotten word to our family doctor who was a Christian, a Dr. Weber. And every night he came and treated my father until my father was well. The term for people like that has been used is Righteous Christian.



And I think Dr. Weber would qualify as a Righteous Christian. I don't know what else he did. But I know what he did for my father.

Much to my consternation, last year when I was back in Kippenheim, someone told me that he was one of the doctors who performed medical experiments. I just can't quite put that together. I prefer to remember him the way I knew him, the way he treated me when I was a child, and when he came and took care of my father. And my father did get better. He's no longer alive. I met his sister. And I thanked his sister last year for what he had done.

After my father got better, the efforts to leave Germany resumed. Only now the focus shifted somewhat. Whereas before we tried to leave as a family together. It was decided that whoever would have the opportunity to leave would leave first. And then hopefully the others would follow. Though I was not to be left alone, if my parents would be able to go. And I remember when we discussed this, it wasn't just a discussion between my parents, but I was part of that discussion.

And my father, everything was always supposed to be a learning experience. And so he said we're going to have a powwow. And this is how Indians in the United States a long time ago used to sit together and discuss things. And then, for instance, he called my mother the squaw. And I don't remember what he called me. But I'm sure I must have had some Indian title also.

And the opportunity for me to leave Germany then presented itself in May 1939. I was able to leave on May 18, 1939 with a children's transport of 500 children ranging in age from twins six months old to 16 years old. And we went to England.

Most of the children went into either girls homes or boys homes, institutional all kinds of settings. Some of us went to live with private families. I went to live with a private family. Probably many, if not most of the children, were able to go through the efforts of some Jewish organizations. That was not the case for me.

But we had located a cousin of my grandfather's in England, a Mrs. Simon who had been in England since she was about 18 months old. She was at that time a woman in her 70s, still going to her own business, which she shared with her son. And I did not live with her. She I guess didn't want to be bothered with a child. And her daughter, a Beatrice Meyer, did all the legwork for her. And Beatrice Meyer talked to a rabbi in Edgware who helped her find a family, and I was placed with a family in Edgware, a family by the name of Sidney Rose and his wife and three children.

And Mrs. Simon, my grandfather's cousin, paid them a certain amount of money monthly or weekly for my board and lodging. Immediately after I arrived in England, just I arrived on a Thursday, the 19th of May 1939, on that following Sunday, the Simon and Meyer family went on their yearly holiday to France. And they were going to be gone all summer. And they told me this when I arrived.

I want to go back to when I was leaving Germany.

Yes, I was going to ask you if you would do that, and how you felt about it. You were leaving your--

Right, well when I was still in Kippenheim but knew that I would be leaving I had mixed feelings. There were feelings of not wanting to leave and being fearful about what I'm getting into, and especially when I found out that in England one drinks tea. And I didn't like tea, because I associated drinking tea with being sick.

I was not very excited about that. On the other hand, my parents were trying to paint a wonderful picture for me, and going to a big city. There's an underground there. You'll be going to school again. You'll be learning a new language. You'll make new friends. And we'll be coming soon. We'll be together again, if not in England, then we'll be together in the United States or someplace. We'll be together. This is just temporary. And this is just-- you were going to go to France or to Switzerland, and this is just happening a little sooner.

And I wanted to believe that. But I had all these mixed feelings. And then all of a sudden, I got the notion into my head that my parents really wanted to get rid of me, that I wasn't really their child, that I was a Gypsy child. Because Gypsies

used to come to Kippenheim once or twice a year. And the story that I heard then always was the gypsy steal children. And so I was always warned not to be anywhere near there. But I used to be fascinated by the Gypsies.

And I'd go there anyway, even though I wasn't allowed to, and stand across the street, and watch them. And I used to think, well, maybe I'm a gypsy child. Maybe one of these Gypsies is going to say, oh, here you are. And so I thought when I was getting ready to leave Germany, I said, you know maybe I really am a gypsy child, and my parents are trying to get rid of me. And the Gypsies didn't reclaim me, so now they're getting rid of me.

And I told them that which must have been extremely painful for them, because I'm sure while they didn't share their pain of parting with me, never showed it or never talked about it, I'm sure they felt it. And then for me to say that must have just been horrendous for them. Plus there were people in the Jewish community who were saying to them at a time like this when there are problems, you don't separate. The family stays together.

And I was the only Jewish child that left on a children's transport from Kippenheim. And as my parents put me on the train, and the train started, and they were still smiling, and this wonderful thing that I'm going to go to. As the train started to move away from the station, they ran along the platform until the platform ended. And I watched and I saw the tears streaming down their face. And then I knew they really did love me. This was a great act of love.

And I watched them, and I saw them getting smaller and smaller. And then there were two dots, and then they were gone. I had no knowledge. The thought didn't even occur to me that this was the very last time that I saw my parents. But I immediately sat down with a terrible guilty conscience, and wrote a letter to my parents and apologized for what I had said to them. And that I really knew that they loved me very much. And that's why they sent me away, because they loved me so much.

And when the train stopped in Cologne I gave the letter to somebody who was on the platform because there were new children joining us there. And asked them to mail my letter to my parents. And they did because my parents acknowledged receiving that letter. And so I'm very glad that I had enough good sense to do that.

Now, a little bit about life in England.

Yes, before we get to England, anything more of that journey about the other children, and the control. Who was sort of looking after?

Well, there were adults who traveled with us who had to go back to Germany afterwards. Because they did not have visas to go to England, but they were allowed to take us. And that also I guess helped with getting the next transport out of Germany, because then they were there to take the next people. I didn't really know any of that at that time. I mean I knew there were adults. And I thought they were also going to England. And I knew that they were there to chaperone us.

I don't really remember much about the children in the compartment with me. Though I apparently described them to my parents and described some of the adults, because letters that I have from my parents talk about this, and how they could visualize what these people looked like and how they behaved from my descriptions. Like for instance, I referred to one person as snowflake.

I'm not sure today anymore what that means. All of that is gone. I don't remember that. I remember being very excited when the train stopped in Cologne, because the train station in Cologne is right next to the cathedral. And I had heard about it, but I'd never seen it. And so seeing this magnificent cathedral was just wonderful for me.

And I did a lot of writing when while the train was moving, writing another letter to my parents, which I was going to give to somebody at some point to mail, and did. And then as the train crossed over into Holland, it stopped very shortly after we crossed the border. And there were some women on the platform. And I don't know who they were. But they gave us juice and cookies. And it was the best juice and the best cookies I ever had in my whole life.

And then we passed these enormous fields of tulips, all different colors. I mean I'd seen tulips before, but these were

thousands and thousands of tulips as far as you could see, tulips everywhere. And so I sat down and I wrote to my parents about the tulips. And the train took us to Hook of Holland, where we were going to get on the boat at 6 o'clock that night, and did.

And the boat was not going to leave until midnight, and would arrive in Harwich, England the following morning at 6 o'clock. And I shared a cabin, a very small cabin, with another girl. I don't really remember anything about her either. I was interested in finding out about this boat. And I walked all over this boat, investigated the boat.

And at some point, I needed to go to the bathroom. And I had learned a little bit of English before I left. My father was teaching me some English. And some of what he remembered, and also by using a book. And I had learned that a bathroom is either a water closet, or WC. And so I looked on the boat for either water closet or WC. And I didn't see either one. And I thought, well I've been looking left and right. I must have missed it, so I'll make--