

Callman, Lilo& Ann (twins), December 1, 1977

Q: When and where were you born?

A: We were born in Berlin, Germany in February of 1910 and we lived with our parents until 1913 when my mother was divorced. She married again in 1916 and my father again in 1918. The marriage from our mother wasn't too successful but we managed to live a normal life until shortly before-well, until Hitler came. Our step-father was interned a couple-rather arrested a couple of times in connection with another matter not related to Hitler but when we- I emigrated or rather left Germany in 1929 in January managed to get-my sister emigrated in August of 1939 to England.

Q: Before we go on, can you tell me something about your education in Berlin?

A: We were in high school educated in Berlin- both of us.

Q: What did you hope to become?

L: I had all intention of becoming a nurse but couldn't because of health reasons so I had to look for other possibilities and I went into an office and started as an apprentice and I had quite a nice job but due to the Hitler coming to power, the company took another turn-somebody else came in and they decided- in the end I was the only Jewish employee left not because I was so good but because I was the only one who knew that particular job- it was like Sears Roebuck Catalogue Co. and I was the only one who knew it so they kept me up to August 1939.

Q: When you started with this firm, was it Jewish?

L: Completely Jewish. The boss was Jewish and the daughter and son were in the business- it was a big company, approximately 200 people and of course it completely went to bits after-it was less and less and less when it became known that we were a Jewish company naturally.

Q: How early did the business start to deteriorate?

L: It started already in 1931 and 1932.

Q: Before Hitler came to power?

L: There must be some connection with it because we had a marvelous Christmas business always and Christmas, 1932, it already started to be about 20% less approximately and then it continued to go down and in 1936, we had only about 10% of what we had in 1931.

Q: Was the business sold to non-Jews?

A: I'm not quite sure about that- if it was sold or forcible sold. Anyhow it was taken over.

Q: You were able to stay until 1939?

L: I then stayed until August 1939 because of what I told you.

Q: Did you notice and major difference in the attitude of the employees toward you as the years went by?

L: Only a few. There was always 'Heil Hitler' salute in the morning and I was the only one who came in with 'good morning'. And especially I remember our porter at the door- he became the fuhrer in the firm then for the employees and he was pretty stiff after-he knew me since I started there in 1930 so I wasn't a newcomer but his attitude changed completely.

Q: Did you have any problems as far as harm to you?

L: No, I didn't. Up to the end I was pretty lucky- I don't know why but I was.

Q: Did you also have a job?

A: Well, I was with my firm for about thirteen years and in the summer of 1937, my boss had to get out or would be arrested and immediately it was taken over, without pay, without anything and they kept me for six months and then they threw me out.

Q: The former own then was Jewish?

A: Completely, Russian Jews and we were a small firm but I would say half of it Jewish and half Christian but all of us were completely eliminated immediately.

Q: At this time when you were sent away from the firm, did you think of emigrating?

A: Well, we thought of emigrating but we had absolutely no connection with anybody or something like that until my sister wrote to my father who had already emigrated a few years before and to this day I don't know what letter she wrote but he immediately got me out through the usual procedure- being a household employee and I had the good luck of

getting my sister out but no more my mother.

Q: When you say your father had emigrated, had he gone to England?

A: Yes.

Q: And he sent you the papers to come there?

A: He himself did not but through business connections, he got me a job.

Q: Let's go back a moment. You were in Berlin on Kristallnacht. What happened on Kristallnacht?

A: We didn't see or hear anything during the night but the next morning when you went out in the street-it was gruesome.

L: I happened to go past our temple which was Ridenstrasse in the center of Berlin and I just went past and I started to cry because the bare wall were standing and we went there since we were children so our whole life was in that synagogue and I never forget the site of those empty walls standing there- no more Ark, no more Torahs, no more nothing. I just can't describe it- right now when I remember it, I see it before my eyes and I think it is a site you never forget once you have seen it. The building which meant so much to you for all you life- that was the one thing that hit me most. Of course, there were other things too but that one house gave you everything you ever wanted to see.

Q: Did you know any of the local Nazis in Berlin?

A: No. I didn't.

L: No. I only know that we-we always got our rolls delivered in the morning- hot rolls hanging on the door in a little bag- but it stopped completely and that one baker wouldn't even sell bread anymore. My mother went somewhere else and later on she told me that our butcher didn't want to sell to her anymore.

Q: Did you ever see any signs "Juden Unerwünscht"?

A: That was a common sign. I suppose it hurt you deep inside. You saw it and you had to pass by. You didn't know what was coming.

- L: There wasn't one Jewish store which wasn't written all over or the houses or something.
A: Or "don't buy here- Jews".
- Q: How did you feel about this mounting pressure from let's say 1936 on as a Jew in Berlin?
- L: Well, we felt like every German Jew I guess. It's fo everybody else but nothing is going to happen to you-you were born here after all, you are a German and a German Jew, what can happen to you. That was my opinion. Nothing can happen to you- I mean, Deutsche Jude that's a German first and then a Jew even if the religious part is strong in you but nothing can happen to you-till the Kristallnacht- then you knew-then it really started to get serious. I remember once coming home and there was a little girl maybe 10-12 years old and a few boys were running after her. I was coming from work. They were shouting "Jew, Jew, Jew" and the little girl was running and when she saw me, she came to me and she said "would you take me home?". I said what's the matter and she said the boys are coming after me, I'm Jewish. I said so am I, come on, I'll take you home. It gives you a kind of an eerie feeling to see kids like that being deprived of their childhood and everything to be afraid to go on the street that bigger children come after them and little things like that which I never thought about before but now thinking about it you see those scenes again, right before your eyes.
- Q: You mentioned this Temple which you belonged to in Berlin, was this orthodox or liberal?
- A: Almost the same service as we have now in the Hebrew Tabernacle. That's why we were so drawn to them because it was like coming back home.
- L: All the same melodies and everything.
- Q: Did you ever remember in that synagogue, the rabbi or anyone else speaking about the situation in Germany or Auswanderung?
- L: Dr. Warshauer always said "our help is only coming from the East, nobody else can help us" The East meaning the Russians or somebody else but nobody was talking about actually doing something about it and Dr. Warshauer or Dr. Blumenthal, I'm not quite certain which one died in concentration camp because he wouldn't leave Berlin. Those were the two Rabbis I remember most during our time.
- A: I do not remember any Rabbi ever saying something from the pulpit about emigrating. Whether or not they said it- they might but I don't remember it.

- Q: Do you remember feeling a pressure from people emigrating up that time-thinking well, maybe I should do the same?
- L: Not in our immediate relationship or fiends, very very few emigrated.
- A: That's why we lost so many relatives because everyone said well, nothing will happen to us but I must say once my company in 1937, then I started to think secretly whatever will happen to us because we neither have the means nor the possibility to go anywhere but what will happen to us. I don't think I thought about death or concentration camp but I do remember one speech that must have been after Krisallnacht from Goering- he said and I quote "We do with the Jews like we do with flowers- we don't give them any water" and to this day, those words ring in my ears and I said you really did what you said you were going to do and since that time, I don't think I ever really breathed freely. That was always in front of me.
- Q: That's exactly what they did.
- A: Exactly. And they did it in a more cruel way than we ever would anticipate.
- Q: Did most of your friends and relatives think he wouldn't last long?
- L: Yes. Think so because so many other countries, they wouldn't all the Jews to be exterminated. And to be quite frank, there was never really any fear, so to speak, about concentration camp. Nobody knew of that- the word was never mentioned so what did we know what was going to happen. I remember the day I arrived in England- a lot of my step-mother's relatives wee there and they said what is it like in Germany and I said- those

are words which still stick in my mind- there will be war within two months. They said “don’t be ridiculous, how can you say anything like that”. I said “you didn’t see the people marching in Berlin- you didn’t see the SS and the Gestapo going through Unter den Linden and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of them and the people on the side cheering them up like anything. I said you didn’t see them. They said “don’t be ridiculous Lilo how can there be war”. I said well, we saw the airplanes all going over Berlin and there was a parade, I don’t know what it was, Hitler’s birthday or something, I don’t remember exactly what it was but there was a big, big parade with the airplanes flying and the tanks rolling along. You didn’t see it. Well, they found out.

Q: How did you look upon these parades in Berlin?

L: With fear-fear in my heart because I knew I was by myself. I’m not speaking about my relatives-my mother or anything-I’m speaking in general. You knew what can you do against hundreds of thousands cheering. The few, I mean the very very few people- I mean compared to those hundreds of thousands maybe a dozen people talked to you. But the other ones, for them you were just something to be trampled on or something not even to be looked at.

Q: You mentioned that baker and the butcher, were there more such incidents when people wouldn’t sell to you?

A: There were signs everywhere on- Jews not wanted- I mean that you couldn’t go in or you wouldn’t go in. Even if they wouldn’t recognize you as a Jew but you yourself were kind of held back.

Q: These were stores you patronized before?

L: Of course, since we lived there.

Q: Was there ever any conversation between you and the proprietor?

L: About Hitler? Never a word mentioned. That was just.

A: To me it was you are not allowed to speak about it.

L: Or you didn't dare to speak about it. Even if you would like to sell to you, maybe it was the one who stands next to you would be an SS and would give you over- I mean not for me but for the proprietor of the store- would give you over as a Jew friend.

Q: In this job which you had, was the owner ever put in a difficult position for retaining you as late as 1938.

L: No, because- I can't remember what the name of the man who was in charge of the Nazi Party in the store- it wasn't a gauleiter-we would say shop steward here. He okayed it because he knew well I was the only one to get that catalogue- it was a deadline for the printer and I was the only one to get that catalogue out on time and there were small translations to be made in French and English and I was the only one, I didn't speak French and I spoke a little English but I was the only one who could use the dictionary sufficiently well. I knew the right words to put into print.

Q: Was there ever a Gestapo agent in the business?

- L: That I don't know because after all, I was only a little cog in a wheel. If there was one in the office for the manager, I don't know.
- Q: You mentioned that you left your job in 1937
- A: No, they kept me on until June of 1938. The Jewish boss left in 1937. They kept me on but under protest of course of the few Nazis in there and I left in Jan. 1939.
- Q: When you say under protest, did they make any problems for you?
- A: Yes. It was pretty uncomfortable but I needed the money and where would I go so I had to swallow my pride and- I mean we would have starved at home if we wouldn't have gone out.
- Q: In what way did they make it uncomfortable?
- A: Well, they would never talk to me directly and when there was something to do you were always sort of eliminated. They gave me to do just the bare necessities.
- Q: Did these people ever ask you if and when you were leaving?
- A: No, not me because they couldn't care less what happened to me.
- Q: I would imagine that that's a very difficult day, the day that you left Germany. How did you feel?

- A: That is I think very hard to describe or to say something about because deep in my heart I knew I would never see my mother again.
- L: I remember my mother was always talking about suicide- after my sister left because I only left in August- that was seven or eight months later and I always said to her “Mommy, you can’t do that to us, we need you” because we were very very close with her. And I remember that night I left- I said “Mommy, I give you back your promise” I never told Ann that, never.
- A: No but that is something to- even to think now about about it after almost forty years. When you said to me how I felt about it- it’s terribly hard to describe when you know and by then of course, you knew- well, you didn’t know whether you could get somebody out or not because I was the only one who was lucky I don’t know whether to use that word because at that time you didn’t feel lucky. You felt alone in the world with nobody- you even thought God had deserted you. What was it to be taken away from your twin sister, from your mother. I thought how could anybody do that to you. But my mother always said to me “you won’t forget what happened but time will make you”. In a way, she was right but even now, it’s hard, very hard.
- Q: Was there any chance that the person who allowed you to come to England...
- A: No, I had to do that all by myself. I think my father at that time- he had his own family. I mean he got married and had a daughter and he wasn’t too keen on the awareness that he had two elder daughters so I knew whatever had to be done, I had to do by myself. My English wasn’t good or perfect at that time but I managed to get my sister out and I also managed to try to get a position for my mother and the woman said to me “My son said I should give you an affidavit for your mother but you have to wait three weeks. If in three

weeks, no war breaks out then I can give it to you.” And the time was August between 15th and 20th, I forget the date. But what happened after that, September 3, 1939 war broke out and that was the end of my dreams to get my mother out.

L: I still remember we got letters from our mother through the Red Cross later on and she in one letter. In the meantime, all the Jews had to move in with relatives or friends. Who had a three room apartments had to have so and so many people in and so forth so my mother move in with her sister-in-law from her first husband and she wrote that everybody said “Oh,if you go to Auschwitz, it’s much better. It’s such a nice camp.” That was the idea they had in Germany at that time from Auschwitz. They didn’t know what they went in for. “The treatment is much better in Auschwitz then it is in Theresienstadt”. And my aunt she survived Theresienstadt- she came back. She lived till she was 96 and she was in Theresienstadt and she said she never forgets it- she told me once she was at the end of the compound and she was just looking for company or something and a woman came up to her and she looked bedraggeled and so thin that you wouldn’t recognize anyone she said “you are Elise Callman, aren’t you”. And she said “yes, that’s me”. And the woman said “don’t you recognize me?” And she said no- it was her own cousin. And my mother was sent to Auschwitz- Ann found that out when she was- in the meantime in England we left our job and joined the British Army because we had dideas that no going into munitions or anything, we would get our mother out if we were so minded to help the country fight Germany. That was our ambition and Ann went the war was over, she went to Germany(Tape Turned)

Q: Did England give you permits in transit or a permanent visa?

A: Permanent visa as domestic only. And you had to report any movement you made to the local police. You weren't restricted in any way. I don't know if it was for their protection or for my own protection that I had to report to the police. I was in a very small town in Yorkshire- whether that was locally or not I'm naturally not aware.

Q: Where and with whom were you placed?

A: With a family in Yorkshire as a domestic.

Q: A Jewish family?

A: Oh yes. But the job I got for my sister was also in Yorkshire- that was not a Jewish family. People were quite willing to get to help people in that way if they had the room and they needed help. For my mother there was an elderly Jewish lady who desperately wanted a companion. It depends on the individual people.

Q: I still remember my mother telling me how difficult it was for her to swallow the roll on the day she left because she had such mixed emotions, how did you feel?

L: Well, I was still choked up from the night because I didn't sleep and I know I didn't have any breakfast but - a little thing- the day before I left, I went to the flower shop and ordered a flower pot to be delivered to my mother the same day in the afternoon. And a friend of the family and my mother brought me to the airport.

Q: Airport?

A: Airport?

L: Yes, I went by plane and because my Jewish boss had a daughter and son in England and he paid my fare in return for me taking care of him during the trip to England. He went along with me- my Jewish boss before the firm was taken over. He wanted to get rid of his apartment and things but his children said now you come and this was on the 14th of August 1939- that says everything right. And so we went by airplane- Lufthansa at that time and they took to Holland.

Q: Did Lufthansa make any restrictions as far as Jews?

L: No. Once you had your ticket and your official papers that you could leave the country, then everything was all right. There were of course Nazis at every check out counter and you couldn't- mother was only allowed up to a certain point and I still see them standing there and my mother turned around and didn't look anymore and then the plane landed in Holland and I don't know- it felt unreal. I felt as if it wasn't me because the crew changed- we took another plane. At that time there were no jets or anything. I had a complete eerie feeling that it is somebody else sitting there in the airplane- it was my first airplane ride of course. It wasn't me. It couldn't have been me and I think excitement turned to pain of leaving my mother in the background because I was a person was so excited that everything was storybook like- that's the only way I can describe it.

Q: When you came to England, I assume that maybe Ann met you

L: No. Ann couldn't meet me because I arrived in London and she was in Yorkshire which is approximately by train 6 or 7 hours and of course she didn't have any money to come. So there was a mix up in the arrival time and we weren't met at the airport and I had to bring

that old gentlemen to an outskirt of London and from there somebody called and they drove me back in the car to my father's house. I called Ann of course the same night on the telephone.

Q: Did any Jewish organizations help you?

L: In London, you didn't need anybody. But in Berlin, you had to have a certificate from a Jewish organization, I don't know which one it was at the time, that you were capable to doing household work for the English consul and there I got a test in a household and that woman- I was there by eight o'clock in the morning- and she said now you just do as if it's your own house you do what's to be done- there's the pots and pans and there's the towels and there's the soap. She didn't even appear- I did everything by myself and in the afternoon she saw that everything is fine.

Q: This was a Jewish agency?

L: It was a Jewish agency

Q: You would think that they would have just filled it out?

L: No, no, they didn't

A: That is something knew to me, I didn't even know that because I left in January, there was absolutely nothing. I even went out without the Jewish Sara in my passport.

L: Well, I got Liselot Sara Callman on my passport. And we got a big J on the front of the passport- that distinction didn't escape anybody.

- A: That must have come between January 1939 and August 1939 because I did not have it- I had my plain passport with no J or Hagenkreuz or anything of that sort.
- Q: You both had these jobs in Yorkshire, how did you get the idea of joining the British Army?
- L: Well, we were interned like every good German was - it didn't make any difference if you were a Jew or non- Jew and we were in an industrial area where they were afraid of spy movements and so on and we were interned in May of 1940 and to be quite honest, we had the best time of our lives because we went to the Isle of Man and the British government paid for everything. You had your food, you had your lodging. We were together with all our friends in one boarding house- German friends we met in Yorkshire- all highly educated people who were domestic and we were all together interned and we had the most marvelous time- we went to the beach all the time, we swam for hours, went home for lunch. A few of us always had duty to help the landlady who was preparing for the meals. We were responsible for our own rooms but otherwise no. Of course, we were confined the one little town- there were no trains out.
- Q: How did you feel when the British came and told you you had to be interned?
- L: The only question I asked was- my sister at that time the next house to me- I would see her, it was as if you were on Ft. Washington Avenue and you look over to the Temple, so near. And the only question when they came in the morning- a woman officer and two men officers came- only question I asked was if they were taking my sister too. That was the only question I asked and when they said yes then I said everything was all right.

Q: Did they explain to you why they were taking you?

L: Well, you knew something was going on but the lady I worked for was very civic minded and she knew every mayor and official in the town of Bradford which was the name of the town where I worked and I went up to her with of course escort to her room to wake her- it was that early, she wasn't up then. She said " Lisa, they can't do that to me, I need you" and the officer said we have to. She said she is calling the mayor right away and he said she could do that but it won't help. Because that is not his domain, it is the government. I said to myself, so what, if Ann is coming, what's the difference.

A: Well, we knew that the war was pretty difficult and in a way I felt that we knew we were not responsible fo the war but we were born there and we knew the people who were fighting and think we knew that something was going to happen- that we might be interned and when they came to the door and I opened up and I saw the people I said I think I'm ready but before I go, will you please tell me, is my sister coming and of course, they laughed and said your sister said the same thing. Yes. And a lady went upstairs to pack and she said take this, that take the other thing but she said don't forget a bathing suite you sure can use it. I thought to myself what a difference between what you think your mother is going through in Germany and here the people- they sort of apologized to you but it's for your own protection. You knew you are an enemy alien. It was heartwarming experience to see those officials talk to you.

Q: Was this a usual experience in England?

- L: Yes. It was, in the industrial regions and in those regions where troop concentrations were. It was a question of security. My father and step mother and others in London, they didn't know anything about it.
- Q: How did you then get the idea of joining the army?
- L: Well, when we were interned, of course, anybody wasn't then thinking of going back to household but those people who gave you- where you were employed with, they had to go to a tribunal and vouch for you that you didn't have any tendency to be a spy before that and then they had a tribunal on the Isle of Man and they asked you all kinds of questions and then they decided you were okay, you could go. But once we came back, it wasn't the same anymore. This was in January 1941 and the war went pretty badly then a few of our friends went into munition but Ann and I talked it over and said well, if the Army or the Air Force take us- by that time they took Germans in a special regiment, men too, and then we decided we try the Army. They took us and we were the second German battalion to be formed with the women's army- the auxiliary territorial service and we both served from October 1941 until November 1947 and we went from so to speak a dollar a day when we started- it wasn't even a dollar, it was less something like 50 cents.
- A: It was thirteen shilling a week.
- L: And when we left the Army we got about 50 shilling a day. So we went from private to sergeant both of us. I worked as a cook all the time and Ann because she has bad feet was lucky and was sent to the office.
- Q: Where were you stationed?

- L: At first, we were stationed in Oxford and from Oxford we went to Colchester and then to Halifax, then Yorkshire again and from there, we bot made application to go overseas.
- Q: This was still with the intention of helping your mother?
- L: Helping our mother. That was the only intention. I mean we made thirteen shilling a week which was of course a ridiculous pay but we had the distinction of helping the country and being in uniform and not making money in munitions factory- just to make money. We felt that was our part for helping our mother to come later to England.
- A: I want to continue on that one. When I went to Germany naturally as a volunteer, the first thing my superior said to me “Of course, being a German Jew, you want to find out about your family” and I looked at him and I said “yes, sir, that is my intention”. He said you have a pass to go to Berlin tomorrow morning.
- Q: When was this?
- A: That was in February of 1946.
- Q: After the war was over?
- A: Yes. And the next morning I went with the Library and Document where I worked. We had a couple of trucks going there and I went on a truck for I don’t know how long through Germany. I knew a cousin of mine had survived concentration camp. As soon as I got to Berlin, I went to him. Of course, he didn’t recognize me being in uniform and I said to him “Hello, how are you” and he said I’m sorry, I don’t recognize you and then I said

kiddingly I called him uncle when I was little and I said “Uncle” and he said “Oh my god, it’s you.” Knowing Germany but after the war and everything, he went with me to the Jewish Center which was Oranienburger Strasse which now is the center behind the wall and I went up and I said I am looking for my mother and they kind of looked at me being in uniform and I said to them I am a German, of course, I spoke German with them. So they gave me the list to look through and I didn’t find my mother’s name and then a man came up terribly disfigured. I think they must have crushed his back or something because that man is still sort of before me and he sat down with me and he said which transport did your mother go on and I said to my knowledge she went in that and that transport- February of 1943 to Auschwitz and he said you mother was lucky. To the best of our knowledge that transport was immediately gassed. To me at that time it was of course well, I don’t think I can describe me feelings at that time. I think anybody can understand that. And then he said, of course, you want to keep the day, you want to light the candles. And I said yes and he said will, we would very much like it if you would light the candles for your mother on February 17th- that’s the day we have set apart. I said of course, I certainly would and since then we keep it as the day my mother passed away.

Q: It must have been difficult when you came to this Oranienburg Strasse center and saw essentially this Jewish remnant of

A: I was kind of heartened by the fact that I saw quite a few Jewish people there and talking to them I found that most of them had lived underground in Berlin and of course if you had come back from concentration camp and that’s what they built up- I suppose they had worked with them that started it quite some time before I came but it was a moving experience to see that some people had had the stamina- I don’t think I could call it anything else- and the will to go underground and survive.

- L: We have a cousin who is now 86 years old and she lived underground. She had one daughter who was sent to a children's transport to England. She lived underground all that time and luckily enough she survived- her husband was taken I don't know from the street- I didn't want to ask, don't want to ask. She got papers to come to America in 1945 or 1946 and her daughter was still in England and coincidence she joined the army too and years and years later in America we went through some of our pictures and Ann and that cousin's daughter both looked at the picture and one or the other said "that's you and that's me" they were standing next to each other and didn't know it.
- A: What's important was that it was our Rosh Hashanah service for the Jewish soldiers and we were all gathered together at that time and the Rabbi said come on, I want to take a picture of all of you to let you keep a memory. In the army, there were really no last names and she used the name Phyllis because it sounded more English than her real name. She was Phyllis and I was Ann so there was actually no relationship other than that we were two Jewish soldiers attending the service. This was in the Army in Germany.
- Q: You went to Germany after the war ended, where were you during this time?
- L: I went first to Belgium before the war ended that was in April of 1945. My unit went to Belgium (we were in different units then) and we only went to Germany in the end of 1946- we went to Hamburg and at that time we were reunited again in one unit.
- Q: When you went to Berlin, did you go to your home?

A: The first time I didn't because I was completely down with searching for my mother then the moving experience to be reunited with my aunt and we had to go through the Russian sector, I had no civilian clothes with me so I went in uniform and at that time they were saying that the Russians were kind of keen on women and so I said to my cousin who was with me if anything happens, take this little paper, go there and there, they'll speak German, tell them what happened, where I went, I wasn't allowed to go there, I did that on my own and they will try to get me out. Don't worry about me.

Q: Your home was in the eastern sector?

A: I didn't go then to my home. I went to my aunt who was in a heim, a nursing home so to speak. That was the second time and of course, I went there now very frequently on business and the second time I went, I went with a girlfriend of mine, and we commandeered a jeep, also one of our German Jewish friends, and I said whatever we do, I have to go to the street where I lived. Of course, in that jeep we went and we stood there and I couldn't believe it- a shell of a house was left- everything else was- and the same little grocery store- if they were the same owners or not I couldn't tell you- and one of the fellows said "let's go and take a picture of you". Of course, everybody came out to take a look why are these soldiers standing at that house and taking pictures. Unfortunately, the pictures never came out but it's the memory I have.

Q: How did you react to being Germany as Jews?

L: Well, I tell you. It was pretty tough in Berlin for me because you knew everything but you didn't recognize anything- it was just a shell. We went once to Rickestrassé Synagogue and you could still see the hay where they kept the horses. And of course that is a picture I

never forgot. I mean I never went to Rickenstrasse, I knew the temple was there but we were liberal and that was orthodox but I mean it was a synagogue and a synagogue to a Jew is like St. Patrick's Cathedral to the Catholics and I still see those partitions for the horses, the partitions showing that there were horses in the synagogue. Just imagine if you come to the Hebrew Tabernacle and everything is taken out- where how benches are and the Ark and everything and you see wooden partitions put up for animals- nobody who hasn't seen this can understand- you can't describe it.

Q: When did you leave the Army? When did you leave Germany?

A: Yes, we went back to England only for a little while because at that time, my half-sister who had married and had emigrated to Canada had said to us you have no other family than us. It doesn't make any difference where you live, why don't you come to Canada. And I have to interpret in there that being in the Army, we were naturalized- we the British passport and of course Britain and Canada was practically one so it was not difficult for us to go to Canada. So she said to her that when we leave the Army we would come to her. It was an experience, it was traveling. I mean, we were by ourselves, we had no other ties so whether we were living in England or Canada, it didn't make any difference. We left the Army in November 1947 and our severance pay from the Army did not run out until I believe the end of January, 1948 and we left England before that and we were still on high seas, we were still being paid by the Army and when we got to Canada, how long did you stay....

A: We only stayed, because not living with my father before, I could not be the dutiful daughter and bow down to everything my father

Q: He had emigrated to Canada too?

L: And he was still the real Prussian father, very domineering and we weren't used to this because we lived with my mother- as we said they were divorced in 1913. We never lived with him and by that time we were 38 years old and you can't bow down then to anybody- you have to live your own life.

Q: What made you come to New York?

A: What made me decide to come to New York was very simple because I would not take any- could with my father because it was intolerable and I came to New York and our cousin also a member of the Hebrew Tabernacle gave us an affidavit.

Q: They had also emigrated from Germany?

A: They were here since 1944. They also lived first in England and they came over to America. They were here quite some time before us.

Q: How did you manage the first days in New York?

A: Well, to me when I was in New York for my vacation for Rosh Hashanah in 1949, it was to me as if I had lived here all my life. It was home to me immediately.

Q: Why did you feel this way?

L: Because we were big city people. Berlin was a big city, right. And at this time, Toronto in 1948 was a very, very, a small English city. It wasn't as it is now- 1 million people city. It

was no cinemas open on Sunday, no restaurants open on Sunday- everything closed and coming from Berlin- we still had that big city feeling in us.

A: And of course, as I said, being here with my mother's family was also a very big drawing point for me and I thought if we could find work in Toronto we certainly could find work here too. As it so happened, I stayed with the same company here as I started with in Canada and I got a transfer reaffected over here and so I stayed with them for 28 years until I retired.

Q: So when you came to New York you knew that you would have employment?

A: No really. The- I being independent said I would go to see them but I would not ask for a transfer but my boss here in New York said why be so stupid, I'll reaffected if and reestablish you seniority.

Q: Did you settle in Washington Heights immediately?

A: We lived on 110th Street in rooms but were looking for an apartment and would you believe it in 1952 we moved into this house hee and we are still here.

Q: Have you ever been back to Germany since you settled here?

L: 1963. My aunt was still living at the time. We didn't have any intention of going but she said well, I send you the money I would like to see you again.

Q: She was the one who survived Theresienstadt and lived in the heim in Berlin?

- L: Yes. Would you believe it, we couldn't wait until we were on the Templehof Airfield again to board the plane to go back home. You have the feeling every person you meet, not that you knew them, that maybe he had something to do with it, maybe he was the one. Of course, we went to the Friedhof, my grandparents are buried there and that part where my grandparents were, wasn't destroyed at all. It looked just like- every leaf was glazed with sunshine. It was a revolution to see those two graves. But part of it where other family members were buried was completely destroyed.
- Q: Did you have any different feelings when you returned in 1963 than you had when you returned with the British Army in 1946, 47?
- L: Yes. I had because you were with the soldiers, don't forget that. You were one of the conquerors. I mean not you yourself but what you khaki uniform stands for pushed them in the ground and that was complete different feeling as if you go there in 1963 as a civilian and maybe it's those years which elapsed in the meantime may have something to do with your attitude too, but you were one of the conquerors.
- Q: Did you notice any difference in your attitude towards the German people in the two times you were back?
- A: Well, I would say not us toward the German people but the German people toward us- the other way around. When we were with the Army, they were.
- L: Kowtowing to us

- A: they were going down, they were clapping their heels, thank-you and please and almost kissing your feet in thankfulness for what you are doing for them while in 1963, there was a completely different feeling. The people had forgotten. They had, we didn't. We hadn't forgotten but they had forgotten what happened during the 1930's and during the war. To me it meant, they were feeling much as we were feeling here in America- secure. They said it couldn't happen again. But to us, to see them strapping around, cock-sure of themselves again and we said well, it can happen again.
- Q: Did you ever engage in any conversation with the Germans?
- L: No. Not me.
- A: Yes. Not me personally but in a group. I wouldn't attempt because I think I would get pretty nasty but in a group we did and of course the more you speak with them- the more you hear . We only had to go along with them- we weren't responsible. We had Jewish friends, we were friendly with Jews. Suddenly there was absolutely no nastiness among them. They were all being forced through others higher up. But they themselves were pure as driven snow.
- Q: This reminds me of your story about the parade in Berlin and one has to wonder who made up the parade.
- L: Ya. And not only the one who were marching but like a parade on Fifth Avenue, they are standing 10,20,30 people deep to view that parade- where did they come from? At that time in 1963 when we went back- not all of them were dead. There were still those people who stood there at that time who knew what was going on.

Q: How do you feel about the Wiedergutmachung?

L: We didn't take a penny from them. We said both of us in accord that nobody can pay us for the death of our mother. We got a few marks- the stuff everybody got but to make a case out of it- we both said no. We wouldn't lower ourselves to that. We don't get a pension, we get our social security- naturally we paid for it so why shouldn't we get it. We worked both of us for it.

Q: You mean German social security?

L: Yes. That is not Wiedergutmachung- that is what is due to us. But other money- no.

A: That is taking blood money because they want to try and pay for us for our mother first of all and for our family and the Jews who were murdered. And it is blood money to me and I wouldn't touch it- I just couldn't. I mean there are lots of people who say so what, take every penny you can get. But that's not in us- that's something so highly personal. Of course, we had our discussions within the family who said crazy, take any penny you can get but we said both together-not at all, we wouldn't. I don't know whether there are other people of whom it's being said you're stupid as we were told but to us it's not stupidity. To us it's something sacred for which you cannot get paid.

Q: It's principle.

A: If we would have starved, we would not have taken any money. For what, for furniture or things like that?

Q: When you look back, what do you think was the most difficult adjustment in this country?

A: In this country, there was no adjustment because we spoke the language perfectly and adjustment could only have been made when you come out of Germany and go as domestic to England as we did where you had to swallow your pride quite a bit to do work which you at home had people who did it for you- to do it, it would take books to describe what pride I personally had to swallow. I don't want to go into that but there were the adjustments to be made, they weren't to be made in Canada or here because

L: You had the freedom of choice of work and worship and everything.

Q: When you talk about this adjustment in England, I would think that must be very difficult for girls who were educated and had jobs in offices.

L: It was pretty difficult. The first job I didn't get along with because they expected you to be perfect at everything right away- they knew you didn't speak the language perfect. That was a veterinarian and you had to answer the telephone and take the calls from people around- what can I who was just in the country three weeks understand on the telephone, what they are talking about to me- about sickness of animals. I could hardly make myself understood for the day to day living. But then I got a job with a very, very nice elderly lady and she took so much pain not only to teach me the language properly but to teach me everything I know about English literature, about English cooking, about English- about everything English. She was very, very upper class so to speak and in her own right, she wrote poems and she even had them published but she really took pleasure in teaching me

to make me- I can honestly say not the person I am now but to give me a foundation in English living and thinking.

Q: In your jobs in this country, did you find that there were any holdovers from your German training?

A: No, only accuracy (laughter), and of course, being a company that large as I had te good luck to be, my job was pretty secure and also I could do it without any difficulties.

Q: Were you able to take this job in Canada and here as a result of the training you had in Germany?

A: Well, I did the same job-When I had my interview with the company in Canada, the man said what did you do when you were in Germany. So I told him my experience in Germany and also my experience in the Army and he said you're hired because he said that's exactly what I want you to do here. Naturally, in the 28 years I was with the company, my job had changed. I sort of went up the rung of the ladder but in essence it was the same- what I was trained in Germany to do.

Q: I neglected to ask you before, exactly what kind of training did you have in Germany? Were you apprentices?

A: I went to a business school for six months so I was not an apprentice. I immediately got a job with a terrific low pay but at that time, you were glad- 1925- that you got a job.

Q: And you L were an apprentice?

L: I was an apprentice in Germany, yes but when I came to England, we worked in a household and as I said I had good training from that lady and in the Army I was a cook and when I arrived here, I went to Schrafft's and got interviewed and I didn't go home the same day until 9 o'clock at night because they didn't let me go- I started work right away because they were looking for people with that experience.

Q: In your life today, are most of your friends American or German-Jews?

A: German- Jews, what else

Q: Why do you think this is so?

A: I think there is a drawing point- perhaps also because we are a little older that you try to go back to your roots.

Q: Do you think it is also a consequence of living in Washington Heights?

A: Definitely.

L: Of course, we didn't have that many friends- we were both working and Saturday and Sunday, you had to clean the house, go shopping so me, being out of the house everyday at 5 o'clock, the only time I could go somewhere was Saturday night so we didn't have a tremendous social life but when I retired in 1975, I started to work actively in the Tabernacle and since that time I haven't stopped. I don't think there is a day where we don't either work for the Temple or do something for the Temple.

- Q: How do you feel about Jewish successes in American politics like Koch and Kissinger?
- L: Why not, why not because they earned their way. I don't wish it on them because being an outsider or not knowing much about it, you feel that everything they do or not do goes back- well, It's a Jews, what can you expect
- Q: Do you think that's a carryover?
- L: It's a carryover from my German experience, maybe. Jews born here who didn't have this experience, they may think entirely different. They say it's only natural but it kind of comes back to you every time. I don't wish it on him, even Beame, why an elderly man like that. God forbid, he does something wrong, it goes back right away- it's a Jew.
- A: That's exactly my sentiments. I only hope they'll succeed because God forbid something goes wrong in one way or the other, you might not agree with their politics but immediately there is that- oh, it's a Jew and I am sure, I am positive that that stems from the Hitler time when that was stamped on us in indelible pencil. It can never be rubbed off.
- L: It's only a pity that they don't teach that lesson. All right, it's a pity they don't teach that lesson but nobody can teach experience. The next generation should know what their parents went through.
- A: Not only their parents.

Something remembered at end of interview

- L: I went once to a flower (blumenhalle) to fetch some flowers for I don't know what it was, and while I was just passing the Lindenstrasse Synagogue which of course was boarded up, sirens went and everybody had to go into a house and there were big signs up "No Jews Allowed". What should I do. Should I stay out- I couldn't stay out because everybody had to be off the street- everybody had to be off the street- everybody had to be underground. No Jews allowed big signs up in the hall. Jew Unerwünscht, Todt ze den Juden. I had to go in- I can't describe my feeling. I had to stay there but it makes you feel not only as an outsider but as a bug which has to be destroyed, which has no right to live. I stood there and thank goodness the sirens went off after about ten minutes or so but those ten minutes were hell. Everybody was talking with everybody else. I just stood there. I don't know if they thought I was deaf or dumb or something but I just stood there. You couldn't look at that wall, you couldn't look at that wall because they all said the same thing.
- A: That reminds me of something else- almost the same experience as my sister had. While I was still employed with that now Aryan company, there was also- the sirens went off- they had these tests and you had to go to a shelter and of course, the Nazi leader said I wasn't allowed to go into the shelter, I was the only Jew left in that company. Then another one said well, we have to take her own with us. So I sat there just like a statue and again, as my sister, said, nobody talked to me. I was sitting there by myself. I had forgotten about this until my sister brought this up. I had forgotten about this until my sister brought this up. And to hear the roar of the airplanes overhead, that must have been in the early part of 1938, but to sit there like a statue and think should there be an accident and should that airplane drop over this house, I don't care about me but that one plane is

only a small cog in a wheel- it's like a hydra with so many heads- one is being dead and there is always another. That is exactly the same experience my sister had.

Q: This was practice?

A: Yes. German practice. And the gauleiter in there said now don't be afraid, absolutely nothing can happen. Even if there is a war, then nobody can penetrate the protection Germany had-especially Berlin. Don't worry, the air protection of Berlin is so good that nothing will happen. And of course, my thoughts at that time were pretty bad with me sitting there and I had to think about these words at my last trip back in Berlin in 1946 and I saw all these destroyed buildings.